USING CRITICAL RACE THEORY TO CENTER BIPOC STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN
UNDERGRADUATE PSYCHOLOGY COURSES WITH A MULTICULTURAL FOCUS
TAUGHT BY WHITE FACULTY

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ABSTRACT

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Colleges and universities have increasingly incorporated multicultural courses into general
education requirements for undergraduate students. Simultaneously, higher education has
become more racially diverse in recent years, with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
(BIPOC) comprising nearly half of student body populations (Espinosa et al., 2019). Despite
these trends, multicultural courses can recapitulate oppressive societal patterns and neglect the
needs of BIPOC students (Pieterse et al., 2016; Seward & Guiffrida, 2012). In addition,
researchers have documented how issues such as colorblind attitudes (Bell, 2002), ineptitude for
managing difficult racial dialogues (Wing Sue et al., 2009), and problematic pedagogies
(Applebaum, 2016) among white faculty members enact harm against BIPOC students. While
prior research has begun to elucidate some of the issues implicated in graduate education
multicultural courses, the experiences of BIPOC undergraduate students in multicultural
psychology courses taught by white faculty members has been understudied. To fill this void, I
sought to understand this topic through a critical race theory (CRT) lens supplemented with
additional critical theories (intersectionality, critical white studies, and critical pedagogy) by
qualitatively examining BIPOC undergraduate students' experiences in psychology courses
containing multicultural content that were taught by white faculty members. Semi-structured
interviews with nine participants were analyzed using narrative inquiry methodology to center
the experiential knowledge of BIPOC undergraduate students. Analyses from these interviews

yielded six core narratives and 20 subthemes shared across participants. The core narratives included: experiences with the climates of their classes; enactments of harm and oppression; oppressive pedagogy; the impact of harm and oppression; positive learning experiences; and future directions for improving multicultural teaching. Implications for theory, teaching, and future research are discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Scholars and activists of critical race theory (CRT) are committed to analyzing and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). As such, the breadth of this scholar-activist framework transcends epistemological and disciplinary boundaries to critically analyze and address the pervasive ways racism manifests across systems and institutions (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). In particular, CRT has been used to deepen scholars' and educators' understandings of educational inequities and injustices that affect Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998; McCoy & Rodricks, 2015).

Despite the richness that CRT offers as a framework for social justice scholarship and activism and for transforming education, CRT has garnered criticism since its inception (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). However, more recent attacks on CRT are related to opposition from former President Donald J. Trump who, in 2020, initiated a directive for all federal agencies to cease the use of anti-bias training grounded in CRT by misrepresenting and weaponizing the framework itself as "racist" (Lang, 2020). Subsequently, CRT engendered a substantial following of opponents across the nation who have proclaimed similar criticisms, contributed to misunderstandings, promoted confusion, and endeavored to block CRT within schools (Gross, 2021).

At the time of this writing, there are over 165 local and national groups who are attempting to block race-based curricula through restrictive legislation that bans the teaching of CRT (Gross, 2021). An especially prominent example of opposition to CRT can be found in

Southlake, Texas, an affluent, predominantly white (see below regarding my use of lowercase lettering for the term) suburb of Dallas known for its award-winning public schools—and for the viral media attention that the city has gained from multiple incidents of hostile racism (Hixenbaugh & Hylton, 2021). To address and rectify racism and other forms of identity-based discrimination and prejudice, Southlake's Independent School District (ISD), Carroll ISD, developed a Cultural Competency Action Plan (CCAP) to specify the district's goals and strategies for fostering district-wide cultural competence (Carroll ISD, 2020). Action steps specified within the CCAP included the implementation of diversity and inclusion initiatives and multicultural curricula across grade levels, the establishment of an official grievance process for reported incidents of discrimination, and the revision of the student code of conduct to strengthen consequences for hate speech or actions against individuals with a minoritized identity, in addition to other goals and strategies for increasing cultural competence and responsiveness. Although the CCAP included no mention of CRT, the plan garnered a mass following of stringent opponents that accumulated into the development of Southlake Families Political Action Committee (PAC), a conservative PAC that denounces the CCAP as being a Marxist initiative to indoctrinate students to CRT and provides endorsement for conservative school board candidates for CISD (Hixenbaugh & Hylton, 2021; Southlake Families, n.d.).

The increasing racial diversity in higher education necessitates one reason for increased acceptance and applications of CRT. However, merely using changes in student demographics as the sole reason for supporting the value and relevance of CRT fails to embody the ethos of justice, a guiding principle of ethics for the profession of psychology (American Psychological Association [APA], 2017). CRT is particularly useful in providing a framework for analyzing systems and practices that perpetuate racial inequity, which can inform progressive actions that

pursue systemic change and aspire towards justice. Faculty of Color only account for one-fifth of faculty positions (American Council on Education [ACE], 2020), but BIPOC students comprise nearly half of student body populations in higher education (Espinosa et al., 2019). Despite increasing racial diversity among student body populations, the ways in which many higher education institutions operate, such as the structures and systems that are implicated in higher education operations, do not account for nor address the needs of BIPOC students (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010; Ladson-Billings 1998).

Increasingly, social science scholars contend that white supremacy is implicated in the foundations of higher education and is the basis for racial inequity within education and leads to the marginalization of BIPOC students (Applebaum, 2016; Patton, 2016). While the APA *Publication Manual*, seventh edition specifies the use of capitalization for racial identities, I have made the intentional choice to utilize lowercase lettering when using the word white in this manuscript when referring to race. My rationale for this choice is based on my commitment to disavow any endorsement of white supremacy, no matter how subtle (Daniszewski, 2020). I use capitalized lettering when referencing marginalized racial identities in this manuscript.

One of the ways in which systemic racism and white supremacy are evidenced within higher education is within curricula and courses that contain a multicultural focus. Despite the recent development of increased diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives across higher education operations, such as mandated multicultural courses as general education requirements for undergraduate students, many institutions continue to fall short in the pursuit of their DEI goals and their proclaimed commitments to multiculturalism (Gassam Asare, 2022). For instance, researchers have identified that some faculty members are more attentive to the educational needs of white students over the needs of BIPOC students in multicultural courses

(Pieterse et al., 2016). In addition, other studies have revealed that faculty members' ineptitude for managing difficult racial dialogues in the classroom contributes to marginalization and harm towards BIPOC students (Wing Sue et al., 2009). Further, other research has led to a deeper understanding of critical issues implicated in white faculty members' teaching of multicultural courses, such as racial colorblindness (Bell, 2002) and performative allyship (Akamine Phillips, 2019). While this research has illuminated the presence of problematized teaching practices and other factors that negatively impact BIPOC students, there appears to be a void in the literature regarding BIPOC undergraduate students' experiences in psychology courses with a multicultural focus taught by white faculty members, which is a gap that was addressed by this study.

The fearmongering and misinformation tactics used to obfuscate the CRT highlight a critical need to demystify this rich framework and illustrate the widespread applications of CRT to advance racial justice, especially within higher education. One such application pertains to BIPOC undergraduate students' experiences in psychology courses with a multicultural focus that are taught by white faculty members. While prior research has examined BIPOC students' educational experiences through a CRT lens (Solórzano et al., 2000) and BIPOC graduate students' experiences in multicultural courses (Pieterse et al., 2016; Pulliam et al, 2019; Seward & Guiffrida, 2012), a gap in the literature regarding the experiences of BIPOC undergraduate students in psychology courses that contain a multicultural focus, especially courses taught by white faculty members, existed prior to this study. In addition, understanding BIPOC students' experiences are enriched through research endeavors that seek to explicitly amplify the voices and experiential knowledge of BIPOC students in this understudied context and through the lens

of critical theories that may shed greater light on the complexities of this topic, both of which were central to this study.

Intersectionality represents one such theory that can facilitate a deeper and more nuanced understanding of BIPOC students' experiences in psychology courses with a multicultural focus. First coined by Crenshaw (1989) and Collins (1990/2000), intersectionality is a critical framework that recognizes the unique and nuanced intersections of privilege and oppression based on one's intersecting social locations and cultural identities that trace back larger systems of oppression. Thus, intersectional research within higher education has illuminated manifestations of converged racism and classism targeted towards BIPOC first generation college students (Ellis et al., 2019) and how Black women attending predominantly white institutions (PWIs) experience objectification, pathologizing messages, and feelings of invisibility from gendered racism (Lewis et al., 2016). In my study, I employed an intersectional lens to facilitate deeper contextualization and analysis of BIPOC students' experiences in psychology courses with a multicultural focus taught by white faculty members by considering salient intersections of identities for both BIPOC students and white faculty. This multifaceted analysis of my research topic through an intersectional lens yields a deeper understanding of identity-based complexities that stem from macro-level systems of oppression and privilege. Contextualizing these complexities within the systems and institutions that perpetuate and maintain oppression in turn illuminate targets for social justice praxis (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017).

Critical white studies (CWS) can also reveal how lived experiences of marginalization and inequity stem from expansive forms of oppression, namely white supremacy (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). One of the primary goals of CWS is to unpack the pervasive ways in which

whiteness is normalized and centralized across systems and institutions and how this maintains racial power imbalances and white privilege (Applebaum, 2016; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Accordingly, CWS is a useful framework for interrogating white supremacy in education, such as manifestations of racial colorblindness (Bell, 2002), problematic pedagogies for teaching about white privilege (Applebaum, 2016), and white faculty members' tendencies to project their discomfort and other emotions stemming from their internalized white racial socialization onto students and the material they teach (Smith et al., 2017). As such, a CWS lens in my study afforded opportunities to critically examine how problematic implications of whiteness are experienced by BIPOC students in psychology courses with a multicultural focus taught by white faculty members.

The final supplemental theory I employed to elucidate complexities surrounding my research topic was Freire's (1992) theory of critical pedagogy, which contends that traditional approaches to teaching reinforce oppressive power imbalances and consequentially function to socialize students to passively accept oppressive systems. While many instructors of multicultural courses may have an overarching goal of effectively educating their students about systems of oppression, common teaching practices and pedagogical choices (e.g., Applebaum, 2016) may be directly antithetical to this goal. Therefore, the incorporation of critical pedagogy perspectives in my study yielded deeper analysis regarding how BIPOC students are impacted by white faculty members' pedagogical choices in psychology courses with a multicultural focus, such as the curriculum, teaching strategies, and relationships with students.

Purpose

The primary objective of my study was to explore the experiences of BIPOC undergraduate students in psychology courses with a multicultural focus taught by white faculty

members. Understanding the lived experiences of BIPOC students in the classroom is a critical step in elucidating the multifaceted ways in which racism and white supremacy manifest in the teaching of psychology. By echoing and amplifying the experiential realties of BIPOC students, the findings of this study may be useful to psychology faculty, especially white faculty, to actively address and rectify racist practices that produce educational injustice and inflict harm upon the wellbeing of BIPOC students. In line with this study's objective and to address a gap in the scholarship, I sought to amplify the experiential knowledge of BIPOC students and critically examine manifestations of oppression, namely racism and white supremacy, in this context. As such, my study was primarily grounded in CRT with supplemental critical theories (intersectionality, CWS, and critical pedagogy) incorporated. Accordingly, these theories inform my research questions and the qualitative methodology for my study.

Research Questions

The following questions informed the foci and methodology of my study:

1. What are the experiences of BIPOC undergraduate students enrolled in psychology courses with a multicultural focus taught by white faculty members?

2. To what degree do undergraduate BIPOC students experience racial and other microaggressions in psychology courses with a multicultural focus taught by white faculty members?

3. To what extent do BIPOC students experience racism and other forms of oppression reflected in the curricula, pedagogical strategies, and in interactions with white faculty members and students in undergraduate psychology courses with a multicultural focus?

4. To what degree is whiteness centralized, either implicitly or explicitly, in BIPOC students' experiences in undergraduate psychology courses with a multicultural focus?

Terminology

To enhance clarity and elucidate my use of various terminology, I provide definitions for key terms that are relevant to my study:

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC): an inclusive term for describing cultural groups who are unified via experiences of racial marginalization. While this term does not have universal agreement or endorsement and has been critiqued for erasing the diversity that exists across racial groups, this term encompasses populations that are compared together against whiteness (Garcia, 2020).

Nonwhite: a term used for illustrating social constructions of whiteness and its boundaries. This term is used to refer to how socially-constructed racial groups are differentiated based on embodied characteristics of whiteness that afford racial privilege to white individuals on the basis of oppression and marginalization designated to BIPOC groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Racism: "a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequities" (Kendi, 2019, pp. 17-18). As such, Kendi (2019) noted that racism is inherently institutional, systemic, and structural.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical Race Theory

CRT is a framework that emerged from the field of critical legal studies for addressing societal racial inequality and how racism perpetuates inequities between dominant and marginalized racial groups (Delgado, 1995). Additionally, CRT critically analyzes how white supremacy is inextricably linked to the oppression of BIPOC groups and how widely-accepted societal norms become taken for granted to reinforce privilege and patterns of exclusion across racial groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Parker & Villalpando, 2007). Consequently, racism becomes normalized due to its prevalence across institutions and in people's daily lives (Delgado, 2000). Since its emergence in the 1970s, CRT has been applied to a number of fields and sectors of society to analyze how racist structures, systems, and policies create racial disparities that marginalize BIPOC individuals and groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In education, CRT has been used to assess how racial inequities manifest in academic contexts and how curricula, assessment practices, and policies and structures in educational settings reinforce white supremacy (Hiraldo, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Major Tenets of Critical Race Theory

As part of the aim to critically interrogate systems and institutions that promote social inequality, CRT scholars and activists employ several major tenets to inform their research and praxis: counter storytelling, the permanence of racism, whiteness as property, interest conversion, and the critique of liberalism (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Perhaps most central to CRT, counter storytelling is a way of building knowledge that creates space for BIPOC individuals to name their realities and "analyze the

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myths, presuppositions, and received wisdoms that make up the common culture about race" and that silence and invalidate the experiential knowledge of BIPOC (Bhattacharya, 2017; Delgado, 1995, p. xiv). Thus, counter storytelling works to center and legitimize the lived experiences of BIPOC groups, thereby challenging privileged discourses and dominant narratives that center whiteness (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010). Further, Delgado and Stefancic (2017) noted that embodying a BIPOC identity "brings with it a presumed competence to speak about race and racism" (p. 11). Additionally, storytelling builds knowledge by allowing BIPOC individuals to name their realities and reflect on their strengths, needs, and ways of making meaning about their racialized lived experiences (Bhattacharya, 2017; Delgado, 2000). In educational contexts, counter storytelling enables BIPOC students to give voice to their experiences of marginalization, which can assist with analyzing the climate of campuses and educational spaces (Hiraldo, 2010). Ultimately, this experiential knowledge can be used to reform educational practices to become meaningfully just, inclusive, and supportive of BIPOC students (Hiraldo, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

CRT acknowledges that racism is inherent to the foundation and structure of the United States and therefore controls political, social, and economic realities by privileging white people and whiteness over BIPOC individuals (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010). Thus, racism promotes the interests of affluent and working-class white people by affording both material and psychological privileges (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In the context of education, the permanence of racism highlights the presence of systemic and institutional racism in educational settings (Hiraldo, 2010). Therefore, efforts to merely diversify educational spaces without reforming institutional structures, policies, and curricula that perpetuate racism are ineffective for achieving racial equity (Hiraldo, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998). As such, Hiraldo contended

the importance of considering "how well-intended institutional processes and procedures can potentially promote racism when working toward improving an institution's plan for diversity and inclusion" (p. 55).

Whiteness as property is based on the assumption of whiteness as a *property interest* due to the ways racism is embedded throughout society (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010). Operating across multiple levels, this notion includes "the right to possession, the right to use and enjoyment, the right to disposition, and the right of exclusion" (Hiraldo, 2010, p. 55). The functions of property have been historically established to benefit white people, as property rights were only afforded to white individuals during enslavement (Harris, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016). In higher education, this tenet of CRT manifests through policies and practices that almost exclusively restrict access to high-quality curricula to white students and that regard professors, who are disproportionately white, as owners of academic curricula (Hiraldo, 2010). Further, Patton et al. (2007) contended that professors' ownership of their curricula affords them privilege of designing their courses around their own philosophies and understandings of knowledge, which can disenfranchise and discount BIPOC students. As such, property, including intellectual and curricular property, is an essential aspect of power (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016).

As the fourth tenet of CRT, interest convergence acknowledges that white people have primarily benefited from civil rights legislation in that gains in civil rights serve the interests of white communities (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Additionally, Decuir and Dixon (2004) argued that basic gains in civil rights have only been offered to the extent that they do not disrupt the status quo or create a "major disruption to a 'normal' way of life for the majority of whites" (p. 28). When applied to educational contexts, interest convergences are

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apparent when diversity initiatives at PWIs primarily increase the prestige and rankings of the institution while BIPOC students are marginalized by an overall cultural ineptness due to the continued existence of racist structures and policies (Hiraldo, 2010).

The final tenet of CRT is a critique of liberal ideology, which is based on equal opportunity initiatives and notions of colorblindness, the belief that race does not affect a person's lived experiences because all individuals are equal regardless of their race, as being problematic and insufficient for achieving racial equity and justice (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010). In particular, colorblind ideology "allows people to ignore racist policies" (Hiraldo, 2010, p. 56). Additionally, equal opportunity initiatives are based on an assumption of sameness, in that all citizens have the equivalent opportunities and experiences (Decuir & Dixon, 2004). This notion invalidates the reality that race-based experiences are not equal across racial groups. As an alternative, CRT scholars contend that *equity* is a better target in the pursuit of racial justice, as equity acknowledges that the playing field is uneven and works to change institutions to address racial inequality more effectively (Decuir & Dixon, 2004).

Critical Race Theory in Education

Building on previous CRT scholarship on K-12 education, Patton (2016) developed three propositions to address how higher education has promulgated racism, white supremacy, and educational inequity in ways that have been taken for granted. The first proposition acknowledges that higher education within the United States is rooted in racism and white supremacy. Citing Wilder (2013), Patton (2016) noted that higher education institutions facilitated wealth accumulated by white people and their institutions because of the chattel slave trade. Thus, higher education institutions used the labor of enslaved persons to establish and maintain their campuses that served the intellectual and cultural curiosities of plantation elites.

These institutions, many of which are Ivy League universities, have hardly exerted any meaningful efforts to rectify their historical wrongdoings, which supports the interest convergence principle of CRT in that any effort to develop meaningful action plans to address the egregious histories of these institutions would only be motivated by the self-interests of these universities. Further, the racist histories of many Ivy League institutions converge with modern day racism and white supremacy in that many of the decisions by U.S. Supreme Court justices, who are often graduates these universities, "are cloaked in racist ideologies that disenfranchise racially marginalized groups" (Patton, 2016, p. 319).

Patton's (2016) second proposition contended that higher education is inextricably connected to the intersections of race, oppression, and notions of property. Implications of the legal constructions of race that afforded white people property rights and citizenship status are still felt within higher education, especially within the overrepresentation of whiteness in student body populations and more symbolically though no less powerfully in curricula, campus policies, and the structure of campus spaces. Additionally, the Eurocentric perspectives that saturate higher education work to ensure that whiteness remains embedded across subject materials. According to Patton (2016), this is particularly apparent in many diversity-related courses in that these courses often provide surface-level coverage of diversity and fail to facilitate deeper learning and consciousness necessary for dismantling oppression. Further, the offering of diversity-related courses in higher education, especially PWIs, reinforces the notion that curricula are property that belongs to white people and accordingly serves white interests and dismisses the experiences of BIPOC.

Lastly, Patton's (2016) third proposition asserted that formal productions of knowledge based in racism and white supremacy are promulgated through higher education institutions. As

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such, knowledge production within the academy often serves to colonize the mind and fuel racist ideologies across academic disciplines. These ideologies then become institutionalized and undergird societal structures, including institutions, organizations, and universities.

Supplemental Theories

Intersectionality

Intersectionality has been alternatively described as a field of study, analytic strategy, and critical praxis for social justice (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). While Kimberlé Crenshaw was the first to coin the term *intersectionality* in 1989, this concept had existed long before it was formally named. Black feminists and social justice activists had been actualizing the central assumptions of intersectionality years before the concept was considered within the academy, as evidenced in Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" speech in 1851 in which Truth described how the lived experiences of Black women explicated the unique convergence of both racism and sexism (McKissack & McKissack, 1992; Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). Nonetheless, both Crenshaw (1989) and Patricia Hill Collins (1990/2000) were among the first to introduce the concept of intersectionality to describe how treating sexism and racism as separate matters of discrimination obscured these issues and to highlight how multiple forms of oppression and privilege intersect across structural levels to produce a complex matrix of domination and oppression.

One of the most central aspects of intersectionality is a call to move beyond single identity politics and to pursue coalition politics to dismantle structures of oppression and privilege (Collins, 1990/2000; Crenshaw, 1989). Thus, intersectionality is not merely the intersection of identities, but rather calls for critical analysis and action to challenge, and ultimately transform, systems that are the root of inequity. The pervasiveness of these systems

extends to the process of knowledge production (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). Intersectionality works to counter the pervasiveness of exclusionary approaches to the production of knowledge and recognizes the validity and merit of lived experiences as an alternative to false notions of researcher objectivity that are grounded in narrow, positivist assumptions (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). In this way, intersectionality closely aligns with the counter storytelling emphasis in CRT and provides a portal into rich analysis that contains liberatory potential (Collins, 1986; Moradi & Grzanka, 2017).

Critical White Studies

As the vast applications of CRT have been expanded over time, some areas of specialized study related to CRT have emerged. One of these areas is CWS, whereby scholars investigate the construction of whiteness through a critical lens to identify how structures produce and maintain white supremacy and privilege (Applebaum, 2016; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In particular, the meanings and implications of embodying whiteness, the ways in which whiteness has evolved over time, notions of *passing*, the phenomenon of white supremacy, and the array of privileges that are afforded to white people are points of inquiry central to CWS (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Delgado and Stefancic (2017) noted how evidence for the social construction of whiteness can be identified by considering its malleability. Historically, Italian, Jewish, and Irish people were considered nonwhite and experienced their own forms of oppression and marginalization on the basis of being proscribed to nonwhite racial categories (Applebaum, 2016; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). However, notions of whiteness have expanded over time to include each of these ethnic groups, while still upholding rigid exclusionary boundaries that maintain the subordination of those who are socially and racially characterized as being

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nonwhite. Additionally, whiteness is recognized as normative in CWS in that other racial groups are differentiated from whiteness and its associated characteristics. This results in whiteness typically going unnoticed for those who benefit from white privilege, while those who are marginalized or otherwise harmed by whiteness are keenly aware of its ubiquity (Applebaum, 2016). The ways in which the construction of whiteness operates as a means of dominance and control can also be gleaned from the one-drop rule a notion that exemplifies how a single drop of BIPOC blood in one's lineage becomes a defining aspect of one's racial identity (Davis, 1991). Accordingly, the complexity of racial identity becomes reduced to narrow categories that are ultimately controlled by whiteness (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

While CWS scholars endeavor to increase the visibility of whiteness within societal structures and institutions, this ultimately runs the risk of recentering whiteness (Applebaum, 2016). As such, Applebaum, (2016) argued that scholars of CWS must engage in critical self-reflection and be vigilant about the ways in which their projects and activities "can become complicit with what they attempt to disrupt" (p. 3). Nonetheless, CWS provides a way to examine the complex and multifaceted aspects of whiteness, especially white supremacy, and the aforementioned vigilance and self-reflection are parts of what has yielded deeper and more nuanced analyses of these issues (Applebaum, 2016). For instance, Applebaum (2016) encouraged consideration of the privileged ways in which individuals are implicated in the maintenance of white supremacy, even unknowingly, and how benefiting from systems that uphold white privilege is connected to being complicit in the perpetuation of white supremacy. Additionally, these considerations are particularly critical for white educators who are committed to multiculturalism and diversity, as a failure to interrogate one's investments in whiteness

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creates an inability to understand how good intentions can nonetheless be detrimental to BIPOC students (Applebaum, 2016).

Critical White Studies in Education

In describing how CWS can be applied to education, Applebaum (2016) discussed white privilege pedagogy, which can be described as "approaches to antiracist education that aim to find ways to encourage white students to acknowledge their white privilege" (p. 6). While facilitating white students' critical consciousness of their privilege and the implications of this is an important aspect of multicultural education for white students, there are a number of shortcomings associated with white privilege pedagogy (Applebaum, 2016). In particular, McIntosh's (1988) conceptualization of white privilege, which is based on personal benefits that individuals derive from their whiteness, is grounded in individualism that obscures relational dynamics of privilege. For instance, multiple aspects of white privilege are based on assumptions of white morality, which rests on the co-construction of BIPOC individuals as being morally inferior (Applebaum, 2016; Kaufman, 2001). Additionally, an individualistic conceptualization of white privilege implies that simplistic solutions exist for dismantling white privilege, such as merely denouncing one's privilege or offering a confessional regarding how one has benefited from privilege, which fail to recognize the larger, complex ways in which privilege is embedded and maintained by systems and institutions (Applebaum, 2016). Consequentially, a failure to address the systems of oppression that provide a foundation for white privilege and how one has been complicit in the reproduction of racial injustice maintains white innocence and ultimately fails to challenge white supremacy (Applebaum, 2016).

Critical Pedagogy

Paulo Freire's (1992) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is one of the most foundational texts of critical pedagogy. Challenging the basic assumptions of traditional education methods in which educators are regarded as authority figures who impart their knowledge onto passive students, Freire (1992) argued that this approach to teaching, known as the banking method, replicated oppressive, hierarchical systems present throughout society that trained students to accept imbalanced power dynamics. This banking method is based on the assumption that knowledge flows in one direction and creates dynamics that objectify and dehumanize students. As an alternative, Freire (1992) proposed the problem-posing model of teaching, which contends that all individuals possess knowledge and that optimal learning occurs collectively. Rather than being omniscient depositors of knowledge, educators are considered teacher-students who can collectively learn alongside their students. This model disrupts the oppressive dynamics found within the banking model and works to empower learners to help students recognize themselves as humans rather than objects.

Additionally, Freire (1992) asserted that dialogic teaching methods work to validate students' knowledge and create an egalitarian environment. Further, dialogues grounded in love and humility operate to increase understanding between different people. Moreover, the problem-posing model helps to facilitate critical consciousness, such as awareness of the relationship between history and the present context, and the connection between theory and praxis. Therefore, dialogic, collective learning works towards liberation by emphasizing the importance of thought, self-reflection, activism/organization, unity, and compassion, which can ultimately extend into other aspects of society. Conversely, anti-dialogical teaching methods consist of conquest, manipulation, divide and rule, and cultural invasion, each of which

constitutes hallmark features of oppression and can be considered evidence for implicit ways that oppression, such as institutionalized racism, exists as a pervasive systemic issue (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). As such, Freire's theory critical pedagogy offers a rich, supplemental convergence with CRT for examining the ways in which racist and other oppressive curricula and pedagogy are implicated in higher education.

Diversity in Higher Education

Higher education has become increasingly racially diverse in recent years. Over the past 20 years, undergraduate Students of Color have increased from 30 to 45% of student body populations (Espinosa et al., 2019). Among graduate students, the percentage of Students of Color grew from 20.8 to 32% between 1996 and 2016 (ACE, 2020). Despite these increases in racial and ethnic diversity among higher education students, faculty, staff, and administrators remain significantly less diverse. In 2017, for example, Faculty of Color comprised approximately one-fifth of all full-time and part-time faculty positions (ACE, 2020).

According to Pew Research data, the student-faculty racial imbalance in 2017 also extends to specific racial groups with only 6% of faculty identifying as Black and 5% of faculty identifying as Hispanic relative to 14% and 20% of undergraduate students identifying as Black and Hispanic, respectively (Davis & Fry, 2019). Further, the proportion of Black faculty in non-tenure track positions is more than 50% greater than the proportion of white faculty in non-tenure-track positions (American Association of University Professors, n.d.). Given that nearly 25% of adjunct faculty rely on public assistance and roughly one-third earn less than $25,000 annually (Flaherty, 2020), the disproportion of Faculty of Color in adjunct, part-time, and contingent faculty positions reflects how higher education as an institution perpetuates issues of racial inequity and injustice. Additionally, 41.3% of maintenance and service workers are People

of Color, while only 26.4% of senior administrators and 15.2% of academic department heads were People of Color from 2018-2019 (ACE, 2020). While increases in racial and ethnic diversity among student body populations may appear to reflect strides towards increasing racial equality, BIPOC students disproportionately endure educational hardships, such as higher rates of student debt and borrowing, as well as higher dropout rates among undergraduate populations, relative to white students (ACE, 2020). Taken together, these disparities reflect how educational inequity continues to be a pervasive issue rooted in institutional and structural racism.

BIPOC Students' Educational Experiences

As student body populations within higher education have become more racially diverse in recent years, research examining BIPOC students' educational experiences has become increasingly salient. In addition, the responses from higher education institutions to increased student diversity must be contextualized and critically evaluated to identify strategies for better-supporting BIPOC students and ultimately transforming higher education to be fully just and equitable. Levine et al. (2019) found that a diversity emphasis in the mission statements of the Chicago Public School system was associated with better cardiometabolic health among eighth grade Students of Color. Accordingly, Levine et al. (2019) purported that when schools explicitly acknowledge and value diversity, Students of Color experience better biomarkers of physical health as a result of lower stress levels and a greater sense of belonging. No differences in health were overserved as a function of the school context among white students, which the authors theorized as potentially being due to a tendency for white students to view diversity as less relevant. While this study examined the relationship between a diversity emphasis and health in primary schools, these findings are applicable to consider in higher education.

Experiences in Multicultural Courses

Although there is a growing body of literature on BIPOC students' experiences in multicultural courses, scholars' consideration of BIPOC students' educational needs and the impact of curricula, pedagogical strategies, and the cultural identities and behaviors of instructors is relatively recent (Curtis-Boles & Bourg, 2010; Pulliam et al., 2019; Sue et al., 2009). Most of these recent studies examining BIPOC students' experiences in multicultural courses are limited to graduate programs, especially in counseling and counseling psychology programs (Curtis-Boles & Bourg, 2010; Pulliam et al. 2019), while the literature on BIPOC students' experiences in undergraduate psychology courses with a multicultural focus appears to be relatively sparse, an omission I address in this study. Nonetheless, studies examining the experiences of BIPOC graduate students in multicultural courses may offer some relevance for considering the experiences of BIPOC undergraduate students.

For instance, Pulliam et al. (2019) examined the experiences of BIPOC students in multicultural counseling courses at a PWI and found that participants evaluated the credibility of their instructors' teaching differently according to their instructors' racial identities. More specifically, participants noted their distrust around their white instructor teaching a multicultural course and questioned their instructor's motivation and commitment to multicultural teaching. Conversely, participants experienced feelings of excitement and comfort towards their Instructor of Color teaching a multicultural course due to the expectation of a greater ability to relate and be understood. Further, participants considered the identity of their instructor when evaluating their expertise for teaching multicultural topics. Participants noted their white instructor's ability to more competently discuss white supremacy and address the racism of white students in the class, while they perceived their Instructor of Color to have greater expertise teaching

multicultural topics based on the assumption that the instructor embodied high levels of multiculturalism as a Person of Color. Despite initially feeling distrustful of the white instructor, participants described their process of coming to trust the instructor upon realizing the instructor's commitment to multicultural issues and their care for students in the classroom. Additionally, participants discussed their white instructor's authenticity and ability to address the racism of white students as factors that enabled them to trust their instructor. Lastly, Pulliam et al. (2019) identified how the white instructor's passion, antiracism advocacy, and efforts to build relationships with students were key factors that supported BIPOC students' learning in graduate multicultural courses.

Curtis-Boles and Bourg (2010) examined the personal narratives of BIPOC students enrolled in a diversity course in a clinical psychology doctoral program. Participants reported gaining increased knowledge about cultural groups, self-awareness of personal identities and biases, and understanding of privilege and oppression as a result of taking the course. Additionally, participants experienced painful memories of racism and strong emotions evoked by the course material. When given opportunities to process these emotions, however, participants reported gaining insights about themselves and developing increased acceptance of others. Through the process of self-reflection and gaining new insights, participants appeared to develop a greater sense of personal agency and empowerment. Accordingly, Curtis-Boles and Bourg (2010) discussed how these findings can inform training considerations for BIPOC students enrolled in multicultural courses, such as the importance of creating a safe learning environment and fostering opportunities for students to gain personal insights about their racial identity development process (e.g., Sue & Sue, 1990).

In their study examining the experiences of counseling and counseling psychology graduate students enrolled in multicultural courses, Pieterse et al. (2016) found that diversity in the classroom contributed to a positive sense of relational connectedness and safety for BIPOC students. Additionally, BIPOC students were attuned to the extent to which multicultural courses were geared towards the educational needs of white students while the needs of BIPOC students were unattended. Affectively, BIPOC students reported experiences of feeling anger in response to experiencing racism in the classroom and feeling sadness about societal racism. Thus, Pieterse et al. (2016) concluded that it is important for instructors to carefully attend to how students' racial identities have implications for classroom dynamics and how dynamics of larger societal oppression can be recapitulated within multicultural courses.

To understand the experiences of BIPOC graduate students enrolled in multicultural counseling courses and to identify pedagogical practices that support students' multicultural training needs, Seward and Guiffrida (2012) utilized grounded theory methodology to analyze the training experiences of their participants. They found a variety of factors that shaped participants' engagement in their courses and in-class participation. Notably, participants described their sense of responsibility and pressure to protect and advocate for BIPOC groups by monitoring their contributions in class to ensure that they represented their race positively. Additionally, participants discussed their fear of reifying negative racial stereotypes by expressing their authentic emotions in class. Further, some participants reported that their participation was motivated to address the limitations of course readings and multicultural class discussions. Factors that contributed to participants' silence in class included fears of appearing different from their white classmates and times when they felt unsupported by their peers and professors. Moreover, some students reported that being silent served as a way to protect BIPOC

groups because not all culturally-specific information is appropriate nor safe to be shared in an

open forum. This coincides with the perspectives of Abbott et al. (2019) in that some cultural

knowledge is considered sacred and not meant to be known by cultural outsiders. Given that

opportunities to engage in cultural dialogues is an important part of multicultural learning, it is

crucial for faculty to address factors that hinder BIPOC students' ability and comfort to engage

in these opportunities and to ensure that their pedagogies in multicultural courses are inclusive of

BIPOC students.

Microaggressions

Because classrooms represent a microcosm of larger societal issues (Mckeen, 2017), it is

important for faculty to attend to how manifestations of racism can be recapitulated within

educational contexts. Due to the permanence of racism that saturates educational systems

(Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010), racial microaggressions are one of the ways racist

ideologies manifest in learning environments and harm BIPOC students (Ogunyemi et al., 2020).

Microaggressions are commonplace negative messages about marginalized groups that can be

conveyed through verbal, nonverbal, or environmental means (Sue et al., 2007). Additionally,

microaggressions can be taxonomized into three broad classifications: microinsults,

microassaults, and microinvalidations (Sue et al., 2007). Microinsults are messages that convey a

perpetrator's negative bias against individuals from historically marginalized groups in a manner

that is unintentional or less conscious in nature (Sue et al., 2007). Microassaults are conscious

and deliberate behaviors or messages that explicitly degrade individuals from marginalized

groups (Sue et al., 2007). These instances can be differentiated from overt acts of hostility or bias

because the perpetrator generally does not recognize their actions to be offensive or

underestimates their impact (Nadal et al., 2021). Lastly, microinsults are generally unconscious

communications that invalidate or minimize the lived experiences of oppression and marginalization based on an individual's membership in a minority group (Sue et al., 2007). While microaggressions are most often conceptualized as messages or actions that occur in an interpersonal nature, the three classifications of microaggressions can also be identified across macrolevel contexts and institutions through policies, legislation, and systems; accordingly, microaggressions that occur at the macrolevel can be classified as ecological microaggressions (Nadal et al., 2021; Sue et al., 2007; Torino et al., 2019).

Racial Microaggressions in Educational Settings

In their systematic review of the literature on microaggressions in learning environments, Ogunyemi et al. (2020) noted the high prevalence of racial microaggressions in higher education and how microaggressions are associated with significant psychological distress among students. Additional deleterious effects of racial microaggressions include feelings of invisibility (Franklin et al., 2006); low self-esteem (Nadal et al., 2014); diminished cognitive performance (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007); self-doubt, frustration, and isolation; and the creation of a hostile and invalidating campus climate (Solórzano et al., 2000). Sue et al. (2009) identified microaggressive themes experienced by Students of Color in classroom contexts, which included racial ascriptions of intelligence, assumptions of criminality, denial of racism, and assumptions of being a perpetual foreigner. Additionally, Sue et al. (2009) noted how racial microaggressions manifested in course content and through the classroom and institutional climate. Thus, there is a critical need to pursue system-level efforts to address institutional microaggressions and their effects on the racial climate on campuses and within individual classrooms (Ogunyemi et al., 2020; Solórzano et al., 2000). Further implications of racial microaggressions in educational settings include the need for cultural sensitivity and bias training for white faculty and educators'

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increased comfort in facilitating difficult dialogues on race in the classroom (Ogunyemi et al., 2020; Sue et al., 2009). Qualitative studies examining racial microaggressions in learning environments constitute empowering counter storytelling opportunities that center the lived experiences of BIPOC students (Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue et al., 2009). As such, the tenets of CRT become actualized and BIPOC students' experiential knowledge can be used to critically examine the multitude of facets of racism in educational systems and offer directions for meaningfully reforming policies, structures, curriculums, and teaching practices that advance racial justice.

Expanding on Sue et al. (2007)'s taxonomy of nine major themes implicated in racial microaggressions, Williams et al. (2020) identified 15 categories of microaggressions experienced by Black college students attending PWIs. Many of these themes were consistent with the themes that Sue et al. (2007) identified, but Williams et al. (2020) identified additional categories of microaggressions, which recognized greater specificity and attention to nuances that had not been noted in previous research. The 15 categories of microaggressions consisted of themes pertaining to: not a true citizen, racial categorization and sameness, assumptions about intelligence/competence/status, false colorblindness/invalidating racial or ethnic identity, criminality or dangerousness, denial of individual racism, myth of meritocracy/race is irrelevant for success, reverse racism hostility, pathologizing minority culture or appearance, second class citizen/ignored and invisible, connecting via stereotypes, exoticization and erotizations, avoidance and distancing, environmental exclusion, and environmental attacks. Consistent with the existing microaggressions scholarship, Williams et al. (2020) reported that the experience of racial microaggressions on campus evoked distress, confusion, and caused participants to question their perceptions of these instances of adversity. In addition, Williams et al. (2020)

noted that "subtle forms of racism, such as microaggressions, can be difficult to identify, quantify, and rectify because of their nebulous and unnamed nature" (p. 10). As such, Williams et al. (2020) asserted the need for unified language in studying more covert forms of racism, namely microaggressions, to allow for improved understanding and measurement of microaggressions which may further validate the perceptions and lived experiences of BIPOC students who frequently encounter these issues.

Other research on racial microaggressions in educational contexts can provide insight into other factors that may compound the negative outcomes of experiencing microaggressions. For instance, Robinson-Perez et al. (2020) examined the relationship between racial microaggressions and psychological distress among undergraduate Students of Color attending a PWI. Consistent with previous research, their findings revealed a positive relationship between microaggressions and psychological distress but also showed that this relationship was particularly pronounced for students living off campus. Accordingly, Robinson-Perez et al. (2020) concluded that living off campus may be a factor that compounds psychological distress and a sense of isolation among Students of Color who experience racial microaggressions in a higher education context. Conversely, these findings may suggest that opportunities for connection, especially in the form of counter spaces, which include supportive spaces that provide affirmation and validation of racialized experiences to promote healing and empowerment (e.g., Solórzano et al., 2000), may provide a buffer against distress among Students of Color (Robinson-Perez et al., 2020).

Consistent with previous research on racial microaggressions in educational settings, Palmer and Maramba (2015) identified how racial microaggressions negatively impacted Latinx and Asian American students' sense of belonging at a historically Black college/university

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(HBCU). Palmer and Maramba (2015) found that Latinx students commonly experienced microaggressions in the form of insensitive jokes and comments from peers while Asian American students were more likely to have experienced microaggressions in terms of being viewed through model minority myth. Additionally, both Latinx and Asian American students reported experiencing uncomfortable stares. Notably, Palmer and Maramba (2015) also found that some participants expressed how they felt bothered by the comments they experienced but reported that they did not perceive any ill will when these comments were made by friends. Palmer and Maramba (2015) compared this trend to the observations of Sue et al. (2007) who noted how some participants excused the microaggressive behavior of peers and friends, which ultimately invalidated participants' own racial realities. Utilizing a CRT lens, Palmer and Maramba (2015) noted how this trend may reflect the ways in which dominant cultures "manipulate marginalized cultures to think and act in ways to help maintain the status quo" (p. 718).

While a substantial body of research has examined negative outcomes and implications associated with experiencing racial microaggressions, recently some researchers have begun to examine how preparatory coping strategies can reduce the effects of racial adversity in the form of microaggressions. DeLapp and Williams (2021) found that threat-oriented thinking and negative affect were common responses to the expectation of experiencing racial microaggressions among a sample of African American college students. In addition, DeLapp and Williams (2021) found that participants who appraised the expectation of experiencing microaggressions with optimism were more likely to take a proactive approach to coping by planning on how to address and manage anticipated microaggressions. These findings shed light on specific coping processes that participants used to persevere through a racially

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microaggressive environment. Thus, DeLapp and Williams (2021) suggested that these findings may be useful in therapeutic contexts such that clinicians can work with clients to expand their locus of control for managing racial stressors, such as microaggressions. While the implications of this study are worthwhile to consider for understanding how Black college students navigated racialized educational experiences, an overemphasis on individual coping processes may invalidate and unwittingly excuse the gravity of systemic racism that students experience in higher education.

Racial microaggressions become further compounded when they converge with other kinds of microaggressions. While Ellis et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative study to examine the nuances of microaggressions based on college students' status as first-generation students, they identified that many of the microaggressions experienced by racial and ethnic minority first-generation students contained racist elements. For instance, racial and ethnic minority first-generation students reported experiencing microaggressions rooted in negative assumptions about how they benefited from race-based affirmative action initiatives, which illuminates how race- and social class-based prejudice can converge in higher education. Ellis et al. (2019) argued the importance of taking an intersectional approach to more fully consider how multiple social inequities can intersect to shape students' experiences with microaggressions in educational contexts. Additionally, Ellis et al. (2019) noted the positive effects microaffirmations can have for first-generation Students of Color. Microaffirmations are statements that convey support, affirmation, and inclusion towards those who feel unwelcome or invisible in certain contexts due to their experiences with prejudicial attitudes or discrimination. Benefits from these microaffirmations included feelings of self-worth, acceptance, and being recognized as valuable.

Lewis et al. (2016) likewise used an intersectional lens to examine gendered racial microaggressions experienced by Black women attending a PWI. Using a qualitative approach to analyze focus group data, Lewis et al. (2016) identified three major themes each with two subthemes that represented participants' experiences with gendered racism. Lewis et al. (2016) identified the first theme as projected stereotypes, which included how the angry Black woman and Jezebel stereotypes were projected onto participants as subthemes. Participants described experiences in which they felt exoticized and sexualized and pressured to censor their feelings of anger due to these controlling images. The second theme pertained to experiences of being silenced and marginalized, which included experiences of invisibility and the struggle for respect as subthemes. For instance, participants described experiences of having their intellect and authority questioned, contributions minimized, and their presence ignored and disregarded on campus and in the classroom. The last major theme consisted of gendered and racialized assumptions about style and beauty. The first subtheme included assumptions about participants' communication styles, which were marked by experiences in which participants felt pathologized or inferior based on how their white peers regarded aspects of their verbal and nonverbal communication. The second subtheme pertained to assumptions about participants' aesthetics, such as their body shapes, hairstyles, and facial features. These findings illustrate the nuanced messages implicated in Black women's experiences of gendered racial microaggressions and how these often operate to reduce Black women to objectifying, socially constructed images. Thus, Lewis et al.'s (2016) research further supports taking a taxonomized approach in future microaggression research and illustrates the importance of analyzing experiences of microaggressions from a multidimensional lens that recognizes the intersection of multiple identities.

Studies examining the prevalence of racial microaggressions experienced by graduate students have revealed that graduate programs are not immune to microaggressions. For instance, Wong and Jones (2018) examined microaggressions within the context of a racially and ethnically diverse social work graduate program. They found that students experienced microaggressions perpetrated by other students more often compared to faculty members and that racial microaggressions were more prevalent compared to microaggressions targeted at other diversity variables. Additionally, Wong and Jones (2018) found that students experienced microaggressions within the general environment (such as a lack of gender-affirming restrooms) and within course content (such as excessive coverage of select racial and ethnic groups). Because of the prevalence of microaggressions within a racially diverse educational context, Wong and Jones (2018) concluded that there is a tremendous need for faculty to reconsider their curricula and pedagogical choices to effectively address, and ultimately reduce, classroom microaggressions. As such, these findings call for explicit efforts to challenge microaggressions perpetrated by other students and across multiple levels of graduate education environments that provide conditions that allow microaggressions to persist.

In another study of microaggressions experienced by Women of Color in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) graduate programs, Wilkins-Yel et al. (2019) found that participants experienced racial and gendered microaggressions that rendered them both invisible and hypervisible in their fields of study due to how their identities as Women of Color are not commonly regarded as a prototype for professionals in STEM. Utilizing an intersectional approach to their qualitative analysis, Wilkins-Yel et al. (2019) found several themes implicated in participants' experiences of microaggressions, such as a delegitimization of their skills and expertise; hearing messages of not belonging; being ignored, dismissed, and

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rendered invisible; and gendered and racialized encounters. Notably, Wilkins-Yel et al. (2019) observed how "participants described their gendered and racialized encounters in relation to a single-axis identity versus their intersecting gender-racial identities," which the authors attributed to how microaggressions are often covert degradations that can obscure the exact nature of the microaggression (i.e., whether the microaggression is based on race, gender, or the intersection of these identity variables; p. 580). Additionally, Wilkins-Yel et al. (2019) noted participants' suggestions for ways to address microaggressions in STEM, such as regaining control through a sense of personal agency, seeking support, recognizing one's strengths, and remaining inspired about improving STEM fields. Taken together, these findings illustrate the merit of using an intersectional approach to better-understand the complexities of BIPOC students' experiences within specific areas of higher education and factors that can support the resilience of Women in Color in STEM graduate programs.

Teaching Undergraduate Psychology Courses With a Multicultural Focus

The APA *Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major: Version 2.0* (henceforth referred to as *APA Undergraduate Guidelines 2.0*) outline five major goals and associated learning outcomes for baccalaureate education in psychology to establish clear expectations for student learning, curriculum, and best practices for assessment to ensure high quality education across undergraduate psychology programs (APA, 2013). These guidelines were first published in 2006 and revised in 2013, the latter of which incorporated the *infusion of sociocultural learning*, rather than supplementing the existing guidelines with a diversity add-on goal, across each of the goals and learning outcomes. As such, "a curricular emphasis on multiculturalism" is a foundational aspect of baccalaureate education for psychology students (APA, 2013, p. 12). While the guidelines were revised again in August 2023, the *APA Undergraduate Guidelines 2.0*

are the guidelines that were most relevant to participants' experiences in the present study (APA, 2023). Implications for the guidelines revised in 2023 are discussed in Chapter 5.

Because the understanding of multicultural education varies considerably (Özturgut, 2011), it is important for researchers and educators to provide clear definitions for what multiculturalism entails. While baccalaureate multicultural education in psychology remains loosely defined, the focus on sociocultural learning in the *APA Undergraduate Guidelines 2.0* highlights how evolved understandings of diversity acknowledge "the social power differences that are associated with diverse identities and multiple contexts" (APA, 2013, p. 12). Additionally, these guidelines note that common threads across diversity and multicultural education include identity development, privilege, and oppression (APA, 2013). Critical multicultural education is defined as education that "explicitly addresses relations of inequitable power" (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2010, p. 97). Further, Freire's theory of multicultural education (1985) emphasizes a liberation approach based on critical consciousness that facilitates students' ability to recognize systems of oppression and "develop strategies that empower individuals towards social action" (Schmidt et al., 2020, p. 2). Taken together, I integrated the aforementioned conceptualizations to define psychology courses with a multicultural focus in this study as critical pedagogies that contain an explicit focus on issues of power, privilege, systems of oppression, and social justice.

Teaching courses on multiculturalism often comes with an array of challenges and rewards. Because of the complexity, sensitivity, and personal relevance of multicultural issues that are recognized by both students and faculty, pedagogy scholars have offered recommendations and considerations to help faculty most effectively facilitate their multicultural courses (Abbott et al., 2019; Bell, 2002; Schmidt et al., 2020). For instance, Abbott et al. (2019)

discussed how cultural humility, which involves humbly acknowledging the limitations of one's cultural knowledge (e.g., Hook et al., 2017), and cultural learning are lifelong processes. Integrating these together while embracing a relationally-orientated stance for understanding others can be applied to education in psychology. While cultural humility has mostly been applied to psychotherapy and other helping professions, Abbott et al. (2019) extended the applications of cultural humility to the teaching of psychology by fostering self-reflection in the classroom and awareness of power, privilege, and oppression; framing cultural learning as a lifelong process; and fostering a safe and relational climate where exploration and growth can occur.

Schmidt et al. (2020) found that multicultural psychology courses with a focus on intergroup dialogues, which consist of opportunities for students to openly discuss differences in identities, lived experiences with privilege and oppression, and varying perspectives on current social issues, produced greater outcomes compared to multicultural psychology courses that utilized traditional didactic teaching methods. In particular, courses with a focus on intergroup dialogues yielded increased openness to diversity, recognition of racial privilege and oppression, and empathy for those who experience oppression compared to courses that did not have a focus on intergroup dialogues. Accordingly, Schmidt et al. (2020) determined that their findings aligned with the goals of Freire's (1985) theory of critical multicultural education in that courses with an intergroup dialogue component fostered effective listening and dialoguing to increase empathy and understanding of varying perspectives. These findings reveal that a critical dialogic model for intergroup dialogues, such as the model explored by Schmidt et al. (2020), can be effective for analyzing power imbalances and social action through the process of relationship-building and having open communication in psychology courses with a multicultural focus.

White Faculty Members Teaching Courses on Multiculturalism

While the racial identities of white faculty members in the context of teaching multicultural issues and diversity, equity, and inclusion have increasingly become a subject of interest among scholars of multiculturalism in the past two decades (e.g., Bell, 2002; Smith et al., 2017; Spanierman & Smith, 2017; Wing Sue et al., 2009), whiteness in multicultural teaching largely remains an understudied topic. Nonetheless, some studies and other scholarly works in this area have yielded some insight into topics that warrant greater inquiry. For instance, Bell (2002) identified themes of both colorblindness and implicit racial awareness in interviews with white educators in public schools. These contradictory findings have revealed how white educators maintained colorblind ideology in their classrooms to claim a position of innocence and absolve themselves of a sense of responsibility for addressing institutional racism while also illuminating their implicit awareness of racism and the implications racial hierarchy. Thus, Bell (2002) highlighted the imperativeness for colorblind rhetoric to be transcended to access white educators' implicit knowledge about race and challenge attitudes and feelings that maintain unproblematized stances that negatively impact BIPOC students in their classrooms (e.g., Good et al., 2020). Additionally, Bell (2002) recommended interviewing students themselves about the unspoken rules of race and culture that manifest in educational settings. Notably, this recommendation directly aligns with the emphasis on counter storytelling in CRT to center and elevate the experiential knowledge of BIPOC students (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010).

Smith and colleagues (2017) addressed the experiences and challenges of white professors who teach about racism by identifying three interrelated issues: multicultural imposter syndrome, multicultural perfectionism, and multicultural projections. They described multicultural imposter syndrome as anxiety, self-doubt, and a sense of feeling like an imposter

that white professors can experience when teaching multicultural psychology courses. These feelings can be compounded due to concerns that one's understanding of whiteness and racism are limited and may hinder their ability to effectively teach about racial issues that are palpably and personally relevant to the lived experiences of their students (Smith et al., 2017). Multicultural perfectionism is the phenomenon of white professors' perfectionistic ruminations and their awareness of the fact that the stakes are high when it comes to teaching about racism and social justice (Smith et al., 2017). Additionally, Smith et al. (2017) suggested that white professors' perfectionism may be an indication of their desire to separate themselves from their privilege and the systems that maintain racial privilege and oppression. Lastly, multicultural projections include white professors' reactions to their students and the material they teach. Smith et al. (2017) contended that these reactions may mirror certain aspects of white racial socialization that professors see within themselves and consequentially evokes discomfort. To transcend these issues, Smith et al. (2017) called for white professors to continue learning about their whiteness, embrace a non-defensive learning stance in the classroom, and model their antiracist identity.

Akamine Phillips et al. (2019) similarly identified challenges faced by white faculty who incorporate anti-racist pedagogy into their courses. By using narrative inquiry to analyze interview data from white faculty members who utilize anti-racist pedagogy in their classrooms, Akamine Phillips and colleagues (2019) identified both personal and institutional barriers that hindered participants' teaching. Personal barriers included participants' internalized struggles with their white identity, such as their desire for affirmation from People of Color regarding their efforts to be an ally, feelings of futility when their racial justice work was challenged or criticized, and struggles with connecting with BIPOC students. Institutional barriers largely

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consisted of a lack of institutional commitment to advancing antiracist policies, practices, and pedagogy on campus and a fear of professional repercussions, such as being denied tenure, due to participants' outspokenness on racial injustice. In addition to participants' personal and institutional challenges, Akamine Phillips et al. (2019) noted participants' personal strategies for overcoming these barriers. These strategies included a commitment to co-constructing knowledge with students, remaining cognizant of white privilege, and resisting performative allyship, which occurs when privileged individuals profess solidarity without taking meaningful action to address injustice in order to distance themselves from scrutiny (Morris, 2020).

In a qualitative study examining how white faculty perceive and react to difficult racial dialogues in the classroom, Wing Sue et al. (2009) found that white professors often experienced anxiety, defensiveness, and uncertainty as they facilitated difficult racial discussions in their courses. Factors that precipitated these reactions included a fear of being perceived as incompetent by students and revealing personal biases, a fear of losing control of their class, concerns about receiving negative course evaluations, and a lack of training regarding how to effectively intervene during difficult dialogues. Additionally, Wing Sue et al. (2009) found that white professors' lack of personal experience with racial discrimination was viewed by BIPOC students as a hinderance to their credibility and that some faculty felt concerned about their ability to support white students in their learning of racial issues while also supporting BIPOC students' needs. Further, Wing Sue and colleagues (2009) described effective strategies for facilitating difficult racial dialogues such as acknowledging their own and students' emotions, revisiting difficult dialogues after taking a break, creating a safe environment, and establishing ground rules for discussing racial issues in class. Given the palpable significance of racial discourses in the classroom, Wing Sue et al. (2009) recommended that educators, especially

white faculty members, receive sufficient training for facilitating difficult racial dialogues, as both BIPOC and white students attribute the success of these dialogues to professors' cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills in the classroom (Sue et al., 2009).

Although the limited scholarship on whiteness and teaching multicultural issues offers insight into some of the challenges that hinder teaching and the problems that white faculty perpetuate in educational contexts, BIPOC students' experiences with white faculty who teach psychology courses that contain a multicultural focus, particularly at the undergraduate level, has been largely unexamined. While research on whiteness and the teaching of multicultural issues illuminates the ways white faculty perpetuate racism and white supremacy in classrooms, this research also centers whiteness and allows whiteness itself to dominate the narratives that are constructed about the racial climate and dynamics that are present in white faculty members' classrooms (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010). To rectify this issue, scholars and researchers should work to center the experiences and narratives of BIPOC students who have white instructors, shifting the focus to BIPOC students' lived experiences while also critically assessing the implications of whiteness in multiculturally-focused educational spaces (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

Narrative Inquiry

Consistent with the counter storytelling emphasis in CRT to center the experiential

knowledge of BIPOC individuals, I selected narrative inquiry, also known as narrative analysis,

as the basis for my qualitative methodology for examining the experiences of BIPOC

undergraduate students enrolled in psychology courses with a multicultural focus taught by white

faculty members. Narrative inquiry recognizes the "complex relationships among knowledge,

contexts, and identities" and accordingly offers a nuanced and multifaceted way for exploring

BIPOC students' experiences with multicultural curricula, relationships with classmates and

white faculty, and identity-based realties in a higher education context (Clandinin, 2013, p. 21).

From an ontological perspective, Clandinin (2013) described narrative inquiry as the human

tendency to live through cultural stories. As such, narrative inquiry allows for a deeper

understanding of stories as both told and lived and "situated and understood within larger

cultural, social, and institutional narratives" and aims to derive meaning from experiences

(Clandinin & Caine, 2008, p. 542). In this way, narrative inquiry aligns with the emphasis on

macro-level issues that are present in the theoretical frameworks of intersectionality (Crenshaw,

1989; Collins, 1990/2000), CWS (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), and critical pedagogy (Freire,

1992).

Narrative inquiry has also been described as a relational methodology such that a

multitude of relationships are implicated in the stories that we tell and live by (Clandinin, 2013).

These relationships include one's relationship to time, such as one's relationship to and with the

past (including intergenerational relationships), present, and future. In addition, relationships between the person, environment, events, other people (such as family), culture, institutions, and language are implicated in storied narratives. Further, narrative inquirers must carefully attend to their relationships with research participants and how these relationships become part of the "storied landscapes" that they seek to study (Clandinin, 2013, p. 24). As such, relational ethics are paramount to narrative inquiry, as researchers cannot separate themselves from the relational space and context where participants share their stories.

Relational Ethics in Narrative Inquiry

Because narrative inquiry is a relational methodology, Clandinin (2013) noted that relational ethics must be central to pursuing narrative inquiry projects. Accordingly, researchers are compelled to embody *ethics of care* throughout every aspect of the narrative inquiry process (Clandinin, 2013; Gilligan, 1982). Gilligan (1982) conceptualized an ethic of care as one grounded in interpersonal relationships, compassion, and empathy, which contrasts from traditionally masculine approaches to ethics that emphasize justice and moral obligations. In narrative inquiry, Clandinin (2013) described relational ethics as a call to understand and fulfill one's "social responsibilities regarding how we live in relation with others and our worlds" (p. 30). As such, I embrace the responsibility I have to the participants who chose to participate in this study and the narratives they generously shared. Thus, I aimed to center the stories of BIPOC students enrolled in psychology courses with a multicultural focus taught by white faculty and to amplify these narratives in the pursuit of social justice transformation in higher education.

Participants

Following participant selection (see Procedures), 15 interviews were conducted, and nine were included in my analyses. All participants endorsed a BIPOC racial identity, were over the age of 18, and had taken at least one undergraduate course psychology containing multicultural topics that was taught by a white faculty member, which were the eligibility criteria required to participate. Additionally, participants needed to have internet access in order to complete the informed consent document (See Appendix B) and participate in the virtual semi-structured interview regarding their educational experiences. Table 1 contains demographic data for participants. All participants were de-identified through self-selected pseudonyms.

Given the specificity of my research topic, I employed a purposive approach to sampling to reach BIPOC undergraduate students who had taken at least one psychology course with a multicultural focus with white faculty members (Patton, 2002). As such, I distributed recruitment notices (see Appendix A) on social media platforms and relevant psychology and higher education listservs. I determined a target sample size of up to 10 participants based on the principles of data saturation and narrative inquiry's emphasis on achieving maximum depth, rather than breadth, through participants' stories (Patton, 2002). While narrative inquiry does not specify exact sample sizes, Creswell (2007) noted that samples are generally limited to "a small number of individuals" (p. 55). Saturation in qualitative research lacks a singular conceptualization (Saunders et al., 2018), but Crabtree and Miller (1999) described saturation as occurring when continued data collection only confirms the understandings that have been gleaned from previous data collection and accordingly indicates a stopping point for sampling recruitment. While Saunders et al. (2018) noted that saturation is more difficult to discern in narrative research, I determined saturation based on data redundancy, or the repetition of

responses, as this approach has been used in storytelling research which mirrors my narrative inquiry methodology (e.g., Power et al., 2015).

Table 1

Participation Demographics

Participant pseudonym	Racial identity	Gender	Sexual orientation	Age	Salient identities	Major	Number of psychology classes with a white instructor
Jo	African American/ Black	Female	Heterosexual	20	Christian	Nutrition and Food Science	2
Ameila	Black/ African American	Female	Straight	19	Congolese; Proud of dark skin	Nursing	2
Destinee	Arab American/ North African	Female	Labels not used	18-25	Muslim	Psychology	6
Asia	Asian American/ Pakistani American	Female	Bisexual	21	Muslim	Psychology	7
Casey	Black/ African American	Female	Straight	19	Nigerian American	Nursing	2
Alyssa	Black/ African American	Female	Bisexual	26	None	Education	1
X	Black/ African American	Male	Straight	20-25	Born to African parents; Christian	Economics and Statistics	1
Sara	African American/ Black	Female	Straight	19	Christian	Nursing	1
Natalie	Hispanic	Female	Straight	22	Catholic	Nursing	2

Note. Language used in Table 1 reflects language used by participants, with racial identities placed in the order they were disclosed by each participant.

Procedure

After securing Institutional Review Board approval, I distributed recruitment notices via social media platforms and relevant listservs. In addition, I posted my study on SONA, which is an online research participation tracking platform used at Texas Woman's University. SONA participants are de-identified in the studies they complete and receive course credit for completing research studies. Individuals who were interested in learning more about the present study accessed a link in the recruitment notice or on SONA where they were directed to Qualtrics.com, a secure internet database used for research studies. Prospective participants were provided with a thorough description of the study and given the option to proceed to an informed consent webpage. The informed consent page contained a description of the interview protocol, how confidentiality would be protected, time commitments, risks, benefits, and information on how they can optionally participate in member reflections during the data analysis process. Individuals who electronically consented to participate were directed to the next page to complete a brief screening questionnaire to ensure their eligibility and then to a subsequent page where they were either asked to provide an email address to be contacted for scheduling the Zoom interview or provided with a code that could be used for selecting a timeslot for completing the interview via the SONA system.

After contacting participants via email to coordinate interview scheduling, I created a teleconferencing link through Zoom, a popular teleconferencing platform, and emailed this link to participants for the interview. At the start of each Zoom call, I introduced myself and shared about my sociocultural identity markers and my motivation for pursuing this project. I then provided an overview of the semi-structured interview and invited participants to ask any questions or share any concerns or curiosities they had regarding the project itself or their

participation. Additionally, I invited participants to ask any questions or share any concerns that arose for them during the interview portion of the call. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and lasted between 45-75 minutes. All participants elected to keep their cameras off, which allows for greater privacy and can prevent videoconferencing fatigue (Bailenson, 2021). I also elected to keep my camera off during the interviews to be congruent with participants. Upon completion of the interview non-SONA participants received a $15.00 electronic Starbucks gift card as a thanks for their time and participation, while SONA participants received research credits for their classes.

Participants were also given the option to participate in member reflections during data analysis. After completing all initial interviews, I contacted interested non-SONA participants via email to schedule a subsequent Zoom meeting. SONA participants were given the option to sign up for another timeslot in the SONA system to complete the member reflection meeting. Member reflection meetings lasted between 15-30 minutes and were recorded and transcribed. Participants who partook in these member reflections received an additional $10.00 Starbucks electronic gift card or SONA credits in appreciation for their time and input.

While a total of 35 non-SONA participants completed some portion of the initial screening measure, I contacted six of these participants to arrange interviews. The remaining 29 participants were excluded due to one or more of the following: having incomplete responses; endorsing responses that did not meet the study's inclusion criteria; or evidence of bots or other suspicious activity discerned by responses completed at nearly identical times at IP addresses with identical geographical coordinates.

I interviewed 15 participants and included nine interviews in my analyses. My rationale for the exclusion of six participants in my analyses is multifaceted. One participant was excluded

because she did not meet the study's criteria, as she had only completed a high school-level sociology course taught by a white teacher, rather than the required criteria of having completed a college-level psychology course taught by a white professor. Three additional participants were excluded due to an issue with the over-recruitment of SONA participants. Unbeknownst to me, these participants had registered to participate in my study after I had reached my target sample size. I opted to conduct these interviews as to not penalize these participants, as they would not receive their anticipated SONA credits had their interview not been conducted. Because narrative analysis emphasizes depth over breath, I excluded these interviews so that I would not compromise the depth of my analyses due to having a larger-than-typical sample size for a narrative analysis study. This decision was made after careful consideration of my narrative analysis methodology. The decision not to include the two remaining participants in my analyses was based on problems with my ability to accurately discern these participants' transcripts of the audio recordings, due to differences in spoken accents, despite my best efforts. As I began my coding process during the data collection process, which I discuss in a subsequent section, I discerned data saturation based on the repetition of similar narratives across participants, resulting in the repetition of existing codes (e.g., Power et al., 2015). Four of the nine participants included in the analyses elected to participate in an optional follow-up member reflection meeting, in which I collaboratively discussed preliminary findings and invited participants' feedback.

Throughout the data collection and data analysis processes, I maintained a field notebook, in which I engaged in reflexive journaling after each interview. These field notes contained my personal reflections regarding the study. I elaborate on the specifics of researcher reflexivity and discuss how I practiced this in my study in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Instruments

To ensure that participants meet eligibility criteria, I utilized a brief screening measure (Appendix C) after participants completed informed consent via a Qualtrics online survey. Participants who met the eligibility criteria via this screening measure were given the option to proceed to next steps of the study while those who did not meet eligibility criteria were redirected to a page informing them that they did not meet the eligibility requirements and thanked them for their interest in my study. Eligible participants either provided an email address at the end of the survey where I could contact them to schedule the online interview or received an online code to use to sign up for the interview timeslot in the SONA system.

In addition, I used a semi-structured interview protocol with questions designed to glean the experiences of BIPOC undergraduate students who had taken at least one psychology course with a multicultural focus with white faculty (see Appendix D). This interview protocol began with participants selecting a pseudonym so that their responses in the interview could be de-identified. I then asked demographic questions to gather information regarding participants' social locations and intersecting identities. Given the inclusion of intersectionality as a supplementary guiding theory for the present study, demographic information was gathered to contextualize participants' lived experiences with white faculty in undergraduate psychology courses with a multicultural focus, as these experiences are shaped by the nuanced intersections of participants' identities and their connection to structural and systemic issues. Participants were informed that they could skip any question, including demographic questions, at any point without penalty.

Most participants answered most questions; however, some participants politely declined to share in depth about their experiences of certain microaggressions due to the sensitivity of

these experiences. When providing demographic information, several participants opted to provide an age range rather than their exact age.

The majority of the interview questions were designed to ascertain participants' experiences in undergraduate psychology courses containing multicultural topics taught by white faculty members. I developed my interview questions based on my review of the literature regarding the educational experiences of BIPOC students in multicultural courses (Curtis-Boles & Bourg, 2010; Pieterse et al., 2016; Pulliam et al., 2019; Seward & Guiffrida, 2012), racial and intersectional microaggressions (Lewis et al., 2016; Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2020), and white faculty who teach multicultural courses (Akamine Phillips et al., 2019; Bell, 2002; Smith et al., 2017). Questions were largely derived from key findings from previous research I reviewed in Chapter 2 and partially from questions previously used in other qualitative studies. Using a semi-structured interview format provided enough structure to elicit responses that aligned with the foci of the theories specified above and the overarching aim of the present study. Simultaneously, the semi-structured nature was ideal to create space for participants to engage in storytelling regarding their lived experiences. This is a central aim to the narrative inquiry methodology in which the proposed study is grounded and to the storytelling and counter storytelling emphasis in CRT that seeks to elevate and validate BIPOC experiential knowledge (Clandinin, 2013).

Data Analysis

Transcription and Coding

Interviews were transcribed during the recording process via Zoom's closed captioning feature. I later edited these transcripts by listening to each recording to ensure that the transcripts contained accurate narratives for each participant. I then conducted initial coding of each

transcript using a deductive method to ensure that my data analysis aligned with the theoretical and epistemological foundations of CRT, CWS, intersectionality, and critical pedagogy. As a relational methodology, narrative inquiry requires ongoing reflexivity and reflection throughout the inquiry process, including data analysis (Clandinin & Caine, 2008). To allow for the flexibility that is required for this ongoing process of reflexivity while still adhering to the CRT framework for my study, I coded interview data with sensitizing concepts. According to Blumer (1969), sensitizing concepts are guiding constructs selected from a discipline that are used to inform the coding process, but coding is not restricted to these concepts. As such, I used theoretical concepts from CRT and my supplemental guiding theories, in addition to concepts and issues from previous research, outlined in Chapter 2, as sensitizing concepts to code transcript data while leaving ample room to glean additional inductive codes that emerged from the storytelling and relational nature of narrative inquiry. Examples of sensitizing concepts from CRT included indicators of the permanence of racism and whiteness as property in participants' narratives (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998). In addition, I used dialogic and non-dialogic based learning from critical pedagogy (Freire, 1992), the normativity of whiteness from CWS (Applebaum, 2016), and intersections of privilege and oppression within interpersonal dynamics and at macro levels from intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins 1990/2000) as sensitizing concepts from my supplemental theories.

According to Esin (2011), "narrative analysis considers the structure, content, and context of narratives" (p. 97). As such, it is considered a flexible methodology with no strict guidelines and includes many models that can be tailored and blended per the nature and research questions of a given study (Esin, 2011; Kim, 2016). Thus, I used a blend of different models of narrative analysis to address my research questions and aims most effectively. Following the basic steps

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for analyzing narrative data outlined by Esin (2011), I began with situating my epistemological

approach based on the theoretical foundations of my study. This included both a constructivist

epistemological approach, which aligns with CRT, and a naturalist approach that lends well to

concepts from intersectionality, CWS, and critical pedagogy. The constructivist approach

focuses on how storytellers make sense of their experiences and draw from cultural and personal

resources while they tell their stories (Davies & Harre, 1990), while the naturalist approach uses

"rich descriptions of people in their natural habitats" (Esin, 2011, p. 95). The next step is

selection of analytical models to be used (Esin, 2011). I selected Riessman's (2008) and Labov

and Waletzky's (1967/1997) models for coding and analyzing the narrative data, as these models

fit with my epistemological approaches and aligned with my research questions. I discuss both of

these models below. According to Esin (2011), the final steps include selecting narratives

(blocks of text) to be analyzed, based on a study's research questions, and then following the

steps of the analytical models selected.

I first used Riessman's (2008) thematic model of narrative analysis, which primarily

considers the content of stories, to deductively code participants' narratives with sensitizing

concepts (see above). Drawing from Riessman (2008), I identified 55 themes from the selected

narrative blocks during the initial open coding process. I later solicited feedback and reflections

about these themes from the four participants who elected to complete the optional member

reflection meeting (see subsequent section). After the member reflection meetings, I reviewed

and condensed the initial codes to 20 thematic codes based on participant feedback and to

improve clarity for the names of the codes, particularly for codes that evoked questions from

participants. Codes that were salient to participants were retained.

Next, I used Labovs and Waletzky's (1967/1997) structural model to analyze the organization and structure of participants' narratives, including how different elements of participants' stories functioned within a particular story. Identifying and documenting the ways that narratives were similarly and differently organized across participants allowed me to produce six categories of core narratives of participants' storied accounts of their experiences. Drawing from Labov and Waletzky's (1967/1997) model, I accomplished this task by reviewing the thematically-coded narratives (completed with Riessman's [2008] model) to organize patterns of themes, similarities, and differences across participants. I then formed descriptive core narratives based on these organizational and thematic patterns. Each of the six core narratives was comprised of different subthemes from the 20 thematic codes.

Narrative inquiry requires taking a storied view of participants' experiences by attending to temporality, sociality, and place to contextualize narratives through storytelling (Clandinin, 2013). Therefore, I considered each of these contextual elements throughout the coding process. In keeping with this contextual tradition and adhering to the relational and fluid aspects of narrative inquiry, I approached coding and the construction of core narratives as iterative processes in which codes and their applications evolved through the data analysis process to develop contextually-informed and responsive theories (Brodsky et al., 2016). As such, I used these processes to analyze my reflexive field notes based on sensitizing concepts of CRT and my supplemental theories and the relational aspects of narrative inquiry methodology.

Member Reflections

Member reflections constitute an additional data source that can enhance rigor and enrich qualitative research projects as a whole. Member reflections, as contrasted with member checks, maintain social constructionism traditions by creating additional space for subsequent data and

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complexity to emerge after primary data collection occurs (Tracy, 2010). Conversely, Tracy (2010) noted that member checks aim to ensure the accuracy and validity of data thereby suggesting that a single truth is to be discerned from data, which aligns better with realist paradigms. As part of my commitment to relational ethics (Clandinin, 2013; Gilligan, 1982; Tracy, 2010), I sought to collaborate and request input from participants in my process of coding interview data. This process can yield additional data, which can ultimately foster deeper and richer analyses (Tracy, 2010).

I began each member reflection meeting by explaining the purpose of the meeting and by inviting members to freely share any reactions, reflections, questions, and curiosities about the project, the data, and myself. I then reintroduced the purpose of the research project and explained my process for deriving the thematic codes from interview narratives. From here, participants reviewed the initial list of 55 codes and shared about which ones resonated with them and ones that evoked questions and curiosities. I discuss the specifics of participants' reflections in Chapter 4. I expressed gratitude for participants' feedback and explained that their feedback would be incorporated into data analysis. I also invited participants to contact me via email at any point if they had additional feedback or reflections to share or if they wanted to schedule another member reflection meeting, although I did not receive additional contact from my participants.

Rigor

Qualitative research is distinct from quantitative approaches to knowledge production in a number of different ways, such as in terms of epistemology, scope, purpose, and methodology (Bhattacharya, 2017). Consequentially, characteristics used to evaluate the quality and rigor of quantitative research, including generalizability, objectivity, reliability, and validity, are often

antithetical to the paradigms from which most qualitative inquiries operate (Bhattacharya, 2017; Tracy, 2010). Because CRT and narrative inquiry both embrace epistemologies based in constructionism (Clandinin 2013; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), as opposed to positivist epistemologies that assert singular, objective truths define reality, I grounded my study in alternative markers of rigor that extend beyond restrictive notions of objectivity, validity, and reliability.

Credibility

Since qualitative research honors multiple meanings and social constructions, the criteria that are used to evaluate qualitative projects must reflect this complexity (Bhattacharya, 2017). Rather than using reliability and validity, which are markers of rigor in quantitative research and assume that singular truths should be discerned, credibility, which refers to dependability and trustworthiness, is seen as a better indication of quality within qualitative research (Tracy, 2010). As such, Morrow (2005) noted that the criteria for evaluating trustworthiness should depend on the paradigm that grounds a given investigation. Given the constructivist and critical underpinnings of CRT and the supplemental theories of my study, markers of credibility are grounded in key aspects of critical and constructivist paradigms. For instance, Morrow (2005) noted that "understanding participant constructions of meaning depends on a number of factors, including *context*, *culture*, and *rapport*" (p. 253). As such, I included these criteria throughout my data collection and analysis by taking extra care to build and maintain rapport with research participants, which aligns with the goals of embodying relational ethics (Clandinin, 2013).

In pursuit of my goal to build rapport with participants, I shared openly about my identity markers, particularly my white racial identity, and my motivations for pursuing this research. I acknowledged and validated that cultural mistrust may exist for some BIPOC individuals

interacting with white researchers and how this can understandably be protective. In addition, I invited and encouraged participants to share any questions, concerns, or curiosities they had about the research project and their participation, to which I responded as thoroughly and graciously as possible. I named my intention to foster an empowering experience for research participants and encouraged them to share any questions or feedback that may arise at any point during the interview or after its completion. An additional marker of credibility of my study that aligns with the critical ideologies of my selected theories is my ultimate goal of identifying "change-making strategies" (Patton, 2002, p. 545) and stimulating action to advance positive change, which is also known as catalytic authenticity, in how white faculty members teach undergraduate psychology courses with a multicultural focus (Morrow, 2005). Both of these creditability markers are integrated with the study's implications discussed in Chapter 5.

Additional markers of credibility in my study include my use of thick descriptions and triangulation (Tracy, 2010) in my data analysis. Citing Geertz (1973) and Bochner (2000), Tracy (2010) noted that thick descriptions in qualitative research entail in-depth, culturally situated meanings with an abundance of detail. In this way, thick description works to ensure that circumstantiality is duly noted and that participants' behaviors and responses are not divorced from their context (Geertz, 1973). Accordingly, these features converge with central assumptions and tenets of narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2013), and such an alignment is a marker of rigor within qualitative research (Bhattacharya, 2017). Triangulation, another indicator of credibility in qualitative inquiry, refers to the convergence of multiple sources of data and theoretical frameworks that produce conclusions (Patton, 2002; Tracy, 2010). I incorporated triangulation in my study by utilizing CRT, intersectionality, CWS, and critical pedagogy as theories that converge in similar ways but also offer their own specific contributions to yield a deeper and

multifaceted understanding of my research topic and illuminate greater complexity and nuance (Tracy, 2010). An additional triangulation technique that I utilized in my study was my use of multiple sources of data, which included participant interviews, member reflections, and my reflexive field notes.

While tremendous variability exists across qualitative approaches and epistemologies, the criteria that are used to evaluate the credibility of qualitative inquiries should be informed by a study's paradigmatic underpinnings. Several criteria for evaluating the quality and rigor of qualitative research can be applied across diverse qualitative projects (Bhattacharya, 2017; Morrow; 2005, Tracy, 2010). Sincerity is one such criteria and refers to researcher authenticity and genuineness, which was achieved through reflexivity and transparency (Tracy, 2010). I discuss my sincerity and reflexivity below.

Researcher Reflexivity

Consistent with social constructivist approaches to knowledge that reject positivist assumptions of objectivity (Bhattacharya, 2017), I have aspired to remain vigilant of how my identities as a white, partnered, cisgender woman and a sixth-year doctoral candidate in an APA-accredited counseling psychology have informed my assumptions and biases throughout the process of conducting research with BIPOC people. Warner et al. (2016) challenged psychologists to identify how their underlying epistemologies frame their research. As I continue to hone my personal-professional identity as a future counseling psychologist, the social justice values of psychology itself (e.g., Nadal, 2017) are an integral part of my critical epistemological lens. Through this lens, I embrace a social constructivist view of nature and critical stance for interrogating oppression, privilege, power imbalances, and injustices that result from these issues (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017).

Due to the ways in which whiteness is normalized in psychological research and society itself (Applebaum, 2016; Bharat et al., 2021), I am committed to naming how this manifested in the present study, which I discuss in Chapter 5 along with my efforts to address these manifestations. For instance, Bharat et al. (2021) noted the importance of engaging in researcher reflexivity, a process involving a researcher's self-examination prevent their biases and positions from unduly influencing the research process (Berger, 2015; Smartt-Gullion & Tilton, 2020), so researchers can identify how their race affects their conceptualization of BIPOC groups. To accomplish this considerable task, researchers are encouraged to engage in multiple forms of reflection and examination, which can include self-reflection, reflection with colleagues, and similar methods (Kolivoski et al., 2014). As part of my own efforts to practice reflexivity through self-reflection, I recognize how CRT assumptions are implicated in my positionality as a white researcher. Specifically, the CRT concept of interest conversion is relevant to my study as I have an invested interest in challenging racial injustice in education. While this interest reflects my personal-professional values, I cannot deny that advancing racial justice in education, especially multicultural courses in psychology, would be of benefit to me personally and professionally as an aspiring educator.

In keeping with the iterative focus of qualitative research (Bhattacharya, 2017), I have prioritized reflexive processes throughout the trajectory of my dissertation. Thus, I have built upon my initial self-reflections prior to pursuing my research topic. Throughout data collection and analysis, I maintained detailed field notes from reflexive journaling. These reflections contain my thoughts about my interactions with participants, curiosities, and my process of arriving at various thoughts, in addition to an interrogation of my assumptions and biases. As I engaged with these reflections, I applied them to my interactions with participants. For example,

I identified my heavy use of academic jargon in my interview questions and how overly-intellectualized language can be a manifestation of white supremacy culture (Okun, 2021). After I came to this realization, I simplified the language of my interview questions to remove unnecessary jargon. I additionally used my reflexivity reflections to discuss implications of my study in Chapter 5. I describe these my reflections in Chapter 4 and expand upon these in Chapter 5, where I present my data interpretation.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction to the Findings

Data analysis of interviews with participants aim to fill a gap in literature regarding the experiences of BIPOC undergraduate students with white faculty who teach multicultural topics in undergraduate psychology courses. While this topic has been understudied to date, previous research has documented a range of issues that impact undergraduate psychology courses that present multicultural topics, including microaggressions in the classroom (Lewis et al., 2016; Robinson-Perez et al., 2020), colorblind attitudes (Bell, 2002), instructor ineptitude for managing classroom dialogues on difficult multicultural topics (Wing Sue et al., 2009), and oppressive pedagogies used by white instructors who teach multicultural topics (Applebaum, 2016). This existing research, the body of scholarship on racial inequity and injustice within higher education, and the relatively few qualitative studies involving students and their perspectives about their own lived experiences make a case for the present study in order to amplify and center BIPOC student voices and their narratives of their lived experiences. As such, the findings presented in this chapter answer the study's following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of BIPOC undergraduate students enrolled in psychology courses with a multicultural focus taught by white faculty members?

2. To what degree do undergraduate BIPOC students experience racial and other microaggressions in psychology courses with a multicultural focus taught by white faculty members?

3. To what extent do BIPOC students experience racism and other forms of oppression reflected in the curricula, pedagogical strategies, and in interactions with white

faculty members and students in undergraduate psychology courses with a multicultural focus?

4. To what degree is whiteness centralized, either implicitly or explicitly, in BIPOC students' experiences in undergraduate psychology courses with a multicultural focus?

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of the study, consisting of participants' six core narratives with 20 subthemes of their experiences with white faculty who teach undergraduate psychology classes with multicultural content. The organization and presentation of the study's findings reflect the narrative analysis methodology used to discern core narratives shared by participants along with nuances and divergencies across participants' storied accounts of their classroom experiences. These narratives were developed from the coding and analysis processes based on Riessman's (2008) and Labov and Waletzky's (1967/1997) models discussed in Chapter 3. Core narratives reflect the structural features of multiple participants' narratives, while the subthemes associated with each core narrative reflect the thematic codes discerned from the deductive coding process and feedback from the member reflection meetings (see Table 2). Consistent with narrative analysis, CRT, and the aims of the study, the presentation of the findings centers participants' stories of their lived experiences to amplify the voices of those who are often silenced by white supremacy oppression. As such, excerpts from participants' narratives contain participants' exact words, inclusive of fillers, repetitions, and slang. In addition, some excerpts were intentionally double-coded and appear in multiple sections belonging to different subthemes.

Table 1

Core Narratives and Subthemes

Core Narrative	Subthemes			
Classroom Climates	Barriers to Engagement	Protective Caution	Safety and Trust Concerns	Tension or Awkwardness
Enactments of Oppression and Harm	Generalizations, Erasure of Nuance, and Color Blindness	Implicit Bias and Inequity	Microaggressions	White Supremacy
Oppressive Pedagogy	Multicultural Topics Are Not Important	Silence, Silencing, and Surface-Level Engagement	Harmful and Ineffective Teaching	Overrepresented Whiteness
Impact of Harm in the Classroom	Accustomed to Expect Ignorance and Other Problems	Feeling Alone	Invisibility and Hypervisibility	
Positive Learning	Connection and Understanding	Discussion and Dialogue	Effective Teaching	
Future Directions	Increased Representation and Acknowledging BIPOC Contributions	Calls to Action		

Core Narratives

Core Narrative #1: Classroom Climates

The core narrative pertaining to participants' experiences with classroom environments was marked by frequent descriptions of the emotional climate of the learning environment. Participants made references to the bland, disengaging manner in which multicultural subjects were taught, as well as prevailing tension and awkwardness around conversations of

multicultural issues. Some also described an absence of trust within classroom climates, while others cited safety concerns from their interactions with problematic classmates who expressed overt bigotry and microaggressive behaviors. Additionally, participant narratives contained accounts of how their engagement and learning were affected by environmental conditions of their courses taught by white faculty. Four classroom climate subthemes comprised similar elements of participants stories of their classroom climate experiences across six out of the nine total participants:

Barriers to Engagement

Some of the key words participants used to describe their learning climates were *sterile, boring,* and *impersonal.* A common element of participants' narratives was how these characteristics reduced student engagement and were barriers to deeper and more meaningful learning. For instance, Jo described her experiences in an online course:

> I think especially with the online class because there wasn't really any engagement from that professor that it was detrimental I think because it was just, oh, here's your assignment, you know, read the text type of thing. We didn't really learn anything in my opinion. I think because the teacher is more behind the screen and you know we never really saw his face or got the opportunity to really talk that it kind of put a damper on how we, how I, learned through that time and it was just like, oh. You know, I'm just doing my homework and just trying to get it done and that's it. Not really trying to retain anything.

Another participant, Casey, contrasted her experience in one class with her excitement and expectations for learning about:

It was an okay, experience. I'm not gonna lie, I, I didn't really learn much though. I feel like. I don't know, I don't feel like it really like connected with what was I was really excited to take psychology to begin with. I thought it was gonna be so interesting, but I feel like the class like focused more on like the history and the people who like thought, you know, made or thought of different theories and stuff. You know, and I thought it was gonna be about like how the brain works and like how this connects to this. You know, like we didn't, it was just kind of boring the first time I took it. It was like a lot of readings and then the exams were hard. It was hard to like gauge what was what they were asking because it would be like in class we would learn something completely different than what the exam was telling me so I don't know it was just... Yeah, I, it was kind of like, it wasn't what I thought it would be.

Destinee described barriers to asking questions and sharing openly in her classes taught by white professors:

I think the best word I can use to describe the environment a lot of the times even when I like the professors, it felt sterile, it felt very impersonal, and I've begun to realize that more and more now that I am in my graduate program, it felt like you couldn't really just share what your thoughts were about specific topics or you couldn't ask the professor some questions about I guess more deeper nuanced subjects.

Safety and Trust Concerns

This subtheme was a prominent issue within participants' descriptions of their class climates. For some students, safety and trust concerns developed from encountering harmful commentary from their white classmates. Jo, for instance, shared:

I remember one student, you know, told one girl like, "oh, yeah, that's why women belong in the kitchen." Like, yeah, no, that's not okay. So yeah, and I think you know even in that college class we went over that you know, cause someone brought it up and you know, my psychology teacher, he even put a stop to that. He's like, no, that's not okay. And you know, women have contributed so much to you know psychology and just, you know, life in general and so many different sciences. So, they're like, you can't really say that women belong kitchen when they you know, contributing a lot more to, you know, certain sciences than some males have.

Destinee referenced experiences with professors who hindered her sense of safety:

There were very few professors where throughout the course. I felt better or more safe around them most of the time. I felt with my white professors, they would end up saying something that sort of made me sort of reel back even more. It's like the little comments that they would say that I was automatically like, oh, why did you say that? That's weird.

Destinee also detailed her tendency to maintain distance from white professors based on skepticism of professors' awareness of their own privilege and commitment to anti-racism:

It sort of made me keep my distance. Like a lot of these professors I thought were very friendly and like it was very interesting to know more about them and even like what their research interests were but there was always I felt like this barrier because they never addressed those things. It was like I never actually knew how they felt about these specific topics and I'm not necessarily referring to it from a political lens. More so of like a like, are you anti-racist? Do you understand the privilege that you have to be able to teach in an institution like this with your identities like because it was never addressed. I was anxious, I would say.

Tension and Awkwardness

Another element of participants' experiences within classroom environments included descriptions of tension and awkwardness. Asia, for example, cited how one of her white professors was quick to cover multicultural topics and appeared eager to move on to other topics:

The one that I can think of, the professor for another class. It seemed like they were almost scared to talk about multicultural identity for some reason. They would gloss over very fast. And if someone raised their hand and was like, yeah, you know, I, you know, experience this or this sounds similar to like an identity of mine, they would just be like, and not and just kind of move on. So, I would say they're not acknowledging that their students were people who had these identities that they were talking about.

Another participant, Destinee, discussed her reflections about how learning about multicultural issues from interpersonal experiences is distinct from learning about multiculturalism in academic contexts and how this can produce anxiety around multicultural interactions:

It's very complicated, I think, because it's one thing to learn about multiculturalism from, I guess, a textbook or from an academic setting, but I think there's like a few main aspects that's missing. And I feel like a lot of these people don't even know how to talk to BIPOC individuals like how to properly address them. I feel like there's trepidation from both parties about making sure that they're addressing the other correctly. And I'm not sure if my perspective is coming from me having only like lecture-based classes and now having seminar- based classes, but talking and learning more about those identities and how they're salient to each individual, I think is helpful, especially because like what we were discussing, everybody has different intersectional identities. So, it's easy to learn

about one identity by itself, but then when you think about its correlation to other identities it, it changes, that meaning changes.

Protective Caution

As a result of environmental conditions of their white professors' classes, another feature of participants' core narrative included guardedness and caution. For example, Jo expressed:

It [microaggressions] to me it just really showed that, you know, a lot of white kids are closed-minded based off you know their parents' ideologies, so I think it kind of you know. So, I'm very cautious when I get around people who identify as white Americans because I'm like, oooh I don't know how your parents raised you. I don't know, you know, what type of ideology they have, which you know reflects on you. I think that's what really kinda you know, hinders me now, especially from high school, is you know, trying to really stay in contact with some white, you know, peers of mine, just off, you know, the experiences. So, I just like, alright… I have like no problem with them at all. It's just like, there's just very much a caution sign when it when it comes to them.

Another participant, Ameila, shared her experiences of feeling unwelcomed and uncomfortable in predominantly white spaces and how they adjusted their personality to fit in:

Yeah, I feel like it did impact my sense of belonging. Cause now like when I enter a white space, I just don't feel welcomed. Even if everybody could be welcoming in there, I feel like there's like a wall between us because it's I'm going through my experiences, they are going through theirs. So, it just feels like anything that I say or do, I just feel like it's being just like overlooked. I just feel like they it's not being overlooked but at the same time it's being like speculated on like anything I do is bizarre anything I say is bizarre, so I just tend to like dampened down my personality just like fit in that space, but

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then even then it just makes me feel like I'm not comfortable. Like, I don't really feel

welcome there and I don't really feel comfortable there as well. And then also it just

makes me a little more pessimistic when it comes to being around a lot of white spaces

because I just feel like everybody has bad intentions towards me, and I'm trying to

unlearn that, just like not everybody is going to be, you know that way towards me but

it's just I'm used to it so. I just tend to be more negative when I'm in a white space. I just

tend to be I have my guard more up and I'm just like basically bracing myself for

someone to say something, you know, microaggressive.

Core Narrative #2: Enactment of Harm and Oppression

Across eight participants, the core narrative of enactments of harm and oppression

contains examples of the multifaceted ways in which oppression and harm were perpetuated

against BIPOC students in their classes with white faculty teaching multicultural topics in

psychology, both from instructors and other students within these classes. A pattern of avoidant

and passive behavior from instructors, especially in response to instructors feeling

uncomfortable, was referenced across the four subthemes of the participants' narratives of how

oppression and harm were enacted within their classes. The majority of participants cited

experiencing microaggressions in their classes, while some experienced more overt and hostile

forms of bias and bigotry. Other features of the core narrative around enactments of harm and

oppression included references to instructors' inequitable treatment of BIPOC students compared

to white students and overgeneralizations and stereotyping. In addition, implicit bias and covert

manifestations of white superiority and resulting harm was recurrent in several participants'

narratives.

Generalizations, Erasure of Nuance, and Color Blindness

Participants referenced examples of how their white professors perpetuated generalizations of BIPOC groups within their classes. Asia, for instance, shared:

You know what, if you if you basically lump all BIPOC populations together and just say marginalized identities and you don't have any differentiation between them, it's kind of, it's really not that comprehensive because you're basically just creating this divide between, you know, white people as the privileged population and almost like the experiences of BIPOC individuals are homogeneous.

When asked about experiences of intersectional oppressions in her classes, Destinee recounted that her professors never discussed intersectionality or the nuanced complexities of multifaceted cultural identities:

No, I don't believe we ever learned about any intersection, intersecting, identities and how injustice and oppression impacts that. We only sort of talked about specific identities on their own as if, like they don't have different nuances depending on someone else's identities.

Ameila referenced concerns of stereotyping occurring in her class as a result of culturally-based concepts being discussed by those who do not have racialized lived experiences that pertain to those topics:

I remember how I think we were talking about this one topic, about the tiger mom or the tiger parents, that's like mostly enforced on Asian people, who are of Asian descent. And we were just all talking about this experience, and I just remember that like, I just kind of felt uncomfortable talking about it, cause I was just like, I mean, I'm not Asian and I just feel like us talking about this is just like, you know, kind of ignorant, because we're

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basically, you know. We're making that stereotype come to life because we're like kind of pushing it on them.

When asked about manifestations of racial colorblindness within her classes, Asia shared:

I think just the way that a lot of, like for example, for my clinical theories class or even the abnormal psychology, just the way that a lot of the information was presented was, like, not taking into account the fact that people with multicultural identities might, you know, need a different approach to therapy beyond just CBT, which is pretty much only the only thing that we were taught in my clinical studies class. That kind of came across as a bit racially blind, I would say.

Inequity and Implicit Bias

The inequity and implicit bias subtheme of participants' narratives contains examples of explicit differential treatment within some participants' experiences with white faculty. For example, when asked about her instructor's attentiveness to white students versus BIPOC students in her class, Alyssa shared:

Yeah, because I find that when you, when you pose a question in that class, I'm not given good details and questions are sometimes not answered. The professor might say that we'll come to your question later at the end of class, and you just know that there is no coming back to me.

Ameila also had similar experiences with her instructor and shared her observations about her instructors' favorite students:

From my in-person and introductory [courses], you can tell like she had favorites in the class. And I, of course, wasn't one of her favorites, but I don't think it was intentional, but a lot of her favorites would be a lot of white women.

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When asked about white instructors' competence for teaching multicultural topics, Jo also referenced examples of differential treatment of Black students:

I think for my white instructors, like that you have no room, at least in my mind, there's no way that you feel like you're able to completely discuss this on an objective level. I feel like there's some type of way that you feel either, this is uncomfortable, or discomfort with this topic and it shows. Especially when it came like towards like Black history month, it's like, you know, they would do like, oh, well, these are, you know, historical Black people. And it shows that, you know, you're uncomfortable with black people be in your environment. Sometimes it's just like, you know, we see it, we know that, you know, some other white people don't feel comfortable with us being around and, you know… I guess you learn, at least I've learned, but you know, there's [*sic*], you don't have to say the words, but your actions show. So as far as you know, like, even just the teachers, like, now, not just the psychology teacher in high school, but other teachers, like, you know you treat Black students differently, you know. You go, you either go too fast on the slide or you do this. You say this too fast, and when they have a question you ignore their question, type of thing. So I'm like, there needs to be more training on how to, you know, keep just the objective level because everybody has different backgrounds. Everyone has different truths. So that's about it.

Microaggressions

A prevalent experience across most participants included microaggressions in their classes. X, for instance, shared:

Yeah, like I say when, even when I was speaking, like you know, someone may compliment you. 'Oh, your English is very good.' Someone might say, like 'you are an

immigrant,' but that feels… it may seem alright, but sometimes they feel agitating, you know.

Sara also shared an example of microaggressions made by other students when she recounted, "Yeah, and with me, with me being African, I do get that question a lot because I, from other Africans… I'll tell them, but then they'll be like 'no, where are you from, like where are your parents from?'"

When reflecting on her experiences in classes containing multicultural content versus classes that did not include multicultural content, Jo shared:

I feel like with classes that speak more about it, I think there is very much less microaggressions that appear versus the classes that don't talk about [it]. I think because teachers don't say like, you know, 'No, that's not right,' that people think that automatically, you know, they're okay to say whatever.

Ameila shared experiences of microaggressions from both her instructor and her classmates:

You know, my teacher would kind of like act like I was someone new just because I got a new hairstyle or they would tend to confuse me with another Black student, like one of the other only Black students that was dark-skinned in that class, with them and it was like as if they thought that we were the same people just because we had the same skin tone. And then when I would, like, be in a group discussion with people where we would just like get together and just talk about a topic that the teacher said for us to discuss, I would be there with students, and I would get a new hair strand and they would ask me if they could touch my hair.

When asked about her experiences with microaggressions, Alyssa shared an example of overt hostility she experienced from other students:

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Yeah, sometimes the students make jokes of you, even laughing at you sometimes because of who you are. Yeah, and when you try to even come up with a point in class, they're already laugh[ing] at you, so you feel like you're not expressing yourself well anymore.

White Supremacy

Several participants referenced examples of insidious white supremacy manifestations in their classes. Asia, for instance, noted how "mental disorders and illnesses are looked at from a very Western perspective."

When recounting her experiences with feeling frustrated with how her white instructors presented multicultural topics in a way that was generalized and oblivious to the experiential realities of BIPOC individuals, Ameila shared how this reminded her issues she had experienced earlier on in her childhood education:

We'd be talking about topics that included slavery or like Black History Month, and then my teachers would always be white. And then they would talk about that topic, and I'd be the only Black student in that class, and they were talking about that topic as if they knew about it better, but I'm just like, I'm still living in those experiences today. They're just like teaching it as if it's over. We're teaching you as if, you know, we're acknowledging it, but then we're moving on. So, kind of just took me back to that place, and then I, like, it just kind of made me angry, cause it's just like, you guys wouldn't really ever understand even if I sat down and explained to you guys everything about like what I go through and what a lot of BIPOC students go through. It's just like, y'all really wouldn't understand because we're still living in it and you guys are just going to be, basically in society's views, you are going to always be seen as the superiors. So, it's kind of like

angry to me because it's just like, it's just like when someone just doesn't understand something, it just, it's so frustrating.

Another participant, Jo, discussed an example of her white instructor's defensiveness and resistance when she and other BIPOC students in the class attempted to correct their instructor's misinformation about racial differences in the experience of pain:

And so, I think he was just like, 'Oh, okay.' And then he will kinda like brush her off and like kind of like, 'Oh, you're saying this, but you know, scientists and other people have said this multiple times' and we're like, whoa. You know, unless you're a Black person, you won't understand that, you know, we still feel pain and we still feel, you know, all the other feelings that other people feel. I think one time we were talking about, you know, just the burden of how slavery has, you know, has affected so many generations even up to this generation now, and I think he truly didn't understand that, like why certain Black parents are the way they are as far as, like, you know, with education and, just like social interactions with others. And so, I think he was just… It's hard to say. I don't want to put him out as, oh, he was unwilling to hear, but it came across that way.

Core Narrative #3: Oppressive Pedagogy

The core narrative of experiences with oppressive pedagogy was shared among five participants and contains examples of ineffective and harmful teaching practices that participants encountered in their classes with white instructors. Participants cited factors related to their white instructors' positionalities that created discomfort and barriers to safety and learning. In addition, participants provided examples of scarce coverage of multicultural topics and over-represented whiteness, both within the curriculum they were taught and among their instructors. Other issues related to the core narrative of oppressive pedagogy included oppressive content taught by white

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instructors and ineffective teaching practices for online courses resulting in student

disengagement and unfulfilling learning experiences. Participants' descriptions of ineffective and

harmful teaching practices contrast from their experiential and discussed-based learning

experiences that comprise a separate core narrative of positive learning experiences.

Harmful and Ineffective Teaching

When asked about instructors' consideration of different students' needs and identities,

Asia shared about how some class policies created by white instructors created strain for

economically-disadvantaged students:

> I think one big thing that kind of stood out to me was the variations in social,
>
> socioeconomic status and students who had to work extra jobs or who were, for example,
>
> first gen students. Even though this university was…it also had a very large like
>
> international student population, and so many students were economically disadvantaged
>
> when compared to others. And I do remember that there was like the professors for the
>
> most part, not all of them, but most of them were very rigid about their guidelines or what
>
> you needed to have. There's one professor I'm thinking of who really wanted like
>
> specific types of note cards and not like the standardized note cards, and it just seemed
>
> like a huge waste to go out and buy those, like, very specific note cards just for this one
>
> class. And it was like a tiny print on the syllabus too, the specifications, but they took off
>
> a lot of points for that.

Destinee provided examples of the ineffective pedagogy choices made by white

professors teaching multicultural topics:

> Yeah, so it was like mainly the professor had all the time, and then the students would
>
> only get a chance to, like, ask questions. I had very few classes where they had

experiential activities or even like watching something. Most of the time it was just

straight up, like, 'I'm gonna talk for an hour and a half and then you guys take notes'....

It's very ineffective in my opinion. It's not engaging, especially for a class that is going

to go on for at least an hour. Most students aren't going to want to continue being there

wanting to learn or expand their knowledge about a topic if it's just going to be, like,

talking and throwing words at me, not even a chance to sort of, not only process the

material, but apply it I think is one of the biggest things because we never got a chance to

apply the things we were learning about.

Destinee also shared her skepticism of her white instructors' ability to teach multicultural

topics effectively:

I didn't think they, I didn't think they were competent in teaching these topics, especially

because like when we were going over the other questions, like, did they ever explicitly

express that they were they were anti-racist or like they, they had these beliefs or ideals?

Like, they never even said that. They never talked about any specific training they had to

deal with, with specific marginalized identities. So, I didn't have, I didn't have that

experience where I thought they were competent in what they were talking about.

In addition, Destinee discussed how she was impacted by the intersection of identities for

her professors that were white men based on her previous experiences with this intersection of

identities. She discussed how evoked discomfort and created learning challenges for her:

I have this own inherent bias of mine where I'm automatically, like, more apprehensive

or scared of professors that are just white men, just because of my own previous

experiences and dealing with that specific demographic. And so, I think it made the

learning process more difficult when they never explicitly stated any, like, anti-racist or

activist background. It made it, it made me more uncomfortable.

Destinee further elaborated by commenting on her impressions of the mpact of the

classroom hierarchy:

> Coming from, like, a person like me who is already having to struggle with oppression
>
> pretty regularly, sort of having that hierarchy within the classroom as well, but then with
>
> that professor having these very privileged identities, I think made it harder to have an
>
> open space or an area for asking questions or engaging properly, I would say. There's
>
> already like a hurdle you have to jump I guess to be able to communicate with the
>
> professor, at least that's what it felt like.

Some students shared their negative experiences with online courses in particular. For

instance, Jo recounted how the absence of interaction in her online class was detrimental to her

learning:

> I think especially with the online class, because there wasn't really any engagement from
>
> that professor, that it was detrimental. I think because it was just, oh, here's your
>
> assignment, you know, read the text type of thing, we didn't really learn anything, in my
>
> opinion. I think because the teacher is more behind the screen and, you know, we never
>
> really saw his face or got the opportunity to really talk, that it kind of put a damper on
>
> how we, how I, learned through that time. And it was just like, oh you know, I'm just
>
> doing my homework and just trying to get it done and that's it, not really trying to retain
>
> anything.

When discussing her experience with a college-level psychology course she completed while in high school, Jo also shared her account of learning about how psychology, especially historically, has been used in oppressive ways:

Some of the topics, you know, we went over like, you know, the intros of like psychology, whatever, certain methods, the famous people in psychology, and you know, he did, even though it was high school, he did make it known that, you know, some of these ideologies or like ideas and psychologies are some outdated. Theories, especially like when it came with to Sigmund Freud and other stuff, so I felt like even, just not even as a Black girl [*sic*] in class, but as a girl he tried his best to make it seem like it wasn't, psychology wasn't put against women, but it was obvious that it was. Especially when we went over like, you know, history of psychology in America and how, you know, women were treated and just like, you know. He was trying to explain like, you know, how psychology's came [*sic*]so far, but it's still kind of awkward or still kind of, you know, upsetting to see how, not only how women were treated like, you know, in the 1950s or whatever, but also how, you know, other races and ethnicities were treated. So, I think he tried to make it seem like, oh, you know, that was years ago, and you know brush it under the rug, but like no, it's still significant. So yeah.

Ameila similarly referenced her discomfort with her class and her instructors' teaching styles, which created barriers to help-seeking:

I didn't really like the teaching styles in both classes. It just really wasn't something that I was able to grasp into. It took a lot of focus and motivation for me to even like complete half the assignments. I feel like it was also on my end, cause I really wasn't

reaching out because I wasn't, like I said, comfortable in any of the classes, so I just

 didn't really want to reach out and ask the teachers for help.

Ameila further disclosed her hesitancy to ask questions due to her concern of being seen as inferior:

I will say that in my in person class, I didn't, like, I said, I really wasn't very interactive

in that class, probably cause like I drew myself back because I just felt like I was

uncomfortable, but the negative aspect was that I just, when I feel like I'm asking a

question, I feel like I look like I'm inferior, like I don't understand. So, I would just have

a lot of experiences where like teachers would belittle me, and make me feel like I should

have understood that topic or I was asking a question that wasn't as bright as the other

students around me. So, that's why I just like refrained from asking questions. If I did

have one, I'd probably have to look it up or ask someone right next to me, if they knew

the answer to that… For my Introductory into Psy, if I did have a question I would email

them, but if my question still wasn't answered, I would just drop it because I didn't really

wanna look like I couldn't understand, or I didn't want to look less than, so I would just

drop it and try to understand it on my own.

Overrepresented Whiteness

This subtheme reflected in participants' core narrative on oppressive pedagogy is

substantiated by participants' accounts of over-represented whiteness, ironically, in their class

experiences containing multicultural foci. When discussing whitewashed presentations of

psychology and the absence of recognition of BIPOC contributions to psychology, Casey shared,

"Yeah, cause I'm pretty sure it's not the same people I keep reading about. Not that they do

amazing things as well, but I just would love to hear about somebody else sometimes."

Ameila similarly shared her reflections about how BIPOC psychology topics have been understudied and how the curriculum of her class applied generalized findings based on studies with predominantly white participant samples to BIPOC populations:

Like a lot of the times when you've been studying psychology, it would only be in white people. So, when we were going further down into history and stuff like that, it was only recently that we just like found out new things about Black people, not just Black people as well, but People of Color and their psychology. And when they [instructors] would just say stuff like that, it would just make me realize like even, like right now, as we're learning about the curriculum, it's just like, these are just generalized questions, generalized findings; there's still more that we need to learn about.

Destinee also recounted her experiences with the curriculum that was presented in her classes:

I mean, it was a lot of the content that we covered was more so just based off of the previous experience of like, you know, the typical white men in psychology. I had some classes where like, you know, you have a little project where like you talk about a BIPOC person that, like, did something groundbreaking, but most of the time there was nothing ever acknowledging people that had different identities from the typical white man in psychology. Yeah, like certain things, like, don't apply universally.

Destinee also identified issues of overrepresented whiteness among professors at her university:

The only other thing I can think of was just sort of even understanding and perceiving like the sheer amount of white professors there were in my, in the program, in comparison to the POC professors. Like in my psychology classes alone, I only had, I

believe two actual professors that were BIPOC, in comparison to the hundreds that were

white. And for Tas, it was a bit different, but like it's just shocking to me because as a tier

one research university, that's why I don't completely understand how we are a Hispanic

serving institution because I'm not even sure, I don't even know if we have Hispanic

professors in the psychology department. And we do have some research labs that sort of

talk about multiculturalism and, and they are run by BIPOC professors, but other than

that, I just feel like there's a huge imbalance to begin with. And then when people, when

students don't see themselves in their professors or can't relate to at least a very like basic

level of, oh like you look like me, or something like that, or you have an identity that I

have, there's already a space or a boundary that's been created.

Asia shared her thoughts about how the material taught by her white professors may have

catered to a white lens and appeared to give minimal coverage to more specific BIPOC

considerations:

Now I'm thinking about it, because they were kind of, again, I think most of my

professors came from more of a research lens. And for the ones practicing, more of like a

CBT type lens, so it was providing a very clinical outlook to, how to deal with

populations who have this disorder, for example for abnormal psychology, or things like

that and kind of glossing over more specific things. I suppose that could be catering to a

white lens.

Multicultural Topics Are Not Important

This subtheme was the most prevalent code within the larger core narrative of oppressive

pedagogy. Participants referenced examples of multicultural topics receiving inadequate

attention from their instructors, as indicated by Ameila who shared, "Yeah, it was kinda like

there was no passion in what they were talking about. It was like they were just trying to get over

with, with the curriculum. Like it was just another important old lesson."

When recounting her overall experiences with white faculty covering multicultural

topics, Destinee said:

It was like okay. And I think I'm saying that coming from a place of it's something that I

used to, so it wasn't anything out of the ordinary. It was like, they sort of did the bare

minimum. Like they covered the parts of the curriculum that required them to bring up.

Asia expressed similar sentiments about her recollections of her experiences with her

instructors:

I think overall, like in terms of curriculum, it was, there was not a focus on multicultural

content. It was just kind of there, I think, to that is, the diversity, portion of what this

university advertises. So it, I mean, we kinda, again, like we kind of glossed over it and it

was just, it was just there, nothing like to focus on or anything like that.

Silence, Silencing, and Surface-Level Engagement

Patterns of silence and avoidance of multicultural issues were also present in participants'

stories of their experiences in the classroom. For instance, Ameila noted the lack of engagement

in the class when other students shared about their own cultural experiences:

I feel like when the other BIPOC students would talk about their experiences, they

would... Let's say, yeah, there would be a student of Latin descent in that class talking

about their experience. They would, you know, be brave enough to step up and talk about

what they've been through or what they've been through or what it's like being raised by

immigrants. Everybody would just nod their heads, but I just feel like they really wasn't

[*sic*] taking that information. They're quick to overlook it. And there would be... Cause

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the student would talk about their experience, there would be follow-up questions, you

know, where people would want to know more. Everyone would just be silent after that

but then another student would raise her hand who wasn't BIPOC and talk about surface

level experience.

Ameila also shared how her experiences with microaggressions from other students were

met with silence and noted the emotional impact of this avoidance:

My teacher would basically just say, hey, we're not gonna talk about that right now or

that's not the place for that discussion, you know? That's not the place for this, you

know. Like, let's just shut it down right now. And that's how they would basically handle

things. And I would also expect that for like small other small microaggressions. Were

like, like I said, be earlier [*sic*] a student would be talking about their experience, and it

would just be quiet. And no one wants to, you know talk about it as well. But they would

also, they wouldn't really like say what I wanted them to say. Like if you like. So quick

to overlook it, I would want them to say, oh, does anybody have any like comments to

add on to that or anybody who's just learned something new? Or just questions that you

want to ask about this? And it would just, they would also be quiet like I said, avoiding

the topic. And it just low-key just made me like, I don't know, like the little girl in me

would feel sad, cause it's just like, it's the same thing happening.

Silencing was also present in the experiences of Jo, who took a college-level psychology

course within her high school, when another student was reprimanded for their racial justice

activism:

But even in school, you know, even once I got, you know, was no longer virtual, I think

there was a… a shift in the environment of the school, you had, you know, separations

with the students. A lot of students really did get into trouble, for you know… So, I know

once they had had a Black Lives Matter movement t-shirt and he got in trouble for it. You

know, there was the, you know, kind of the stigmatism or profiling that you know, oh,

these students over here are, you know, are trying to make some type of diversion or

whatever, when they're just trying to show support for something that they feel

passionate about.

Core Narrative #4: Impact of Harm

The core narrative pertaining to the impact of harm contains multiple instances in which

participants were expected to provide education to both peers and instructors about BIPOC

issues. Participants also referenced patterns of feeling alone, displaced, and an absence of

belonging within predominantly white classrooms. Simultaneously, several participants made

references to their experiences of feeling both invisible and hypervisible as BIPOC students. In

addition, a common experience shared by multiple participants is how they anticipated to expect

issues related to the coverage of multicultural topics in their classes as a result of similar patterns

in previous classes. While one participant noted that they did not experience problems or any

harm in their class, this experience diverges from seven participants who shared this core

narrative and who experienced multiple forms of harm and unmet needs in their classes.

Accustomed to Expect Ignorance and Other Problems

In this subtheme, participants referenced how they expected or were not surprised to

encounter issues that they had experienced in previous classes. Destinee, for instance, shared

about her experience of receiving heightened attention in some of her classes because of her

racial identity:

I'm not sure if I'm carrying these, like, thought processes from when I was in high school and I just assumed that, like, it's going to happen again in college, but it is definitely still a feeling that I hold.

When sharing about observing performative allyship by instructors and peers and experiences of feeling disappointed, Ameila recounted:

It would be when we would be doing our discussions, and a lot of people would talk about their experiences. And, you know, the teachers sometimes do respond to the experiences and like the reflections, so it would just be very robotic, and they'd be like, oh, I understand this, this, and that. And I'm just like, I don't really feel like you're coming from a place of understanding. And maybe I completely missed about that because it was an online class, so I never really got to like have a connection with that teacher, but I just felt like the responses were very robotic, and I just didn't really feel like they really cared....I mean, I just overlooked it because I'm so used to it. You know, I'm so used to, you know, being let down by other teachers when they're talking about that subject of like blatant like disregard, so I was just, like, yeah like I've been through that before so, it's not really hurting me so I just shoved it away, you know.

In reference to experiencing microagressive comments and questions in her classes, Ameila shared:

I mean, I just wanna say that it was just, like, I'm used to it. But it's just annoying seeing it, like you were expecting it almost. So, I know, like, if I'm in a setting and even sometimes I might sometimes be proven wrong, but most of the time I'm right when like a topic like that is brought up. I know like there's gonna be a lot of silence. There's going to be a lot of audience and there's just gonna be people who aren't just taking it as

serious, who are going to roll their eyes.... And I'm just expecting it always at this at some point. And I'm trying to be more open minded and more optimistic about that, but it's just like because I've experienced it so much, because I've seen it so much, I just have grown used to it. So, I expect it, like, it's almost as if like I'm holding my breath and waiting for it to happen because I've seen it happen around me so much.

Feeling Alone

Several participants made references to feeling isolated and alone in predominately white classes. When asked about her interactions with peers in her classes taught be white instructors, Destinee shared, "I believe most of the students in my classes were also white, so I'm not sure if they were having the same experience that I was."

Ameila also referenced her experiences of feeling alone and disconnected from peers:

I just never really made any connections or friends, you know. When we got together for, like, discussions, group discussions and stuff, we would just, you know, touch over the basics and then just go back to not speaking to each other. I just never really made any connections in that class at all.

Sara shared her reflections on her experiences of feeling alone and outcasted due to her identity as an African woman, in addition to being Black:

I don't know this is racism, but with me being African, like, I just feel kind of alone sometimes because it's like people outcast, like they outcast Black people too. But, like when you're Black and you're African at the same time, they just find some reason to have you counted as like you're so different, which I've never understood growing up. I mean, yeah, we have a different culture and all that stuff, but it's like we're the same.

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Invisibility and Hypervisibility

Experiences of harm in the classroom were also marked by participants' experiences of invisibility and hypervisibility simultaneously in classes taught by white instructors. One participant, X, shared about his heightened visibility in predominately white classes and how others frequently expected him to speak on topics related to African cultures:

So as a BIPOC student, I can say, like, when you are in a room full of white people, mostly, you'll be the one identified. Like, even though we came from different, different ethnic backgrounds. Like, you know, being Black, you all are identified… so let's say Black people, we are not, we are not many in that class… We have, like, the subject matter I can say, you know, when you are Black and, you are discussing about an African culture, most of the questions will be directed to you for you to provide an explanation on what you know. Even though some of us may not know apart from what we have heard from our parents…Like you can even ask a white person about an African culture or what they know, maybe what they have read or what they had, what they have heard from other people they know. Like, just because you have an African origin, you know, you know everything about Africa.

X also shared about his experiences of feeling overwhelmed by attention directed towards him when questions about multicultural topics were asked in his class:

Sometimes it caused anxiety because, you know, when a question is being asked, I'm expected to answer. So even though *you* have not been asked that, you just may feel some kind of anxiety in answering the question because it is a sign that the question can be directed to you.

Another participant, Destinee referenced the erasure of intersectionality in the curricula of her classes taught by white instructors and how this magnified feelings of tokenism:

Like I was saying previously, the curriculum never considered people that had multiple identities, so it was interesting, because when we would learn about just one, I felt like that wasn't truly encapsulating the experience. Like, if I was going through something, I would think that is not at all what it is, it's actually much more difficult when you have to consider, oh, like this person is transgender along with being like an ethnic minority or something, so I think it was difficult and I always have these feelings of being like the token person of color. It hasn't gone away and I, I thought it would get easier in college because it's supposed to be like a diverse experience, but it didn't.

Ameila shared her experiences of attention being directed towards her when certain multicultural topics came up:

Like when I walk in, I'm probably one of the only Black people in there or I'm, like, only one of those dark-skinned women in there. So, it's just like, even if it's just like even though it's a diverse school and stuff, like, when I sit down it's just like you can tell like I'm one of the only first people in there that looks like me. And then when we talk about certain topics and stuff, like, that just makes me feel like, you know, there's people who just like look back and stare at me and stuff when those topics are brought up.

When asked about the involvement of her instructor when multicultural topics were part of class discussions, Jo noted:

I think he was more passive, I think because he… Some of the things that he didn't understand, so it was like, oh, well you know, I get it, whatever. But it was more, oh, he didn't know certain things and I guess as long as he was teaching us, we, the BIPOC

students, were teaching him, so that I guess what kind of created like the awkwardness of,
you know. As BIPOC students, we're always teaching other non… What is it called?
Other races, I guess you would say, about certain things, about other cultures, or, you
know just in our like systemic ways of life. And he was just learning as well.

When providing an overview of her experiences in her classes, Alyssa described her
experiences of feeling unseen by her white professors:

I describe my experience as that it wasn't a good experience to me, in terms of those
classes. But I went to them, and I actually had okay grades, and, even though sometimes I
feel like that you're not recognized in the class with the input you put in. But, you know,
you just have to adapt and do whatever you can do to make yourself better.

Core Narrative #5: Positive Learning

The core narrative of positive learning experiences contains recurring examples of
interpersonal connection and meaningful conversations. Contrasted with disengagement and
bland learning experiences commonly referenced in participants' accounts of most classroom
climates, participants described how they valued opportunities to learn from and engage in
discussion with classmates. Participants attributed these discussions as central to meaningful
learning of multicultural topics thereby fostering a greater depth in understanding of identity-
based lived experiences. The core narrative around positive learning was constructed from a
combination of actual experiences, both with some white professors as well as some participants'
experiences with BIPOC professors that they mentioned in their stories, and participants' visions
of what would have improved their learning experiences. Thus, all nine participants' individual
narratives comprised this core narrative. While several participants noted experiences of
connection in the classroom, some described their wishes for increased attentiveness and

understanding of the individual experiential realities of varied demographics of students. Another factor of positive learning experiences that was referenced by some participants was the appropriate used of power and authority by their instructors when necessary, such as disrupting harmful commentary from other students.

Connection and Understanding the Lived Experience

Patterns of interpersonal connection and understanding constituted a valued part of some participants' learning, while others shared about how greater connection and understanding were absent from their experiences but would have improved their overall experiences. The importance of this subtheme can be substantiated by Jo's narrative containing her own perspectives on pathways for building connection and understanding, as well as examples of positive experiences with a BIPOC professor that contrasted some of her experiences with white professors:

One thing that I found out that helps me better is, you know, just listening to other students and their experiences that I'm like, oh, you know, we kind of have, you know, this intersection like, you know, some of our experiences and lives are the same in some ways and in the same ways they're different. You know as far as you know food and you know connecting over just like oh that's cool I do this or oh my family does it this way instead, it kinda broadens like, oh, if you do something similar, oh, I learned, and I'm like, okay, but there's different ways to do it. Even with the teacher I have now, you know, like she's an Asian woman. And I'm like, oh, you know, it's cool that, you know, she's putting her experiences, you know, in the class so that makes me able to connect mine and then from us to discuss like, oh, that's cool that you do it this way, but this is how I was taught. Or, you know, this is how I learned psychology. As far as like taking

notes or, you know, if I take notes on paper, if I take notes online or, you know, just kind of those different ways of how different students interact with the teacher and how they retain information.

Other participants, including Asia, described her wishes for more connection with professors and classmates and shared her thoughts on how identity differences may have resulted in the absence of connection:

I wish that there had been more connection with the professors, but I honestly don't know if that's just like the way the university was structured, to not foster that type of connection. Or if it was, I don't know, like if there was something else, maybe something, your identities that kind of prevented that from happening.

In reference to their white professor, Ameila shared her perspectives on her professor's lack of understanding her racialized lived experiences:

For, someone who just didn't really have the same experiences of me, I just felt like it was kind of weird that they were kind of generalizing it to a textbook or something that they've learned, when I don't think they've actually just like sat down with someone of that skin tone and just like try to understand where they're coming from.

Discussion and Dialogue

Another common subtheme that participants referenced in their reflections about positive learning experiences included class discussions and open dialogues with classmates. One participant, Jo, noted how listening to the experiences of peers fostered greater engagement and connection:

One thing that I found out that helps me better is, you know, just listening to other students and their experiences that I'm like, oh, you know, we kind of have, you know,

this intersection like, you know, some of our experiences and lives are the same in some ways and in the same ways they're different. You know as far as you know food and you know connecting over just like, 'oh that's cool I do this,' or 'oh, my family does it this way instead,' it kinda broadens like, 'oh, if you do something similar,' 'oh, I learned,' and I'm like, 'okay, but there's different ways to do it.' Even with the teacher I have now, you know, like she's an Asian woman. And I'm like, oh, you know, it's cool that, you know, she's putting her experiences, you know, in the class so that makes me able to connect mine and then from us to discuss like, oh, that's cool that you do it this way, but this is how I was taught. Or, you know, this is how I learned psychology. As far as like taking notes or, you know, if I take notes on paper, if I take notes online or, you know, just kind of those different ways of how different students interact with the teacher and how they retain information.

Another participant, Asia, discussed the value of contributions from other students and her reflections on how more class discussion, contrasted from lecturing, would have enhanced learning:

I do feel like students have a lot that they bring in the class. I think that especially when you're talking that topic in psychology that are so personal to so many students. You have to acknowledge them on some level and you have to hear their voices more than just online assignments. You have to bring that into the question as well. So, I definitely think that purely lecturing style is not appropriate for many courses and I think that there should have been more discussion and activities integrated in there.

When describing the importance of open discussions to facilitate greater connection and understanding of intergenerational issues that affect BIPOC populations, Ameila explained:

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You just try to come from a place of understanding because psychology really isn't talked

much about in other countries or countries where they're seen as third world, you know?

But yeah, but I feel like that should be more talked about and a lot of people should share

their experiences on that because there's a lot of people that can learn from that and then

also just, just something where, like, we can also like step back and say, 'wow, like I

never really thought that this was a thing or, you know, I never really thought that other

people went through stuff like this. And maybe there might be someone who could like

take away with it or someone who resonated with them because that's how they were

raised as well, and talking about it verbally just helps them

Effective Teaching

Participants' narratives also contained examples of effective teaching practices. Natalie,

who largely had positive things to say about her experiences with white faculty teaching

multicultural topics in psychology, said, "I guess because she would, let us that [*sic*], she would

make sure that we were all involved with this" when referencing her instructor's inclusivity.

Casey explained how her current instructor's apparent passion for teaching about

multicultural topics has helped her learn, contrasted with a previous ineffective class:

Yeah, it's a lot different this year. I feel like she's made it a lot more interesting. I feel

like I'm, I've actually learned a few things, maybe because I really, you know, kind of

went over it already, but I think I learned a lot more things, and it was kinda more

exciting this year because it's so much, she's more passionate about her job. Like,

someone who actually wants to teach the subject and she loves what she does. But like I

don't know, I said the first time it wasn't like that, it was like, I don't know, I didn't

really learn anything. I was just trying to get through. Yeah."

Sara discussed similar experiences and shared how her instructor's responsiveness and willingness to self-disclose has supported her learning:

She, I think she even had a personal story that she had shared one topic, I actually forgot like what it was, but she was sharing to us and then you can tell, like, she actually really loves the course she teaches. Like she'll give background and she'll like give stories, and if we come to her question, she's very willing to answer.

Jo shared similar thoughts about effective teaching by contrasting her current experiences with a BIPOC instructor from her previous experiences with white instructors:

And this year with the BIPOC teacher, it's actually it's more refreshing because she has a different background than, you know, a typical white professor. So, she she's able to connect her culture, which is able to help other people connect their culture.

In another excerpt from Jo, she shared changes her instructor made to be more attentive and responsive to students:

I think after… Probably like the last, probably in the middle of the first semester, he kind of started, you know, oh, I'm in the middle of the first semester, he kind of started asking 'am I meeting everybody's needs in the class?' So, he would do different things to be like, 'okay, did you get this information? Or did you get this information?' And tried to connect individually with the students. And definitely towards the last semester, in the ending of that semester, he was really more on the one-on one-basis with his students, so as for me he would be like, oh, I'm gonna send the notes later or and he would let me know. And so and so, or he would be like I have the notes. If you need anything else, just let me know. So, he would, he got better as the semesters and as days and we went on.

In an example from Asia she shared how her professor effectively handled another student who expressed discriminatory view in class:

> There was that one person who was very vocal about his beliefs, and I remember we had one of our major chapters towards the end of the semester. He did end up going on a bit of a tangent during class at some point and being kind of aggressively discriminatory towards some people, and I appreciate it as a professor, he kind of shut that down and basically told him that that wasn't okay. And so that was really, like I really like that they were able to, you know attend to that and make sure that this person is not going on their tangent any further.

Core Narrative #6: Future Directions

The core narrative of future directions expands from eight participants' narratives of the impact of harm that they experienced in their classes and their perspectives on how white instructors can improve their teaching on multicultural topics in psychology. This core narrative is comprised of participants' narratives about ways to rectify prevalent forms of injustice and inequity within classroom contexts, as well as specific calls to action for white instructors. A similarity across many participants' narratives was the specificity of the calls to action. Many of these calls were attached to participants' own negative experiences. Participants' narratives also referenced desires for more BIPOC representation, both in class content and among instructors, especially for classes that contain multicultural elements. Another example of future directions that was cited by multiple participants is the need for instructors to be more committed and equipped to provide bystander intervention when necessary.

Increased Representation and Acknowledging BIPOC Contributions

One of the most prevalent subthemes across participants' narratives was an emphasis on more acknowledgement of BIPOC contributions in psychology, as well as increased BIPOC representation. This is substantiated in Casey's narrative:

I'm a very big history person, and I love learning about culture. I love my own culture. Like I'm big on it, even like from the beginning of the whole slave trade and like how we see the culture in even today's age that, you know, that's just amazing I think. I feel like, I just feel like if it was incorporated more, like if they just save credit where credit was due more, like that would be great. Just, I don't know, something other than, I don't know, I feel like people think differently, especially people of like different cultures and like different like regions of the world. Like you probably… it'll probably be great to like learn something different, like something that's not even like custom to what we're learning. And we can only get that from like, you know, learning from people of different cultures and people from different backgrounds, you know, they probably have a different way of thinking about things as well.

When commenting on the ways in which the history of psychology has been whitewashed, "Casey" also remarked, "Yeah, cause I'm pretty sure it's not the same people I keep reading about. Not that they don't do amazing things as well, but I just would love to hear about somebody else sometimes." She also shared:

I would also say, like I'm not saying that, you know, these the people that came up with, you know, nature versus nurture and all that stuff, don't deserve credit, But I feel like, like this real feeling that there's some more people of color who had theories as well. And maybe like, you know, we could learn some of their theories and like how that, like,

also made you know, influence on the people who got recognition for them. I feel like… I feel like some of these people that we study and give so much like, I don't know, like credibility to don't necessarily didn't necessarily come to that on their own. But that's just me, I don't know if that's completely true. But maybe we could look at more into, you know, African Americans who have theories or Koreans who have theories or you know, Latino Americans or whatever that had theories as well and see how that incorporates into psychology and how that influenced it as well.

Jo also emphasized the need for increased recognition of BIPOC contributions in psychology, especially the history of psychology:

I think that, there, should read a section or each, or there should be sections on each individual ethnicity, and that's just my opinion because school is where we learn about other ethnicities besides, you know, interacting with each other. And I think there should have been more, some more information on like, oh, these are some of the, you know, the Black psychologists, the Latino psychologists, you know, other ethnicities that have played a major role in psychology and understanding the depths of psychology, as long as with the history. Even though it might not be pretty, but I think including all that information will also be like allows students, you know, to be like, oh, well, I didn't know this about, you know, I didn't know that, you know, oh, that Black people contribute so much to psychology or Asian people did and we didn't even know. And so, I think that will also help for other students, and just also helping them figure out, oh, I love psychology because oh, my favorite person in psychology did whatever, you know, type of thing.

Jo also offered suggestions for increasing BIPOC representation, as well as her rationale

for how this would likely benefit students of all racial identities:

If a white teacher is always teaching the same class, I think, you know, it only lacks

interest of students or, you know, BIPOC students, but also, it doesn't allow the white

students to learn about different cultures. So I think having, you know, more than one

type of race in that department, or whatever. Or you know, having speakers come in and

speak about, you know, their findings whether they're scientists or you know, a local

somebody, you know, kind of helping students engage like, oh, this is my race, and I can

be excited with what they're gonna say and probably learn a little bit more and other

students like understand like, oh, this is pretty fascinating.

In addition, Amelia shared her perspectives on inadequate coverage of multicultural

issues, especially the complexities of experiences based on the intersection of multiple identities

for BIPOC individuals. In reference to her classes taught by white instructors, she recounted:

They tend to overlook a lot of issues that women go through, and not just women in

general, but like every woman of color that what we go through, like especially with

beauty standards, especially with how we're raised in immigrant households, how, like,

our parents tend to raise the woman to be more, to be more in the kitchen, and how we're

expected to dress, and how we're supposed to be more subservient to men, how we're

raised like that. And how when we are finally out in the world, we're adults, we're doing

our own thing, we still tend to be meek. We're not able to stand up for ourselves as much,

and I know it's not just something of my experience, it's something where I've met a lot

of BIPOC students and you've actually bonded over that where we talk about how we do

tend to be more meek, or we tend to put our heads down more, and how it takes a lot of

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strength in us internally to like just break that stigma and just unlearn everything that we were taught as kids. And that's something I'm still doing now and a lot of BIPOC students are doing as well. It's not really talked about. We just tend to, like, skim over the top, but there also needs to be more studies on how BIPOC students are raised and also not just the students, but also the parents and what their childhoods were like because it's kind of like a cycle of how people are raised because they're used to it because that's how their parents raised them. And then that's how their other parents raised them, and it just like goes down into like a straight cycle, like a straight line, of how they were raised. So, then it comes back to us and they're teaching with ingrained trauma.

Calls to Action

Participants' calls to action for white instructors who teach multicultural topics in psychology courses contained a wide variety of examples, many of which were based on the problems that participants experienced or witnessed in their classes. For instance, some participants called for white instructors to have increased tolerance for being uncomfortable when sensitive, culturally-relevant, subjects are brought up, rather than avoiding these topics. Amelia, who shared about a lack of engagement from both her instructor and white peers when BIPOC students would share about their racialized lived experiences, said:

> And they would just overlook what was just said…Because that was uncomfortable for them. They don't want to hear it again, and they just wanted to overlook it just so it won't make anyone feel uncomfortable. You know? And that's one thing I did tend to notice, like, when topics like that would be just brought up in the class, or a student was brave enough to share their experience, or just talk about something that resonated with them on a racial level. It was very quiet in the class, and you can tell that it would make a lot of

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people uncomfortable…I just personally believe for us to, like, get somewhere and for us to engage and just to unlearn everything that we've been taught, you first have to be uncomfortable for you to get to the stage where you want to be.

One of Jo's calls to action included the need for white instructors to make clear commitments to multicultural issues and advocacy:

My thing is, if you're willing to teach a multicultural topic, that you need to be invested in multicultural issues, whether that's BLM, you know, sticking up for immigration or immigrants, you know, there's so many different issues. Helping with feminism, helping people with, you know, LGBTQ rights, you know. If you're gonna speak on these topics, you need to be able to support, do your research about them, and like know why certain groups are taking these, these types of actions.

When asked about white instructors teaching on the topic of white privilege in the classroom, Jo shared:

I think, you know,… them having the discussion with, with themselves or with other teachers, or 'how do we handle these topics and then how do we let everyone feel engaged with these topics? Or, how do we let the students feel engaged with this topic but also don't make any students uncomfortable, you know?' As a Black student, or as a Black person, my parents always have talked about the topic of, you know, white privilege and privilege as a whole. So I feel like, you know, if my parents can do it, you know, teachers should be able to do it. And I think that also will help other Black teachers or, you know, Latino teachers or Asian teachers, to help them create, like no, this is a systematic thing, or this is, you know, something that was put in place so there is

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white privilege, but there's not really anything said, you know, quote unquote minority privilege.

Ameila also shared thoughts about the importance of white instructors acknowledging their white privilege as precursor for deeper learning to occur:

I feel like there should be a lot of diversity training…Like I just wanted there to be, like, a deeper knowledge for that topic, so when they're teaching it, it won't sound as monotone when it's coming from them. And, like, when they're teaching it, it's like they have a more of a passion for it and where they're actually trying to ingrain it in the minds of their students… Before you even teach that subject, you need to acknowledge that especially if you're not a person of color, you have to like acknowledge your privilege, you have to acknowledge that if I were to teach the subject it has to come with the right message and tone. Because I don't wanna make it seem like it's just like another lesson that I have to just get over with, you know? I just want there to be more passion when you're teaching the subject so the students around them can be able to engage and take off from it.

Ameila elaborated on the necessity of more education around white privilege and how others, both instructors and other white students, can take accountability and responsibility for their learning and unlearning:

I just want there to be a lot of education and a lot of people acknowledging that they do have some kind of privilege, but with that privilege they can learn and, like, basically teach themselves how to, like, basically unlearn everything that they've learned…The first step is always like acknowledging, you know, your privilege, but then the second step is realizing that, okay, I acknowledged it but, like, what next? Like, what can I do?

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Like, what can I teach myself about, you know, what can I educate myself about so I

know that, from now on, I'm not making the same mistakes I did in the past.

Ameila also shared her ideas on how multicultural teaching can be improved with more

discussion, listening, and open engagement among students:

I would say that I feel like it also could be improved if there'd be discussions on… If like

one student of color just talked about their experiences, and a lot of the people who

weren't of color would just be more willing to learn, like asking more questions instead

of kind of just being closed off because it gives the impression that you don't really care

about their experience, you know? And so, I'm just hoping that with a lot more

multicultural teachings and curriculums that there's like a lot of engagement so this won't

be one-sided. There can be a lot of, like, it can be both meeting in half and just, you

know, trying to understand from there.

Similar to Jo and Ameila on the topic of white instructors acknowledging their white

privilege, Casey shared her thoughts on how white instructors can approach the teaching of

multicultural topics with more self-awareness and sensitivity for the lived experiences of BIPOC

students:

I think maybe they can also acknowledge their privilege. Maybe talk about how like it

might have been easier in some sense to get where they are versus, like, other people with

cultural backgrounds. We could talk about more statistics that involve like minorities and

people of color. Maybe that would help, you know, other people, you know, have more

empathy and just understand maybe like the struggle that comes with like being a

different race.

When asked about ways that multicultural teaching can be improved, especially when these courses are taught by white instructors, Alyssa noted:

I could also recommend that in schools that they should form some supportive groups for the Black students in schools. And the teachers and the professors and even the administrators also should be engaged so that if there are some issues that are affecting them, we can address them directly.

Asia also shared her ideas for improving multicultural teaching, such as attending to identity-based strengths, in addition to acknowledging cultural differences and challenges experienced by different marginalized populations:

I would say the biggest thing is just acknowledging those differences in a culturally sensitive way, because it, again, like it sucks to be in a classroom where it's just presented as like white is the norm and that's what everyone… like, everyone has the same presentation with every disorder and there's no cultural variation whatsoever. And I would say just having that acknowledgement firstly and then I think, as I said earlier, just coming from a strengths-based approach when it comes to talking about different identities, in addition to all the barriers that, like, some marginalized identities have had systemically and in addition to all the prejudice that many people experience, we can also talk about the strength that comes from different populations. So, just having a balance of all of that would definitely be better.

Asia also noted how instructors can make their courses accessible and inclusive for students by sharing, "I would say the big thing is to maybe make things more accessible for socially- and economically-disadvantaged students because, I was talking about this earlier,

about how the university is very expensive to begin with." Asia also discussed how accessibility can be improved by removing learning materials that contain excessive jargon:

A lot of the language that's used in certain articles that we were assigned to read, it was so you really have to know a lot about the academic world of psychology to even begin to understand that there's a lot of big terms that are used. It feels like they're not as easily defined, even if you can search the definition from Google, it's still hard to understand it. And so, then the thing is, that a lot of the professors would use that same language in class but then just not explain it and because they were lecturing and they were going a little bit fast…You know, people get intimidated to raise their hand and say, 'What was that word? Can you please explain it a bit?' So not using such complex, like, language and making the language itself more accessible.

When asked about multicultural topics that were missed but should be covered, Destinee shared:

[I'm] thinking more so about like ethnic minorities that aren't typically discussed, like I feel like we always talk about the big racial groups, like, oh you are if you are Asian, or if you are white… We always skim over Indigenous people, and then another thing would be people that are not cisgender or heterosexual. I feel like we always skip over gender minorities and I'm not sure if it's because of the political climate of where I live but, like, I'm learning about gender-affirming care and gender and sexuality for the first time ever in grad school.

Destinee also commented on how instructors can address power imbalances when she shared:

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I feel like there's a lack of awareness, especially when, I mean, you can say that you would, you can address the power imbalance, but then you continue to uphold these specific standards, especially because it can be interpreted as upholding unless you specifically, you know, say that you are anti-racist, or you do partake in activism for specific groups. I hope that made sense… Maybe this is very basic, but literally just listening to students like I know that probably a lot of universities they have they have like the student rating where like the student will share their experience in the class, and I feel like most professors don't care about that. And I bet a lot of those students don't just have something to say about the material or like the homework load, it's more so about the disposition of the professor, like the lack of acknowledgement for those things that we were talking about, but I'm not sure how we would go about doing that, especially because I mean now at least in Texas they're trying to get rid of the DEI offices.

In a similar vein, Jo shared her thoughts on how professors can used their power in effective ways to address bigotry coming from other students:

I think that a lot of it could be addressed instead of just saying, "Oh, that's you know, how they are." No, you know, certain things aren't okay to say in public at all and not even in private. And I think, you know, even with being on campus during the summer, there's like, you know, our just on campus for about a year. So, I think there's a lot of, you know, different things that could be addressed on campus as far as, you know, the white students go. You know, I understand, you know, they don't understand like some of the correlations between some things, that, you know, Black students go through, or Asian students, you know, even Latinos, you know. To create a safer environment for

everyone, let's address all the things that, you know, either been said, done, or you know just presented themselves in a way.

Member Reflections

The four participants who opted to share their reflections during the member reflection meetings were brief, but these reflections nonetheless played an important role in the data analysis process. Here, I describe feedback shared from participants and how this feedback contributed to the construction of findings drawn from the data. In Chapter 5, I provide further discussion of this feedback, implications, and conclusions.

Salient initial codes that participants noted in their review included overrepresented whiteness, calls for greater BIPOC representation, racial color blindness, implicit bias, and othering and displacement. Because these codes particularly resonated with participants, I used these as anchors in my process of generating subthemes. I also used the sentiments behind these codes to further attend to related issues and experiences referenced in participants' narratives. For instance, I sought to recognize other examples and variations of racial color blindness, which led to identifying patterns of generalizations and erasure of nuance, which became part of the color blindness subtheme for the Core Narrative #2: Enactments of Harm and Oppression.

While participants did not express skepticism of any of the initial codes, some expressed that the names of some codes were unclear. For example, an initial code named "environmental conditions" lacked clarity to some participants. I used this feedback to rename the code to "tension and awkwardness" from revisiting the narratives associated with the code, which ultimately became a subtheme for Core Narrative #1: Classroom Climates.

Other important disclosures shared by participants during the member reflection meetings included hopes that this research would be used to bring awareness to issues of problematic

teaching practices and help to rectify these issues. In addition, one participant expressed curiosity about future research expanding to BIPOC students' experiences with white faculty in K-12 education when covering topics relevant to multicultural psychology. I expand on these implications and directions in Chapter 5.

Researcher Reflexivity

After each interview with participants, I documented my thoughts, emotions, curiosities, and observations of my interactions with each participant. While my aim was to center and amplify participants' stories as much as possible without tarnishing these narratives by imposing myself, I recognize the impossibility of denying my influence on participants and the findings I discerned. In this chapter, I have aimed to describe and present participants' narratives as they shared them, while I discuss my interpretations in Chapter 5. I have aimed to do the same with providing a description of my reflexivity data here and have reserved analysis of my reflexivity data for the following chapter.

In my initial interviews, I documented my awareness of my urge to paraphrase participants' narratives and my desire to seek specific words and responses that could answer my research questions in my reflexivity notes. In addition, I identified my tendency to restate some of my interview questions to participants when I was hoping to access more of their narratives than what they had shared with me in their initial responses. Another self-reflection I documented early on was my assessment of my interview questions as assumptive about the experiences of my participants, rather than these being more open and neutral. I also documented feelings of shock and sadness when hearing about participants' experiences with microaggressions and hostile racism in their classes. I recounted my experiences of having difficulty fathoming and grappling with some participants' examples of egregious bias and

inequity present in their educational experiences. As participants shared detailed accounts of harmful experiences, I found myself wondering about their perceptions of me as a researcher and if they felt uncomfortable sharing so much with me as a white person.

Other feelings I documented include the emergence of white guilt when participants asked me to restate or explain my wordy interview questions with jargon. In these moments, I documented reflections of taking an overly-intellectualized stance mirroring white superiority. Another realization I noted after a few of the interviews was examples of centering whiteness taking place within the study. One participant noted how her classes often presented white as the default or norm by contrasting whiteness with the idea of a homogenous group of BIPOC identities. Few of my questions attended to nuance of participants' identities and rather categorized BIPOC issues as a single entity. Similarly, I documented my thoughts about how my questions reinforced a narrow narrative of victimization and did not adequately attend to strengths and resilience, as a result of one participant's call for more of a strengths-based lens in multicultural teaching.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Summary of Major Findings

The six core narratives and 20 subthemes discerned from the nine participants' storied accounts of their realities in undergraduate psychology classes taught by white faculty who covered multicultural topics provide a window into the experiences of BIPOC students within this understudied context and thereby answer the study's first research question. Participants' narratives were marked by references to the climates of their classrooms, enacted harm and oppression, oppressive pedagogy, the felt impact of harm, perspectives on positive learning, and ideas for reforming the teaching of multicultural content in psychology. These categories indicate salient aspects of experiences and the nuances within each of these categories reveals the complexities of different individuals' experiences. While recurring themes were present across many participants' narratives, accounts cannot be reduced to a singular description marked solely by oppressive experiences. Doing so recapitulates societal erasures of BIPOC students' nuanced, unique accounts and produces inaccurate, oppressive narratives that maintain the status quo of painting BIPOC populations as victims.

The key findings from the present study also address more specific foci, including microaggressions, oppressive pedagogy and curricula, and the centralization of whiteness, related to the study's three other research questions. All but one participant cited experiences of witnessing and/or being the targets of microaggressions within their undergraduate multicultural psychology courses with white faculty, revealing a prevalence of microaggressive experiences in college environments consistent with existing research (Ogunyemi et al., 2020). Participants' narratives also revealed experiences with a wide spectrum of racist experiences, ranging from

individually-based implicit bias and overt bigotry to racist practices and teaching styles operating at structural levels. Further, the findings located within participants' stories of their lived experiences in classes taught by white faculty reveal examples of overrepresentation of whiteness and covert and overt manifestations of white supremacy culture.

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Integration With Existing Literature

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BIPOC Student Experiences With Multicultural Education

The findings from the present study support existing scholarship on issues adjacent to the experiences of BIPOC students in undergraduate psychology courses taught by white instructors who covered multicultural topics in these courses. While the present study is the first of its kind to examine undergraduate education in psychology, recent studies have examined closely-related topics. For instance, Valencia-Garcia and Coles-Ritchie (2021) centered the voices of BIPOC students enrolled in service-learning courses at a PWI; they expressed grievances related to the centering of whiteness in their courses, especially related to white students being prioritized. In a study examining instructors' use of identity safety cues, Howansky et al. (2022) found that students with marginalized identities felt a stronger sense of belonging and had more favorable impressions of instructors who incorporated safety cues into their classes.

Participants also shared similar experiences with BIPOC graduate students documented in previous research. Specifically, findings pertaining to participants' skepticism of their white instructors' credibility for teaching multicultural topics mirror similar concerns expressed by BIPOC graduate students documented in Pulliam et al. (2019). In addition, BIPOC students in the present study noted their desire for greater BIPOC representation among faculty and how their increased engagement in classes taught by BIPOC faculty contrasted with their experiences in classes taught by white instructors, which replicates findings from Pulliam et al. (2019).

Further, witnessing white instructors effectively handle problematic students was cited by participants in Pulliam et al. (2019) as a factor that supported their gradual trust of their white instructors, which aligned with sentiments expressed by some participants in the current study.

Findings discerned from participants' narratives in this study are congruent with the conclusions drawn by Curtis-Boles and Bourg (2010), who studied the experiences of BIPOC graduate students completing doctoral coursework in clinical psychology. In particular, research involving BIPOC graduate students mirrors the experiences of BIPOC undergraduate students in this study, with both groups finding value in opportunities for processing and self-reflection to gain new insights on multicultural issues. As such, the need for emotionally safe learning environments, particularly when learning about multicultural issues, as expressed by participants in the present study, is similar to Curtis-Boles and Bourg (2010)'s research with graduate students.

The importance of building connections and experiencing a sense of belonging shared among participants in this study overlap with sentiments felt by BIPOC counseling psychology graduate students Pieterse et al. (2016) found. In addition, findings from the current study resemble experiences of BIPOC students previous research who observed how their multicultural courses prioritized the needs of white students over those of BIPOC students, thereby centering whiteness. Participants in the present study made similar observations and noted how multicultural curricula was generally presented in a whitewashed manner.

Participants' experiences documented in the current study can also be integrated with other research by Seward and Guiffrida (2012) who examined multicultural pedagogy and the learning needs of BIPOC graduate students enrolled in multicultural counseling courses. In this previous research, participants noted their concerns about being negatively stereotyped when

participating in class, which is similar to concerns expressed by undergraduate participants in the present study. In addition, a shared theme of protective caution among participants in the present study follows similar patterns of what Seward and Guiffrida (2012) observed among their sample of BIPOC graduate students, who maintained silence as a mechanism of both self- and cultural preservation.

Microaggressions

Participants' narratives of their experiences with microaggressions in the current study extends the existing scholarship on microaggressions prevalent within educational contexts. Mirroring previous research documenting feelings of invisibility (Franklin et al., 2006), low self-esteem (Nadal et al., 2014), and the effects of existing within a hostile educational climate (Solórzano et al., 2000), participants in the present study revealed similar effects from their experiences with microaggressions perpetuated by other students and their white instructors. Consistent with Sue et al.'s (2009) microaggressive themes, findings from the current study reconfirm patterns of racial ascriptions of intelligence and assumptions of being a perpetual foreigner that are commonplace for BIPOC students in college classrooms.

While participants from the current study did not cite explicit denials of racism as documented by Sue et al. (2009), adjacent issues of colorblindness and the erasure of participants' multifaceted identities were implicated in participants' experiences with microaggressions in their classes. These adjacent issues were especially prevalent in the curricula taught by participants' white instructors, which aligns with existing literature documenting the how racial microaggressions can be perpetuated via interpersonal interactions that are tainted by individually-based implicit biases, as well as through structural and organizational levels,

including in the topics that are covered versus the topics that are excluded when white instructors cover multicultural content in their courses.

Findings from previous research by Williams et al. (2020), which focused on microaggressions experienced by Black students attending PWIs, were also replicated in the experiences of Black participants in the current study. Major themes implicated in racial microaggressions that Williams et al. (2020) identified that overlapped with the experiences of students from this study pertained to: BIPOC students not being real citizens, racial categorization and sameness, intelligence assumptions, being treated as a second class citizen and ignored or invisiblized, exoticization, avoidance and distancing, and environmental exclusion. Although Williams et al. (2020) studied the experiences of Black students, microaggressive themes identified from this research were also evidenced among non-Black participants of color in the present study. While caution must be paid to avoid excessive assumptions of shared experiences across different BIPOC populations and thereby recapitulating generalizations and existing microaggressions, recurring themes of microaggressions experienced by different racial and cultural groups can illuminate the insidious ways that white supremacy operates and reinforces patterns of othering, pathologizing, and homogenizing different racial groups within higher education settings.

Participants' calls for increasing support and opportunities for connection for BIPOC students can also be integrated with Robinson-Perez et al.'s (2020) findings who found that psychological distress induced by microaggressions experienced by BIPOC students attending PWIs was exacerbated by living off campus. Robinson-Perez et al. (2020) thus suggested that opportunities for connection, particularly affirmative counter spaces, may buffer stress related to experiencing microaggressions. The value that participants placed on opportunities for

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connection building, such as within support or affinity groups for BIPOC college students, can be integrated with Robinson-Perez et al.'s (2020) suggestions made to call on higher education institutions to facilitate and support the formation of spaces for creating community among BIPOC students.

Participants' experiences with microaggressions made by their peers also resemble findings by Wong and Jones (2018), who found that BIPOC students experienced microaggressions from their peers to a greater degree compared to their faculty members. In addition, Wong and Jones (2018) found that racial microaggressions were more prevalent relative to other identity-based microaggressions, which was also evidenced in the present study. Because peer-based microaggressions can be particularly detrimental to students' sense of belonging and safety, both Wong and Jones (2018) and the findings from the present study highlight the need for faculty to be vigilant of microaggressions occurring in their classrooms and to make concerted efforts to effectively confront and challenge microaggressions perpetrated by other students.

Undergraduate Psychology Curricula

The focus on participants' experiences with multicultural issues covered within their undergraduate psychology courses generated findings that can be integrated with common curricular practices for baccalaureate education in psychology. At this study's inception, the *APA Undergraduate Guidelines 2.0* for psychology majors was under revision (APA, 2013). While this revision was published in August 2023 as the *Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major: Version 3.0* (henceforth referred to as *APA Undergraduate Guidelines 3.0*), participants' narratives of their experiences in psychology classes taught by white faculty pertained to classes that were taken when the previous guidelines were in place (APA, 2023). Nonetheless, findings

discerned from participants' experiences can be used to examine issues that are relevant for examining the new *APA Undergraduate Guidelines 3.0* (APA, 2023).

While the previous guidelines contained "a curricular emphasis on multiculturalism" as a foundational aspect of baccalaureate education for psychology students (APA, 2013, p. 12), the current guidelines evolved to offer a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) issues along with and recommendations of actualizing these proclaimed commitments. For instance, the new guidelines specify the importance of helping students recognize and understand psychology's "checkered history in regard to privilege and marginalization," which captures participants' narratives regarding the need for their classes to be more transparent in acknowledging the history of psychology (APA 2023, p. 40). In addition, findings from the current study support the emphasis on EDI-informed pedagogy to support belonging among students from historically marginalized student communities, which can include acknowledgment and appreciation for ideas that were generated by BIPOC and other historically marginalized groups and providing opportunities for quality social learning experiences (APA, 2023).

Although the new guidelines show promise as there is evidence of how key issues related to the findings of the current study are implicated in the new guidelines, the present study also offers additional contributions that can be used to analyze potential shortcomings of the updated guidelines. In particular, issues related to the centering of whiteness in psychology as experienced by participants in this study may still exist within the new guidelines. The commitment to EDI, for instance, is only explained towards the end of the document, and there is only one specified learning outcome related to multiculturalism listed as tool for guiding baccalaureate education in psychology, providing only cursory attention to these issues. This

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learning outcome, described as *develop(ing) and practice interpersonal and intercultural responsiveness*, is absent of the calls to broader action for multicultural education identified by participants in the current study (APA, 2023). According to this study's findings, participants believe EDI issues should be centered within the curricula, design, and pedagogy of psychology courses, especially courses that contain a focus on multicultural topics. However, current political initiatives to eliminate or reduce EDI work in education present major challenges (Yang, 2023). In addition, the censorship of EDI can be an institutional barrier for educators who aspire to practice anti-racist pedagogy (Akamine-Phillips et al., 2019). I discuss this further in a subsequent section (see Teaching Implications).

Whiteness and Teaching Multiculturalism

Findings from the present study can also be integrated with previous research examining how white instructors teach multicultural issues. Smith et al. (2017), for instance, described multicultural imposter syndrome, multicultural perfectionism, and multicultural projection as common issues experienced by white faculty who teach topics related to race and other multicultural topics. Each of these issues were evidenced in participants' accounts of their white instructors in the present study. For example, participants' observations of their instructors' discomfort when teaching multicultural content overlaps with the phenomenon of multicultural imposter syndrome Smith et al. (2017) described. Participants similarly noted their instructors' discomfort when they evidenced struggle with managing difficult classroom dialogues, which Wing Sue et al. (2009) previously documented.

A related phenomenon of multicultural perfectionism was implicated in participants' descriptions of their white instructors and classmates who came across as overconfident regarding their awareness of white privilege (Smith et al., 2017). Multicultural perfectionism is

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especially relevant to recent political initiatives that have banned or limited multicultural education (Yang, 2023). Educators are likely to feel the strain of these policies, which may induce greater fear and hesitation to address multicultural topics in their classes out of concern that doing so could jeopardize their employment, especially for untenured faculty (Akamine Phillips et al., 2019). In addition, multicultural projections, an adjacent issue, consisting of displaced emotion related to instructors' discomfort of being called in around their implicit biases were present in participants' accounts of their instructors' defensive reactions (Okun, 2021; Smith et al., 2017).

Participants' ideas for improving multicultural teaching also mirror findings from Akamine Phillips et al. (2019), who examined strategies used by white instructors for incorporating anti-racist pedagogy into their courses. The co-construction of knowledge by both instructors and students was evidenced in the present study and in Akamine Phillips et al.'s (2019) research as a valued approach to teaching, which extends further support for using dialogic teaching methods and exercising cultural humility in multicultural psychology courses taught by white faculty (Abbott et al., 2019; Freire, 1992). Additionally, participants in the current study cited grievances with performative allyship and inadequate acknowledgement of white privilege, similar to issues examined by Akamine Phillips et al. (2019), who referenced white instructors' resistance of performative allyship and cognizance of white privilege as part of their efforts to practice anti-racist pedagogy in their classes. Consequentially, the integration of findings from the present study with existing scholarship on whiteness and multicultural teaching provide additional clarity and direction for white instructors who aspire to improve the cultural responsiveness of their pedagogy.

Implications for Theories

Implications for Critical Race Theory

Findings from participants' narratives provide support for the utility of CRT to as a framework for identifying and interrogating practices and structures that perpetuate and maintain racial inequity and as a means for challenging the oppressive status quo with undergraduate psychology education. In particular, participants' stories support calls for challenging and displacing dominance, both narratives and positionalities, upheld by white instructors who teach multicultural topics in psychology. Using participants' narratives of their experiences to facilitate change aligns with the value of counter storytelling central within CRT (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010). To challenge dominant teachings and narratives that center whiteness, for example, participants' responses captured their critiques of oppressive content taught by their white instructors, their instructors' justifications of their oppressive teaching practices, and the overrepresentation of whiteness and underrepresentation of theories and contributions made by BIPOC figures in psychology.

Whiteness as property is another aspect of CRT evidenced throughout many of participants' experiences (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010). In particular, several participants described how their white professors maintained control of the multicultural topics that were covered by using lectures to discuss instructor-selected material for the entirety of class without providing space for students to engage with multicultural material through interactions and discussions. From participants' accounts, the teaching of multicultural topics can be understood as the *property* of their professors, which is consistent with Patton's (2016) critical analysis of white property interests in higher education, especially curricula. Consequentially, the

findings of the present study provide support for the reality of white property interests and how these interests can operate in multicultural psychology classes when taught by white instructors.

The permanence of racism is an additional component of CRT evidenced throughout many participants' narratives (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010). For instance, several participants made references to how problems in their classes resembled issues they encountered throughout their previous education, verifying how racism is systemic within education and transcends the boundaries of individual classrooms. In addition, the subtheme of participants' being accustomed to expect instructor ignorance and other racial issues provides evidence for pervasiveness of racism throughout institutions and systems.

Implications for Critical White Studies

Themes of overrepresented whiteness and white supremacy located within participants' narratives of their experiences have implications of CWS, which is an area of specialized study that was created from CRT expansion (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In particular, several participants noted the many ways in which whiteness was centered within their courses, as well as indicators of instructors' defensiveness, a central element of white supremacy culture (Okun, 2021). White supremacy culture, as Okun (2021) defined it, is also comprised of a fear of open conflict and power hoarding, in addition to other elements. Both fear of open conflict and power hoarding were present across several participants' narratives in their references to pervasive silence and apparent avoidance of sensitive multicultural issues that could result in class conflict, as well as mechanisms of power hoarding exercised by their instructors. These examples demonstrate the relevance of CWS for analyzing and problematizing issues related to the centering of whiteness and white supremacy in the teaching of multicultural topics by white professors of undergraduate psychology courses.

As cautioned by Applebaum (2016), critical examination of whiteness runs the risk of inadvertently recentering whiteness. To account for this tendency, Applebaum (2016) noted the importance of engaging in critical reflexivity for scholars of CWS. Thus, the importance of my self-examination of whiteness in this study cannot be overstated. While I discuss my reflexivity in the limitations section of this chapter, I discuss the pertinence of interest convergence and white saviorism here as these issues are relevant to the theoretical implications of my study.

Interest convergence, a tenet of CRT, refers to how social change for marginalized groups tends to be realized only when such change would benefit those in positionalities with greater privilege and power (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1998). My work around issues related to educational inequity impacting BIPOC students does not only offer implications for reforming instructional practices to be more responsive to the needs of BIPOC students, but my work also serves my own interests as doing DEI work is often praised in my profession. While I maintain that this study was born from my social justice values and curiosities stemming from my anecdotal experiences as a college instructor, any positive influence that may come from this study will likely be misattributed to me over the voices of my participants that I have sought to amplify.

The issue of white saviorism, an ideology of charity and rescuing of marginalized BIPOC groups, is one I examined in my reflexivity efforts within the present study (Murphy, 2023). Although one of my aims for the study is to center the voices of BIPOC students with the goal of documenting targets for educational reform for white instructors who teach multicultural topics in psychology, I reject the notion of BIPOC students being a population in need of rescuing. According to Murphy (2023), a hallmark feature of white saviorism is a sense of urgency to procure fast remedies over the arduous work supporting meaningful systemic and structural

reform. To this end, I center macro-level teaching implications over individualistic solutions based on the study's findings in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Implications for Critical Pedagogy

Participants' accounts of their lived experiences related to the teaching practices employed by their white instructors offer a variety of implications for Freire's (1992) theory of critical pedagogy. In particular, most participants cited their dislike of the absence of discussion and interaction in their classes, which is relevant to Freire's (1992) views of anti-dialogic teaching methods as tools of oppression versus dialogic teaching practices that foster understanding, humility, and critical consciousness. Additionally, participants' shared critiques of their instructors' authoritarian stances in their classes captures Freire's (1992) critique of educators who exploit their power and utilize the banking method of teaching to impart their expertise onto the minds of passive students.

When referencing ideas for improving how white instructors cover multicultural topics in psychology, participants' calls for centering and honoring BIPOC lived experiences and cultural knowledge aligns with Freire's (1992) ideas for empowering students by recognizing and validating the knowledge that students already possess. These examples provide support for using Freire's (1992) theory of critical pedagogy to analyze oppressive classroom dynamics and teaching practices, which illustrates contemporary relevance and applications of the theory over 50 years after it was first published. Conversely, critical pedagogy frameworks can be used to identify alternative practices that are student-centered and have the potential to facilitate more effective and meaningful learning related to multicultural issues, which can ultimately be used to inform collective activism against oppressive ideologies, systems, and institutions (Freire, 1992).

Implications for Intersectionality

Findings from participants' narratives regarding identity erasure, invisibility, and generalizations made about BIPOC populations provide support for how an intersectional lens can be used to analyze educational shortcomings and how these shortcomings are inextricably connected to macro-level systems of oppression (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). For instance, participants cited examples of how their white instructors presented multicultural topics as single identity politics absent of nuances and complexities related to simultaneous multicultural issues. Additionally, participants referenced how the curricula taught by their instructors often grouped BIPOC populations together as a single group to compare against whiteness, thereby erasing BIPOC identity intersections. This pattern of neglecting the complexities of BIPOC identity intersections and the framing of whiteness as standard, normative, or the default overlaps with the systemic and perpetual centering of whiteness that is a central target for critique in CWS (Applebaum, 2016; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Thus, the findings from the present study illuminate CWS and intersectionality as complementary frameworks for analyzing and interrogating insidious implications of the normalization of whiteness, as well as identity erasure and reduction processes, particularly within the context of teaching multicultural issues in higher education.

Implications for Teaching

In light of the wide range of recurring issues that BIPOC students experienced within their undergraduate psychology courses containing multicultural topics taught by white instructors, the findings from this study present several implications for teaching. One of the most prevalent sentiments shared by participants was a call for greater BIPOC representation, especially BIPOC professors to teach multiculturally-focused courses in undergraduate

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psychology programs. Per the findings from participants' narratives in the present study, BIPOC

representation within higher education faculty can provide a point of connection for BIPOC

students. In addition, faculty who hold a BIPOC identity possess "a presumed competence to

speak about race and racism" as a result of their racialized lived experiences, which can rectify

the patterns of white incompetence for teaching multicultural topics cited by participants

(Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 11). However, the issue of overburdening BIPOC people with the

task of being the sole educators of multicultural issues cannot be over-cautioned, as this

recapitulates the pressures and burdens of being the spokesperson multicultural topics cited by

participants in the present study. Thus, white educators have an onus to increase and maintain

competence for teaching multicultural topics effectively while embracing a stance of

simultaneous cultural humility (Abbott et al., 2019).

Faculty of Color comprise approximately one-fifth of the faculty positions within higher

education, while BIPOC students account for nearly half of student body populations within

colleges and universities (ACE, 2020). BIPOC faculty cannot merely be increased without

intentional structural changes to reduce systemic barriers that have created a disproportional

imbalance among higher education faculty, with white faculty being overrepresented and BIPOC

faculty being underrepresented. One possibility involves the generation of pipelines that provide

adequate support to help BIPOC students progress through undergraduate and graduate

education programs to ultimately attain the credentials necessary for becoming higher education

faculty. Because of the considerable costs of higher education and because BIPOC students are

more likely to be financially disadvantaged (Wong, 2021), one form of support includes national

policy to provide reparations in the form of tuition waivers and no interest loans for BIPOC

students pursuing higher education, as this could reduce or eliminate economic barriers that

make higher education unobtainable for some. However, recent political initiatives that block EDI advocacy in some states are a barrier that serve primarily as a state and institutional social justice target for educators and psychologists, particularly counseling psychologists (Nadal, 2017). While this is likely challenging feat, the findings from this study have the potential to illustrate the usefulness of CRT and reduce prominent misconceptions that villainize this framework and EDI initiatives (Lang, 2020).

An additional task for addressing the imbalance of BIPOC faulty is ending the common practice in higher education of exploiting adjunct and non-tenure track labor for inadequate pay. BIPOC faculty disproportionately represent adjunct and non-tenure track faculty positions and approximately one-third of faculty in these positions earn less than $25,000 annually (American Association of University Professors, n.d.; Flaherty, 2020). These unfair labor practices are financially unsustainable for most, which contributes to the underrepresentation of BIPOC faculty in higher education.

In addition to macro-level implications, the findings from the present study also offer implications for teaching practices. In particular, the prevalence and impact of classroom microaggressions experienced by most participants highlights how microaggressions can be heightened in classrooms that cover multicultural topics. This heightened potential for harm presents a need for instructors to take an active role in managing the climate of their classrooms. Further, classes that contain a multicultural focus can provide a context for ultimately decreasing microaggressions through effective education on this topic. While the need for instructors to embrace an active role was noted in several participants' narratives, instructor involvement must be balanced with adequate space for students to co-construct their learning communities and share their inherent knowledge to the extent they wish to do so (Freire, 1992). This practice is

necessary to avoid the recapitulation of white dominance and control of multicultural curricula and class dynamics (Patton, 2016). Because the tension between instructor involvement versus openness and flexibility presents a tricky balance for instructors to strike, instructor reflexivity and humility are especially necessary in multicultural courses, particularly for white instructors.

The importance of using effective dialogic teaching methods constitutes another implication for student-centered teaching practices that is informed by the findings of the present study. In particular, participants' emphasis on the importance of fostering understanding of BIPOC experiential realities and creating opportunities for student discussions provides direction for instructors who seek to make their coverage of multicultural topics more student-centered and engaging. The use of student discussions as a pedagogical tool also has implications for creating greater connection and belonging among students, thereby decreasing experiences of isolation.

Issues of instructor presence and involvement in their classes and opportunities for students to engage in dialogue also extend to implications for teaching online multicultural courses. Several participants noted their disappointment with their experiences in their online courses and how the structure of these online courses had a negative impact on meaningful engagement and learning. While creating opportunities for student-centered discussions may require increased instructor creativity in the course design of online classes, findings from the present study indicate that teaching practices in online courses need to be more responsive to student needs. For example, these teaching practices may include alternative modes for student discussions to occur online, such as small group discussion boards, the use of collaborative document annotation activities (e.g., Perusall), and tools such as VoiceThread, which allow

students to engage in discussions by recording short audio commentaries and sharing their responses to others' commentaries.

Directions for Future Research

Perhaps one of the greatest contributions of the present study is the potential directions for further research based on the findings discerned from participants' narratives. One such possibility is participatory action research that involves BIPOC students in the construction of future studies that are deemed the most relevant and necessary areas for inquiry (Smartt-Gullion & Tilton, 2020). This direction is a meaningful way to balance the inherent power imbalance present in researcher-constructed research projects. Additionally, centering participants' voices in the construction of research better-accomplishes one of the aims of the present study and would ensure that future efforts to elucidate the topic contain fewer externally-based assumptions made by researchers and are more tailored to BIPOC students.

Another direction for future research is the utilization of focus groups with BIPOC students regarding experiences with white faculty who teach multicultural topics in undergraduate psychology classes. Focus groups lend well to participant storytelling, and there is much that can gleaned from participants' stories related to the topic of the present study. By hearing the narratives of other BIPOC students, it is possible that participants might be able to offer insights that they may not have shared or identified when recounting their experiences to an interviewer. In addition, focus group methodology is well-positioned to center participants' voices and amplify their experiences to make calls for change and steps towards reforming how multicultural topics are by white psychology instructors in higher education.

Regarding additional foci that can be explored in future research that builds on the present study, participants' experiences across different types of educational institutions may

shed greater light on how different institutional cultures shape the teaching of multicultural topics within psychology. For instance, understanding variations in participants' experiences across PWIs, community colleges, small liberal arts colleges (SLACs), tier one research universities, and dual-credit courses taught within high school may illuminate particular issues that are institutionally-specific. Understanding these nuanced issues is necessary for creating targeted advocacy that addresses these issues most effectively. In a similar vein, future research should involve a greater range of participants with demographics that were underrepresented in the present study, including the experiences of men, LGBTQIA+ participants, Latinx participants, and Indigenous participants.

Another area that necessitates further research is issues experienced by BIPOC students within online multicultural psychology classes. While there has been a dramatic increase in students completing online college courses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023), research on the topic of online pedagogy only recently became popularized in the wake of the pandemic (Ndibalema, 2022). Participants in the present study who had completed online classes with white instructors cited lackluster, particularly negative experiences within their courses, revealing issues and complexities specific to online teaching modalities. Identifying and understanding how these issues operate therefore should be a pursuit for future research.

Limitations

While the findings of the present study help to partially fill a gap in scholarly literature regarding the experiences of BIPOC students within multicultural psychology courses taught by white instructors, the findings must be considered in light of the study's limitations. One such limitation is the underrepresentation of men and Latinx, Indigenous, and LGBTQIA+

participants whose experiences may in part be shaped by specific cultural, historical, and identity-based intersectional factors relevant to these demographic groups. In addition, all participants were under the age of 30, which limits the extent to which the study's findings can be generalized to adult students from other age groups.

Another limitation that hinders the comprehensive and holistic understanding of the study's findings includes the absence of nonverbal data the was collected due to participants electing to maintain their cameras off during the interviews. While this choice has utility in that Zoom fatigue can be prevented by not using video in teleconferencing meetings (Bailenson, 2021) and may increase participant safety by providing greater privacy and an additional precaution to ensure that participants' anonymity is maintained, contextual information, such as body language and affective expression relevant to participants' narratives could not readily be discerned. However, I was able to discern participants' vocal qualities, such as tone indications of frustration when participants recounted patterns of problematic experiences across their education. In addition, some participants seemed to speak slowly and carefully towards the beginning of the interview but later appeared to speak more organically, which may have been related to the gradual building of rapport.

Other limitations relevant to my data collection and methodology included the unexpected issue of obtaining more participants than I could include in my analyses because of the narrow scope narrative inquiry methods that focuses on analytical depth over breadth. This required me to consider excluding some of the interviews I conducted from my analyses in order to maintain rigor and alignment with my methodology, which was not a decision I made lightly. In addition, it became apparent to me during data collection that the construction of my semi-structured interview may have created barriers to participants' storytelling due to structure of my

interview questions. In order to make space for participant storytelling to occur, narrative analysts recommend using open questions that prompt participants to engage in storytelling, share examples, and go on tangents (Esin, 2011; Kim, 2016). While my interview protocol contained prompts for participants to share examples of their experiences, the specificity and academic jargon used in some of the questions may have hindered participants' stories, particularly for three participants who tended to provide succinct responses to my questions as to follow the traditional question-answer format of common interviewing practices.

Positionality Limitations and Reflexivity

My identity and positionality as a white researcher also constitute multiple limitations that must be noted when considering the study's findings. First, the narratives shared with me by participants may not represent the entirety of their lived experiences due to potential distrust of my positionality as a white researcher. Some participants, for example, declined to elaborate on certain experiences that were more personally sensitive, such as experiences of bullying and microaggressions made by peers. While it is unknown if my white identity was the sole factor that maintained the brevity of some participants' narratives within the interviews, valid BIPOC trust and safety concerns towards white researchers due to historical abuses (e.g., the Tuskegee syphilis study) can be protective and are well-documented (Scharff et al., 2010). Another possible explanation for some briefer responses is the safekeeping and guarding of cultural knowledge not meant to be shared with cultural outsiders, as cultural forms of knowledge have often endured exploitation and appropriation by white colonizers of knowledge (Abbott et al., 2019; Chrona, 2016; Patton, 2016).

A second limitation related to my positionality as a white woman in academia is potential social desirability among participants, who may have felt pressure to censor their negative

experiences with white instructors due to being interviewed by a white instructor-researcher. This may have occurred for one participant in particular, who only cited positive experiences within both of her classes taught be white instructors who covered multicultural topics in her psychology classes, which may have occurred due to a reluctance to critique whiteness in the presence of a white researcher. However, this is impossible to discern with absolute certainty as her experiences may have been positive and overly questioning this participant's account perpetuates white knowledge superiority.

An additional limitation related to my white racial identity is my implicit biases which shape my interpretation of the study's findings. Although I engaged in measures to counter my inherent subjectivity, such as conducting member reflection meetings and engaging in critical reflexivity throughout data collection and analysis, I am unable to rid the influence of my white lens and the impact of my racial stimulus value on participants. However, engaging in reflective journaling throughout data collection allowed me to identify a number of considerations that pose limitations to my interpretation of the study's findings. For instance, I speculated about my embodying of an overly-intellectualized stance, which unconsciously recapitulated white superiority, that can be used to divorce research phenomena from the felt impact of lived human experiences. Because I do not have the lived experiences of the BIPOC participants of my study, I recognized that I felt pulled to consider participants' narratives more from an analytical stance over a stance of grounded in empathic understanding and connection. In addition, participants' discernment of my analytical position may have kept participants from sharing as openly as they might have shared if they were in an interaction that centered connection over intellectualization.

Another limitation I gleaned from my reflexivity was my tendency to paraphrase participants' narratives and reflect them back during the interviews. While this may in part stem

from my counseling skills and may have emerged out of habit due to my counseling psychology background, these mechanisms can also operate as a form of control by attending to and reflecting back the details that I, the researcher, discerned as most important for answering my research questions. Similarly, I identified my tendency to restate my interview questions and ask more follow-up questions to seek key words and responses that could be used to answer my research questions and that would help me access more of participants' narratives than what they had shared with me in their initial responses.

Strengths

While the present study is not without limitations, the findings from participants' narratives fill the existing literature gap regarding the experiences of BIPOC students within undergraduate psychology classes containing multicultural topics that were taught by white faculty. Although some studies have examined the experiences of BIPOC students in graduate programs, the lack of research on undergraduate experiences presents a peculiar paradox when this topic is considered in light of DEI commitments made by many higher education institutions (Charles, 2023). Participants' stories documented in the present study give voice to an understudied topic and illuminate problematic educational practices and conditions discrepant with the commitments to DEI that most universities proclaim (Gassam Asare, 2022).

An additional strength in the present study is the use of methodology that aims to center and amplify participants' lived experiences shared according to their own perspectives, which are too often silenced and discounted in place dominant narratives that attempt to speak for and over the voices of marginalized populations of interest. The narrative analysis methodology used aligns with the CRT theoretical foundations that grounded the study and my aim to use participants' narratives as the basis for naming harmful and inequitable educational practices in

the pursuit of reform and justice. In addition, participants' narratives offer explicit ideas for reforming the teaching of multicultural topics in undergraduate classrooms, which provide directions for immediate education and policy reform.

While my positionality as a white woman researcher presents several limitations as discussed in a previous section, a simultaneous consideration that may be worthy of recognition is that my positionality presented an opportunity for critical reflexivity to deepen my analysis and critique of the issues that are central to the study itself, namely white supremacy and oppressive teaching practices. In addition, my experiences as an instructor informed my lens and anecdotal curiosities that generated my pursuit of this research project.

Conclusion

This study investigated the experiences of BIPOC undergraduate students who had completed one or more psychology courses that contained coverage of multicultural topics and that was taught by a white instructor. Results detailed key issues, experiences, and narratives that were central to participants accounts and ways of detailing their experiential realities related to the topic of the study. These findings included shared themes across participants' reflections pertaining to the emotional climates of their classrooms, enactments and impacts of harm, oppressive pedagogy, positive learning experiences and future directions for improving the quality and cultural responsiveness of white instructors' pedagogies for teaching multicultural content in psychology. As such, these findings have important implications for teaching and baccalaureate education in psychology. Themes provided by participants' narratives in this study can be used by instructors, especially white instructors, to help guide their understanding of common issues experienced by BIPOC students and ways to rectify these issues at personal and structural levels through cultural responsiveness. Continued research in the area of multicultural

teaching within undergraduate psychology coursework, especially in online courses, is vital for taking a student-centered and culturally humble approach to further address educational inequity and other issues commonly experienced by BIPOC students in higher education.

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APPENDIX A

RECRIUTMENT NOTICE

Greetings!

My name is Allison Comiskey, and I am a Counseling Psychology Doctoral Candidate at Texas Woman's University. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study for my dissertation about the experiences of BIPOC undergraduate students who have taken a psychology course with a multicultural focus with a white faculty member. You are eligible to participate in this study if you identify as a BIPOC person who has taken at least one psychology course with a multicultural focus with a white faculty member, are over the age of 18, and currently reside in the United States.

Participation requires internet access and involves partaking in a Zoom interview (video optional) that will last between 60-90 minutes where you will be asked about your educational experiences in psychology courses with a multicultural focus taught by a white faculty member. All interview responses will be deidentified to protect your privacy. Any information that could potentially be identifying (such as general demographic information) will be kept confidential and stored in a secure document that is double password protected. In addition to the interview, participants will also be given the option to attend a collaborative follow-up meeting where I will invite you to share your input regarding preliminary data analyses. This meeting will take place via Zoom and will last up to 30 minutes.

To thank you for your participation, participants will receive an electronic Starbucks gift card ($15.00 for interview participation and an additional $10.00 for participants who optionally choose to complete the follow-up meeting). Please note that there is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading, electronic meetings, and internet transactions.

This research participation opportunity is completely voluntary. If you have any questions about this study, please feel to contact me using the contact information provided below. This study has been approved by the Texas Woman's University Institutional Review Board.

If you would like to participate in this study, please click the link below where you will be directed to an informed consent page:

https://twu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dgakNxzik7t4ukC

Thank you very much for you time and for your consideration of my study! Please feel welcome to pass this information along to anyone who may be interested.

Gratefully,

Allison Comiskey, M.A.

Pronouns: she/her/hers

Counseling Psychology Doctoral Candidate

Texas Woman's University

acomiskey@twu.edu

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY (TWU)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title: BIPOC Students' Experiences in Multicultural Psychology Courses with White Faculty
Members

Primary Investigator: Allison Comiskey, M.A…………..acomiskey@twu.edu (316)-305-2206

Chair: Debra Mollen, Ph.D. ……………......dmollen@twu.edu (940)-898-2317

Summary and Key Information about the Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Allison Comiskey, a

graduate student at Texas Woman's University, as a part of her dissertation. The purpose of this

research is to gain a better understanding of BIPOC students' educational experiences in

multicultural psychology courses taught by white faculty members. You have been invited to

participate in this study because you identify as a BIPOC undergraduate student who has

completed at least one psychology course with a multicultural focus taught by a white faculty

member.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you are interested in learning more

about this study, please review this consent form carefully and take your time deciding whether

or not you want to participate. Please feel free to contact the researcher with any questions you

have about the study at any time.

Description of Procedures

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to complete a brief online screening measure to ensure your eligibility for this study. You then will be able to register for a time to complete a semi-structured virtual interview through Zoom. You will be given the option to complete the interview with your camera off to allow for greater privacy and to prevent Zoom fatigue. You can expect the interview to last between 60-90 minutes, and it will consist of questions regarding your experiences in undergraduate psychology courses with a multicultural focus taught by white faculty members. You will also be asked to select a code name or pseudonym so that your interview responses can be deidentified. All interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed.

You will also be given the opportunity to schedule a follow-up Zoom meeting offer your input and other feedback regarding initial data analyses and the study itself. Participating in this follow-up meeting is optional and will last between 30-60 minutes. These meetings will also be audio recorded and transcribed.

In order to be a participant in this study, you must be at least 18 years of age or older, identify as a BIPOC undergraduate student, and have completed at least one psychology course with a multicultural focus that was taught by a white faculty member.

Potential Risks

One risk in this study is loss of confidentiality. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law. All email correspondence with identifying information will be stored in a password-protected database will be deled upon the study's completion. Only a code name or pseudonym will be used in the interviews, not your real name. Should any names be

inadvertently used during the interview, the researcher will change the names in the written

transcript. Material related to the study, including any identifiable information (name and email),

will be kept separate from the interview recordings and transcripts and stored in a password-

protected electronic database. All interview recordings and transcripts will be stored in a secure

drive that is double password-protected. Interview recordings and transcripts will only be

listened to and read by primary researcher or the researcher's dissertation advisors. All

recordings will be erased upon completion of the study. De-identified interview transcripts will

be deleted within five years of the study's completion. You can choose to complete the interview

at the location of your preference. The researcher will complete all interviews from a private

office behind a closed door.

There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality when information is collected over the internet

and in all emails, downloads, electronic meetings, and internet transactions. All emails that

contain your name or contact information will be deleted upon completion of the study.

Information from the screening questionnaire and the contact information that you provide to

schedule your Zoom interview will be kept confidential. The researcher and her dissertation

advisors will be the only individuals who have access to your personal information and interview

transcripts.

The risk of loss of confidentiality can be minimized by completing the survey alone, closing your

web browser after you complete the online screening measure, avoiding the use of a public

network while completing the survey and the interview, and using a virtual private network

(VPN), if possible.

Another risk in this study is the possibility of emotional discomfort. The researcher will ask you

questions about your experiences in multicultural psychology courses taught by white faculty

members. You may find the nature of the questions to be sensitive or somewhat uncomfortable. However, you are empowered to only disclose what you feel comfortable sharing during the interview, and you can decline to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable answering. Additionally, you may stop the interview at any time and choose to withdraw from the study. The researcher will provide you with a list of resources and referrals in the event that you would like to speak with a mental health professional about your discomfort.

Because interview questions will concentrate on your personal experiences, there is a risk of the invasion of privacy. However, participation is voluntary, and you may end the interview at any time and skip any questions that cause you discomfort.

There is also a risk of loss of time. Interviews are expected to last between 60-90 minutes and optional follow-up meetings will last 30-60 minutes.

Fatigue is another risk you may experience as a result of completing the survey. You may take breaks during the interview as needed if you become tired or upset. You may also end the interview at any time.

The researchers will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let the researchers know at once if there is a problem and they will try to help you. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

The results of the study may be reported in scientific magazines or journals, but your name or any other identifying information will not be included.

Participation and Benefits

To thank you for your time, you will receive a $15.00 electronic Starbucks gift card for participating in the interview. Those who do not complete the interview will not receive monetary compensation. You will also receive an additional $10.00 electronic Starbucks gift card if you choose to complete the optional follow-up meeting to offer your feedback regarding preliminary data analyses. In addition, your participation will also help to advance research regarding BIPOC students' educational experiences with white faculty members in multicultural psychology courses, a topic that has been understudied to date. Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty.

Questions Regarding the Study

You may print a copy of this informed consent document to keep. If you have any questions about the research study, you should ask the researcher; their contact information is at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the TWU Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via e-mail at IRB@twu.edu.

To indicate your consent to participate in this study, please click here (or check box)— [electronic consent].

APPENDIX C

SCREENING MEASURE

Are you over the age of 18?

    Yes

    No

Do you identify as Black, Indigenous, or as a Person of Color (BIPOC)?

    Yes

    No

Are you a current college student or a former undergraduate student within the last five years

who has completed at least one undergraduate psychology course containing multicultural

curriculum or content that was taught by a white faculty member? (This may include any

psychology courses dedicated to multicultural issues, such as Cross-Cultural Psychology or

Psychology of Race and Racism, or other psychology courses, such as Introduction to

Psychology, that contained a unit, module, or particular emphasis on multicultural issues).

    Yes

    No

(For SONA only): Are you a former student of the Principal Investigator (Allison Comiskey)?

    Yes

    No

(For SONA only): Please provide your SONA ID number below.

APPENDIX D

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Thank you for your participation in my study.

I'd like to begin with a bit of an introduction about my study and my motivations. I am interested in the experiences of BIPOC college students who have taken at least one undergraduate course containing multicultural content or curriculum that was taught by a white professor or instructor.

I am interested in this topic because there isn't much research about this specifically, but there is lots of other research that reveals racial inequities and other problems when it comes to how multicultural classes are taught in college. My hope is that my study will amplify participants' lived experiences so that these issues may be brought to light and corrected.

I also think it's important that I share with you about my positionality as a white woman who is an instructor of college psychology courses. I am passionate about teaching and social justice, so I was inspired to pursue this study for my dissertation. I have the goal of making my teaching more responsive to the experiences and needs of my BIPOC students and the goal of promoting change to how undergraduate psychology courses are taught in the United States.

We'll spend the next 60-90 minutes together where I will ask you questions about your educational experiences with White faculty members who teach psychology courses with a

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multicultural focus. I'll start by asking you some basic demographic questions about your identities and background and then we'll move into questions about educational experiences as they pertain to the research topic for this study.

There are no right or wrong answers; I'm interested in learning about your experiences and thoughts. You may choose to skip any questions that you don't feel comfortable answering, and can you stop the interview at any time for any reason without penalty.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we get started?

Before we begin with the demographic questions, would you mind selecting a code name or pseudonym for the purpose of deidentifying your responses?

We'll start with some demographic and background questions now.

1. What is your age?
2. What words do you use to describe your racial identity?
3. What words do you use to describe ethnic identity?
4. What is your gender identity?
5. What is your sexual orientation?
6. Are you a first-generation college student?

7. What additional identity or cultural variables, if any, are most salient to you? This could

   be a religious or spiritual identity, disability status, socioeconomic background, or any

   other identity variable that's important to you.

8. What is your college major?

9. Do you have a minor? If so, what is your minor?

10. What kind of educational institution do you attend? Some examples could include

    community college, public, private, Historically Black College or University (HBCU),

    Predominately White Institution (PWI), and Hispanic-Serving, just to name a few

    options.

11. What is the approximate size of your educational institution?

12. Do you live on campus?

13. How many psychology classes with a multicultural focus have you taken?

    a. With White faculty members?

    b. With BIPOC faculty members?

    c. Did your instructors explicitly state their racial identities, or are your previous

       answers based on how you perceived their racial identities (which is totally fine)?

14. What was the name of the course? When did you take it?

15. Approximately how many students were enrolled in the course?

16. What was the format of the course (e.g., in-person, hybrid, online)?

17. Aside from your instructors' racial identities, are you able to recall other aspects of their

    identities (such as their gender or other identities that they may have explicitly

    mentioned)?

Thank you for answering those questions. Your responses help to provide some context that's helpful for the rest of the interview. We'll now move into questions about your experiences in psychology courses that had a multicultural focus with White faculty members.

1. Generally, how would you describe your experience in the course?

    a. With your instructor?

    b. With other students?

    c. With the curriculum?

2. What were some of the major multicultural topics covered in your course?

    a. What did you learn or gain from the course?

3. As a Student of Color, can you talk about how you understand your multicultural learning needs?

    a. To what extent did you experience your instructor to be attentive to the educational needs of BIPOC students versus White students?

    b. What about the needs of students with other identities (such gender, social class, immigration status)?

    c. Were your needs and expectations for the course met?

    d. In your opinion, what additional topics should have been included or covered in greater depth?

4. What qualities of your instructor or factors of the class supported your learning, engagement, and overall experiences in the course?

a. What characteristics, factors, or events hindered your learning, engagement, or contributed to negative experiences?

5. Microaggressions are commonplace negative messages about marginalized groups that can be conveyed through verbal, nonverbal, or environmental means. To what extent did your experience or witness racial microaggressions in your class?

    a. From your instructor?

    b. From peers?

    c. Implicated in the environment or curriculum/course content?

    d. Can you provide examples?

6. To what extent did you experience or witness microaggressions pertaining to other aspects of your identities (such as gender, immigration status, sexual orientation) or the intersection of multiple identities (such as gender racism)?

    a. Can you discuss examples?

7. What messages did these microaggressions communicate?

    a. What themes were implicated in these microaggressions?

8. How did these microaggressions affect you?

    a. Emotionally?

    b. Mentally?

    c. Physically?

    d. Interpersonally (such as your sense of belonging)?

    e. Your sense of visibility?

    f. Your educational experiences and ability to learn?

9. How did you cope with these experiences?

10. Were these microaggressions handled or addressed in any way?

    a. If so, how?

    b. If not, do you know how you would have liked to have seen these situations
       handled?

    c. What would have been most supportive and affirming in these moments?

11. Were microaggressions expressed to a greater, less, or same degree as your other
    courses?

    a. To what extent do you think the multicultural focus of your class impacted the
       degree or amount of microaggressions?

12. In addition to microaggressions, to what extent did you experience or observe the
    recapitulation of societal oppressions (such as racism, sexism, xenophobia) implicated in
    the class?

    a. In terms of interpersonal dynamics?

    b. Pedagogical strategies?

    c. Environment of the class?

13. In addition to microaggressions, to what extent did you experience or witness identity-
    based prejudice, discrimination, or exclusion (such as racism, homophobia, sexism) at
    both implicit and explicit levels?

    a. Can you discuss examples?

    b. What about intersecting oppressions (such as gendered racism or the intersection
       of sexism and homophobia)?

14. How did you initially perceive the credibility and competence of your instructor in the area of multicultural teaching based on their White racial identity?

    a. How did their other identities (such as gender) influence your perception of their credibility and competence?

    b. Can you discuss examples of the specific concerns, if any, that arose for you?

    c. Did your perceptions of your instructor's credibility and competence change over the semester?

        i. If so, what caused your perceptions to change?

15. How did you experience your instructor's passion or commitment, or lack thereof, for teaching about multicultural issues?

    a. Did you find this to be authentic?

    b. To what extent did you find your instructor to be invested in social justice?

        i. What about anti-racism?

16. Did your instructor acknowledge or discuss their White privilege?

    a. What about other identity-based privileges?

    b. How did their acknowledgment, or lack thereof, impact your view of them?

    c. Did this impact you in other ways?

    d. Did this impact the environment or class dynamics?

17. To what extent did you observe performative allyship from your instructor?

    a. Can you provide an example?

    b. How did this impact your view of them?

    c. Did this impact you in other ways?

18. To what extent did you experience or observe racial colorblindness in your course?

   a. From your instructor?

   b. From your peers?

   c. In the way that course content was developed and presented?

   d. In pedagogy (such as assignments, activities, class discussions)?

19. Based on your experiences, how do you think multicultural teaching can be improved?

   a. What recommendations or calls to action do you have for White instructors who teach undergraduate psychology courses with a multicultural focus?

20. Is there anything else you'd like to share that could help me understand your experiences better or in greater depth?

21. Do you have any feedback for me or about this study?