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Racial Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers against Students of Color

Mary Anne Meeks

RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS BY SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

AGAINST STUDENTS OF COLOR

by

MARY ANNE PERCY MEEKS

(Under the Direction of Linda M. Arthur)

ABSTRACT

Racial microaggressions are the subtle, oftentimes unconscious words or actions that are committed against people of color that denigrate them and may cause emotional and physical harm (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). Because children are so vulnerable, it is important that educators understand the negative effects of racial microaggressions in a school setting and how to avoid them. The purpose of this research is to study the racial microaggressions that secondary school teachers may enact against students of color. Most research on racial microaggressions has taken place in higher education in the form of qualitative studies of focus groups. Few quantitative research studies have been found in secondary schools that study teachers being responsible for racial microaggressions against students. The current investigation utilizes the Student Life Experiences Survey (SLES), a twenty-one question survey that was administered to 342 twelfth grade students in a large, racially diverse public high school. The SLES measured the student's perception of the frequency of racial microaggressions they encountered by teachers over a four-year period and how bothered the students were by the racial microaggressions. The survey also allowed students to record written instances of racial microaggressions they experienced or observed. Through ANOVA analysis, the results of the survey

revealed that students did not perceive many racial microaggressions over a four-year period, nor were they bothered by the ones they did experience. The written comments, however, indicated that students were much more bothered by the racial microaggressions than what was recorded on the survey. Asian and Hispanic students perceived they were called on more often by teachers to represent their race in class discussions and to teach words in their native language. Asian students perceived teachers thinking they all looked alike, and this bothered them. Hispanic students alleged that teachers thought they were illegal immigrants, and this bothered them greatly. The results of this study yield implications for anyone working with students. Racial microaggressions by teachers do happen to students of color, and they are bothered by them.

INDEX WORDS: Racial microaggressions, Aversive racism, Ambivalent racism, Microinvalidation, Microinsult, Modern racism

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Jim and Mary Percy, and to my grandson, Dallas James Spires. My mother always used to say, "There is never any excuse to be rude," and she meant it. My father lived that principle every day.

Mom and Dad lived in the Deep South during a time when paternalism, not fraternalism, governed race relations. Yet they both managed to rear four children who learned to love and respect others. Much of my parent's idealism is the foundation of this research.

Another one of Mom and Dad's sayings is that the children need to be better than the parents, or the parents have not done their job. I think that is true not only of our own children, but also of the students we teach. This dissertation is also dedicated to my grandson, DJ, that he may be better than us all.

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If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, "thank you," that would

suffice.

~Meister Eckhart

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knows many of the authors cited in this paper and inspires me with his knowledge. More

than that, he challenged me to think outside of my own comfort zone, to include the

larger world in which race relations are not always so easy as it is in my own school.

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The Student Life Experiences Survey (SLES) that I created for this research study

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family. Dr. Mary Kay Murphy is one of the most gracious ladies I have ever known. She taught me by her example the meaning of "as long as I have breath." I really would like to be like her when I grow up!

I would be remiss if I did not mention my earlier teachers, the Sisters of Divine Providence who taught me in high school, and the Sisters of the Most Holy Sacrament who were my elementary school teachers. These women were young and inspiring and taught me a passion for teaching. If I could only pick two sisters who were my inspiration it would be Sister Cecile Clare Vanderlick and Sister Ann Petrus. Sister C.C. was indefatigable not only in her teaching, but also in her own education. She never tired of going back to school for another degree. Sister Ann made school fun, and that is hard to do when you teach mathematics! She had a knack for instilling a desire to learn, but also enjoy life along the way. Much of my own philosophy of teaching can be traced to these wonderful sisters.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Racism is alive and well in America today, although it is more difficult to recognize for it often takes the form of racial microaggressions. Racial microaggressions are "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racist minority group" (Sue, Buccerri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2007, p. 72). They may take many forms, such as unintentional put-downs, doubts about ability or credentials, assumptions of criminality, and questioning the national origins of others, to mention just a few.

Racial microaggressions are not the same thing as microassaults, which are intended to be discriminatory (Sue, Buccerri et al., 2007). Microassaults, because they are so overtly racist, are no longer considered politically or socially acceptable. Most Americans like to think they have progressed beyond being racists. The reality is that humans are the product of their experience and environment, and racism is buried deep in the unconscious. From time to time there may be racial leakage, which takes the form of a microaggression.

Racial microaggressions merit serious study for they inflict real pain on the victims. People of color (POC) spend more time analyzing the remarks and actions of others than do White people. There is more mental energy expended contemplating whether a remark or action was discriminatory that could be used in other ways (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). The uncertainty of microaggressions is very distressing to people of color and can impact not only academic achievement but also job performance

(Knight, Hebl, Foster, & Mannix, 2002). Racial microaggressions cause stress, which may result in weakened immune systems and sickness (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). There have been many studies tracing the relationship between racial stress and psychological illnesses such as depression (Wong, Eccles and Sameroff, 2003; Sue, Capodilupo and Holder, 2008; Paradies, 2006; and Coker et al., 2009). Whether intentional or not, racial microaggressions perpetuate the divisions between the races. Because many microaggressions are unintentional, many who would not have been thought of as racist may now be labeled as such (Zuriff, 2002), and this includes teachers.

The teacher in the classroom is the leader in the classroom (Schlechty, 1990) and there are guidelines for teachers to follow. National standards for teachers who have classrooms with racial and ethnic diversity are imbedded in the Five Core Propositions for teacher competency (The five core, 2010), taken from the National Board for Certified Teacher Standards. Classes are becoming more racially diverse in American public schools, and it is the role of the teacher to create and maintain a racial climate conducive to learning and personal growth. *The President's Initiative on Race* (Clinton, 1998) stated that the first steps to establishing this climate of mutual understanding must begin with the teacher working to create opportunities for constructive dialogue to bridge racial divides. Racial microaggressions in the classroom and on campus create a racial climate where students become emotionally disturbed, teachers are frustrated, and honest dialogue about race is difficult to attain (Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, & Rivera, 2009). When a teacher understands the nature of microaggressions, how to avoid them and how to manage them if they occur, everyone in the classroom wins, but especially the students.

One of the challenges for education is to get more minority teachers in the classroom. According to the National Education Association (NEA), ninety percent of K-12 public school teachers were White in 2001, six percent were Black, and less than five percent were other races (Assessment of, 2004). Another challenge is to educate the White teachers about microaggressions so they can manage their own actions and their classrooms better. If, according to Sue (2003), White people hold the power and perpetuate the idea of White dominance in the United States, and if the majority of teachers in the United States are White, then if any change is to be made to reduce racial microaggressions, it is important for White teachers to be trained in multi-cultural diversity.

Much of the research that has been conducted in the past ten years has taken place on American college campuses and has specifically targeted Blacks and Asians. The findings have allowed social psychologists to formulate categories of microaggressions that are useful to counselors and professors in higher education to help them in their work with students of color (Sue, Nadal, Capodilupo et al., 2008). Little research has been conducted at a secondary school level. Because the perpetrators of racial microaggressions are many times family, friends, and colleagues of those they have offended, it is reasonable to question how teachers in secondary schools might also commit racial microaggressions in the school setting. The teacher must take the lead in fostering a good racial climate; therefore, it is important for the teacher to be able to recognize microaggressions when they occur, particularly if the teacher perpetrates them. The findings from this research would be valuable in training all teachers (whether in a college school of education teaching pre-service teachers or those planning staff

development for teachers in the local school building) about microaggression and how to avoid perpetrating microaggressions in the classroom

Background of the Study

Microaggressions are an altered form of racism in America and have its roots in old-fashioned racism. It is studied under many titles, and microaggression may take many forms. The effects of microaggression on people of color may be devastating, especially when it affects students. The research studies that have been conducted in the past ten years have primarily studied select students of color who are college or graduate school students. There is a growing body of knowledge about microaggression that is important to educators, particularly as students in classrooms across America become more diverse. Traditional studies in racism in the United States have centered on the impact racism makes on the individual, but there are other means of studying racism in institutions.

One of the most used means of studying racism has been with Critical Race Theory (CRT), which is one of the lens through which this research focuses on racial microaggression. Critical Race Theory is a critique of racism in the law and society that can be applied to how racism is viewed in education (Huber, Johnson, & Kohli, 2006; Solorzano, 1997). According to Solorzano (1997), CRT has five unifying themes that define the movement and can be related to the study of racism in America (discussed in Chapter Two).

The New Racism – Microaggression

Historically, racism is the belief that one race is superior over all the others and, therefore, has the right to dominate (Solorzano et al., 2000). Racism has always been a part of the American experience, but racist attitudes have come to be thought of as

immoral, and politically and socially incorrect (Zuriff, 2002). As fewer and fewer people were expressing overt racism, modern social psychologists began investigating concealed or unconscious racism in the early 1970's (Zuriff, 2002). This new version of racism is identified and may be researched under many titles: Modern racism, aversive racism, implicit stereotypes (Zuriff, 2002), color blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2002), ambivalent racism (Blair, 1999), symbolic racism, embedded assumptions, negative stereotyping, implied association, and racial microaggression (as presented by Sue in a PowerPoint to the American Psychological Association). The term "microaggression" will be used for all of these behaviors for the purpose of this literature review. Note that neo-racism is not synonymous with microaggressions as it is a form of hate speech that is very overt (Josey, 2010).

Microaggressions are "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racist minority group" (Sue, Buccerri et al., 2007, p. 72). Sue, Capodilupo et al. (2007) stated that microaggressions are the "everyday insults, indignities and demeaning messages sent to people of color by well-intentioned White people who are unaware of the hidden messages being sent to them" (p. 271). Microaggressions take three main forms: microassault, microinsult, and microinvalidation (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). Microassaults are the more overt type of racial insult that is meant to be denigrating and discriminatory. It is called a microassault because while the attack may be very public, the racist views are held privately and usually not exhibited unless provoked or they can be made safely. Since microassaults are more intentioned and conscious, they will be excluded from this study and the focus will be on the more subtle forms of racism known as microinsults and

microinvalidation. Derald Sue, a professor at Columbia University and a leader in the study of microaggression, defined microinsults as "verbal and nonverbal communications that subtly convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity" (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007, p. 272). A microinsult might be if a teacher asks a student of color how they were accepted into a prestigious university, implying that it must have been through affirmative action or a quota system. Another example would be to say that Asian women are terrible drivers (insulting not only Asians, but also women).

Microinvalidations, according to Sue, Capodilupo et al., (2007) are "communications that subtly exclude, negate or nullify the thoughts, feelings or experiential reality of a person of color" (p. 272). An example would be for a teacher to ask Hispanic students, "How long have you lived here?" implying they are illegal immigrants. This would also imply that they are foreigners in their own land. No matter what form of microaggression is used, the effect on people of color may be harmful.

The Effects of Microaggression

Racial microaggressions are harmful to people of color, whether they are intentional or not. Mark Greer (2004), staff reporter for the *Monitor* magazine produced by the American Psychological Association, reported that people of color may experience the "invisibility syndrome," a term Franklin (2004) coined for the feeling people get when "an inner struggle with feeling that one's talents, abilities, and worth are not valued or recognized because of prejudice and racism" (p. 4). Dehumanizing a person of color takes away from the energy or life force of the individual. They may come to question every action as a racist microaggression, and this may lead to depression, anger, physical ailments, pervasive discontent and hopelessness. As an example, a Black college student

who took part in a focus group on racial microaggression related that due to previous microaggressions she had experienced, she felt as if she had "to be on my guard every time I go in to talk to a professor, every time I go in and talk to the advisor, every time I go and talk to anybody. I'm like, are they here really to help me …?" (Solorzano et al., 2000, p. 69).

An early study of microaggression in high school stated that White teachers feared the misbehavior of students of color, and that a secondary concern was the lack of motivation on the part of these students (Cook, 1975). The study attempted to correlate the microaggressions of White teachers against students of color with the behavior and academic performance of these students. While causation was not proved, the data showed that the microaggressions of teachers caused students to "feel frustrated, inadequate, shamed, and resentful" (Cook, 1975, p. 21).

A more recent study of racial climate in the classroom was conducted by Sue et al., (2009). Sue and his colleagues used college focus groups to study how teachers managed microaggressions when they occurred in the classroom, and what effect it had on class dialogue. The findings showed that when White teachers had difficulty managing microaggressions in the classroom, the students of color had cognitive, emotional and behavioral reactions. A racial climate was created where it was difficult to have honest dialogue about race, and racial microaggressions were oftentimes the trigger for a poor racial climate (Sue et al., 2009).

One aspect of microaggressions that was researched is the effect that microaggressions by college counselors may have on people of color. Spanierman (2002) studied the case of Benita, an African American graduate student, who felt isolated and

stressed due to perceived microaggression on a predominantly White college campus. One problem she encountered was finding a school counselor she could trust, preferably not White, due to a lack of trust from previously perceived microaggressions by Whites. Other studies of college students showed that where there is a negative racial climate, African American students struggle with self-doubt, frustration, and isolation (Solorzano et al., 2000). Because of the negative effects of microaggression on people of color, there has been great interest in studying this topic in the last ten years.

The History of the Study of Racial Microaggression

It is important to note that the history of the study of racial microaggression is different from the study of the history of racism, which is all encompassing and beyond the scope of this study except as it applies to racism in education. In a review of the literature, some of the earliest research into microaggressions can be traced to Pierce and his 1970 study of African American college students in a climate of racial microaggressions (Solorzano et al., 2000). Pierce was a colleague of Cook (1975), who published her dissertation researching microaggression in a high school setting. Cook played "Learning Cup," (a then-popular song for students), in focus groups and they related their personal experiences with microaggressions to the events in the song (Cook, 1975).

According to Zuriff (2002), another group to pioneer the new approach to modern racism was social psychologists Sears and Kinder, and their colleague, McConahay, who constructed the *Modern Racism Scale* (Sabnani & Ponterotto, 1992). They studied in the early 1970s the voting behavior of Whites when Black candidates were on the ballot. While Sue is best known for his work on college campuses with students of color, he

also studied microaggressions in the 2008 presidential election (DeAngelis, 2009b) as have other researchers (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002) interested in the political arena.

Dovidio, of Yale University, and Gaertner, of the University of Delaware, (Dovidio et al., 2002), are two of the leading social psychologists who study aversive racism, and they designed a scale that uncovers racism, especially among liberals (Zuriff, 2002). Aversive racists tend to avoid people of color, especially Blacks. When faced with issues regarding race, aversive racists can justify their actions against POC on liberal grounds not related to racism, effectively denying any personal involvement. Kawakami, Karmali & Dunn, (2009) studied aversive racism from the point of view of the tolerance Whites have towards people who make racial slurs. When people are confronted after making a racial slur, they are less likely to repeat the behavior in public. But when someone acquiesces in the face of racism, it perpetuates the racist behaviors, according to Kawakami et al. (2009). While these political studies are interesting, most studies on microaggression are focus groups that involve college students.

Studies on College Campuses

There are numerous studies that center on the microaggressions committed by Whites against Black students on college campuses. Solorzano, of UCLA, used Carroll's *Mundane Extreme Environmental Stress Test* to study African Americans (Solorzano, 2003) at the University of Michigan. His findings showed an accepted level of bigotry on campus that undervalued or silenced other races in the classroom. There is little information on the methodology used.

Prior to the University of Michigan study, Solorzano et al. (2000) conducted a study of racial microaggressions on college campuses. He had 34 African Americans, taken from three college campuses, participate in ten focus groups. The focus group interviews covered seven areas of inquiry, and were unstructured to elicit participation. The results indicated that Black students felt invisible in academic spaces, that faculty had low expectations of their performance, and that White students felt they (Black students) had entered the university by affirmative action. Racial microaggressions were also noticed outside the classroom in social settings, where they felt unwanted by the White community. Solorzano concluded that the racial climate had much to do with the mental health of African Americans as they dealt with racial microaggressions on campus.

Spanierman (2002) presented a qualitative case study of Benita, a Black graduate student at a predominantly White university. She used an ecological model of social relationships to study the career development of Benita, citing the norms, values, and assumptions of a White culture, and how that affected Benita's self-image. Spanierman used this study to show the implications this has for students of color finding adequate counseling on college campuses, a concern of other theorists as well.

Sue, a psychologist at Teachers College, Columbia University (DeAngelis, 2009a), is one of the undisputed leaders in the field of microaggression. Sue, along with his colleagues and graduate assistants, used focus groups to study Blacks and Asians on college campuses. They have been responsible for categorizing microaggressions that correspond to each ethnic group (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007; Sue, Nadal et al., 2008). Sue, Nadal et al. (2008) conducted a qualitative study using two focus groups of Black

Americans, eight in one group and five in the other. All were either graduate students or college faculty. Data were collected through a demographic questionnaire and a semistructured interview protocol that consisted of eight open-ended questions. Six themes emerged as the results of the study: (a) Assumption of intellectual inferiority, (b) second-class citizen, (c) assumption of criminality, (d) assumption of inferior status, (e) assumed universality of the Black American experience, and (f) assumed superiority of white cultural values and communication styles (Sue, Nadal, Capodilupo et al., 2008). Sue maintained that college counselors needed to be aware of the racial climate on a campus and microaggressions from which students of color may suffer.

An earlier study by Sue (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007) that ventured from studying Black Americans was his study of racial microaggression and Asian Americans. Sue maintained that even though it may appear that Asian Americans have made it in American society and are immune to microaggressions, this is not so according to his research. Sue used two focus groups, with five Asian Americans in each. The participants were all in their mid-twenties, with the exception of one in her early 40's. Eight were students and two were working professionals. Data were collected through a brief demographic questionnaire and a semistructured interview protocol. The questions were open-ended, designed to elicit personal examples of microaggressions. Nine racial microaggression themes were identified: (a) Alien in own land, (b) ascription or attribution of intelligence, (c) denial of racial reality, (d) exoticization of Asian American women, (e) invalidation of interethnic differences, (f) pathologizing or condemning cultural values and communication styles of people of color, (g) second class citizen, (h) invisibility, and (i) undeveloped incidents and responses (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007).

Along these same lines, Nadal (2008a) conducted an online survey of 448 Chinese and Filipino Americans of different ages, generations, and geographic locations. Nadal was interested in how different Asian groups might experience racial microaggression and the resultant stress that affects mental health. His findings indicated that further research needs to be done to disaggregate the data on Asian American populations. This is one of the few studies that used a quantitative survey method rather than the qualitative focus group used by most researchers in the field.

Microaggressions in the classroom may trigger difficult dialogues on race and racism, according to a 2009 study by Sue and his graduate students at Columbia University. Sue studied fourteen students of diversity in two focus groups to determine how a teacher in a college classroom handled microaggressions, and if this, in turn, led to difficult discussions on race and racism. The results showed that teachers did not always know how to handle microaggressions when they occurred, and this led to tension by students and the teacher that hindered positive dialogue on race. Further, the focus groups reported powerful cognitive, behavioral, and emotional reactions on the part of the students once microaggressions occurred (Sue et al., 2009).

Conclusion

Racial microaggression is a serious problem affecting people of color, especially when found in education. Research studies have primarily taken place on college campuses with Black or Asian university undergraduate or graduate students. Little research has been found with the Hispanic population and few recent studies have been conducted in secondary school classrooms. The researcher is a secondary school teacher who believes teachers control the classroom and so have great influence on their students.

Therefore, it is important to know whether secondary school teachers are perpetrators of microaggressions and to understand if the microaggressions have any effect on their students.

Problem Statement

As a teacher in a very large, diverse suburban high school in the southeastern United States, the researcher had a vested interest in knowing about microaggressions. A teacher is the leader in the classroom and has a moral and ethical responsibility as a professional educator to not commit microaggressions, and to protect students from the microaggressions of others. Likewise, schools of education and school principals should be preparing teachers with knowledge about this subtle form of racism.

There are a few research studies (Coker et al., 2009; Fisher, Wallace & Fenton, 2000; Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & Lewis, 2006; Teranishi & Briscoe, 2006; Wong et al., 2003) about racial microaggressions that have been conducted in K-12 schools in the last ten years. The participants studied in previous research have nearly all been at the college and graduate school level. It is important to discover how elementary and secondary school teachers may be responsible for microaggressions against students of color because microaggressions can take place at any time, to any age group, and because many microaggressions are unintentionally perpetrated by teachers. The focus of this study was Asian, Black, and Hispanic high school twelfth grade students. The reason this population was chosen is because they comprise the majority of the student body in the researcher's high school, and they represent the trend in the growth of diversity in the teacher's school district.

Research Questions

There are four research questions:

1.   To what extent do students of color experience racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

2.   To what extent are students of color bothered by racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

3.   To what extent do students of color experience by race the racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

4.   To what extent are students of color by race bothered by racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

Significance of the Study

It is apparent from the research that microaggressions are harmful to people of color. They cause very real mental and physical problems that are pervasive and may be long lasting. Microaggressions also create a racial climate that fosters unhappiness and poor performance in work and school. The racial climate in a classroom is controlled by the teacher-leader. If the teacher does not recognize racial microaggressions, or does not know how to respond to microaggressions, or is guilty of committing racial microaggressions, then students of color will suffer. In addition, all students in the classroom will be denied an opportunity for honest dialogue.

This research study is significant because there are only a few recent studies about microaggression in secondary schools, and even fewer that gauge student perception of microaggressions by teachers. Educators need to know everything they can about this

topic, particularly as American schools are becoming more diversified with students of color. It is incumbent upon the colleges and universities to teach pre-service teachers about microaggressions. It is also important that principals and district personnel should be responsible for professional staff developments that educate everyone in the building about microaggressions, for teachers are not the only ones working with children.

On a personal note, the researcher has a vested interest in knowing more about microaggressions, for the researcher is a teacher in a very diverse minority majority high school. The researcher also was taught to never be rude and to always be respectful of others, no matter their age. The idea that racial microaggressions oftentimes occur subconsciously and without the intent of being harmful was particularly annoying and challenging to this veteran teacher. It is the belief of the researcher that the education of teachers in this subject might prevent microaggression from occurring and harming students. That, in itself, is significant.

Method

The purpose of the study was to learn the perceptions of twelfth grade secondary school students of color about teacher microaggressions. A quantitative, descriptive, non-experimental survey method was used for this study. Individual students responded to survey questions that asked them to self-report their perceptions about microaggressions. There are several reasons why a survey was used for this study and not a focus group. A survey is anonymous, compared to gathering data in a focus group, and a survey is self-paced by the student, rather than being led by a focus group leader (Creswell, 1994). The survey method would be a departure from the more predominant method used by researchers in colleges, which has been the focus group. In addition, the information on

the survey can be analyzed to identify patterns and themes of microaggressions as they relate to ethnicity. The data can be used not only for this study, but for future research as well (such as investigating the perception of White students towards microaggressions). Since few research studies have been conducted in K-12 schools in the last ten years, it would be beneficial to gain as much information as possible from as many ethnic groups as possible. This is possible with a survey.

The population for the survey was the approximately 450 twelfth grade students in the researcher's high school. The sample was the 342 twelfth grade students who completed the SLES. This was a convenience sample since all seniors must take a social studies class in the fall and spring term. The reason all seniors were asked to take the test was to not single out minorities. The researcher purposively selected twelfth grade students because they were more mature and had experienced more teachers throughout their high school career. Therefore, they had more opportunities to experience microaggressions by teachers. The social studies teachers were not asked to administer the test due to respondent bias. Rather, a certified teacher who did not teach any of the students administered the test. The data gathered from a large sample of students strengthened the reliability and generalizability of the instrument and gained valuable data for future research.

This was an affective survey, measuring the sensitive issue of race, so the researcher was sure to gain the principal's approval as required by the county office, and the researcher's university Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix A). No student was required to take the survey. Counselors and administrators were prepared to counsel any student who became distraught due to emotions that might have been inflamed by the

survey. Because the survey subjects were minors, parental consent and student assent was required. Permission letters were sent home by the social studies teachers with each student and were signed by the parents and student, and returned by the student before the student could take the survey. The permission letter assured the parents and the student that the survey was completely anonymous, that the surveys were to be kept secured, and that the results of the study would not be used against them.

The high school where the study took place is located in the heart of a growing city of an estimated 27,000 people. The city is a suburb of the largest city in the southeastern United States. While the population of over 2,000 students may be large relative to many schools, this high school had the second lowest number of students of any high school in the school district. In 2009-2010 the student population, according to school records was 23 percent Asian, 20 percent Black, 25 percent Hispanic, 27 percent White, 4 percent Multi-racial, and 47 percent free and reduced lunch. Based on past demographic trends, it was expected that the minority population would continue to grow.

The Student Life Experiences Survey (SLES) (Appendix B), designed by the researcher, is a survey that related to the secondary school experiences of twelfth grade students and their perceptions of microaggressions by teachers, and how this affected the students. It is a compilation of two other surveys, Harrell's Daily Life Experiences (Racial Hassles) Scale (DLE) (1997b), and Nadal's Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS) (2010). The SLES is a twenty-one-question survey that had three subscales (or what the researcher called microaggression themes). The three subscales are: Assumptions of Inferiority; Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality;

and Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity. The subjects were asked to rate how frequently they experienced a microaggression during their four years of high school, and how much it bothered them. A five-point Likert-type scale was used to record the frequency of the microaggression and how bothered the students were by the microaggressions. Students were asked to record any other microaggressions they perceived that were not listed on the survey.

The survey was completely anonymous, but there were two questions in the beginning of the survey requesting the demographic information of sex and race. The choices for race were Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, and Other, the primary races used in much of the microaggression literature (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). The student answered the questions on the survey.

To assure face or content validity and reliability of the SLES for this study, three high school graduates who are students of color took the survey, and six veteran teachers were asked to review the survey as well. Their comments provided feedback to improve the survey. By having more than one person review the survey inter-judge reliability was assured (Dereshiwsky, 1993).

All five of the economics and political systems teachers at the researcher's high school were asked to allow the survey to be given to their twelfth grade students, thereby testing all of the approximately 450 seniors. None of these teachers administered the test as a certified teacher who did not teach any of the students in the study administered the test. The test was given to all classes on the same day.

The researcher entered the data collected from the survey into the SPSS database for analysis. The data was analyzed and reported by the four research questions. An

analysis was made of the one qualitative question on the survey asking for student comments. Types of racial microaggressions that teachers committed were identified, as were the frequency of occurrences, and how bothered the students were by the racial microaggressions. Data was analyzed to see if there was a relationship between the occurrences, how bothered the students were, and the types or themes of microaggressions, as identified by Sue, Capodilupo et al. (2007) with Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White students.

Delimitations

The sample population presented some interesting delimitations on the study. By choosing the twelfth grade class, and no other grades, the study excluded younger students who may be less mature. Because the study was conducted at the researcher's high school, it was important that the identity of the researcher was concealed from the students as much as possible to prevent student bias for or against the researcher. Even though the researcher was not administering the survey to any students, this bias might have been significant because the researcher taught almost one-fourth of the senior class in another social studies class.

The research did not purport to study racism, as the topic is too broad and all encompassing. Nor did the study claim to investigate institutional racism that would be present, as an example, in curriculum selection or hiring/firing practices by the school board. Likewise, the research did not include overt discriminatory acts (blatant racism) by individuals intended to be harmful to students of color.

Limitations

A limitation on this study is that it may not have been easy for students to discuss the construct of racism (Sue, Lin et al., 2009), depending upon their past experiences. They may not have been comfortable taking a survey relating to race. On the other hand, because this study took place in a very diverse public school, the students taking the survey may have been very tolerant with issues relating to race and ethnicity. Regardless of their views, since this was a cross-sectional survey taking a snapshot of their opinions about teacher microaggressions at one point in time, their attitudes may change over time, making generalizability more difficult.

The subjects in the study may not have been honest. The twelfth grade class was chosen in the belief that seniors are more mature and may be more sincere. One reason the students may not have wanted to be candid is because they may not have wanted to "tattle" on their teachers who committed microaggressions. Students may also have focused on current teachers and their actions towards students, and not teachers they had in previous years. On the other hand, students may have had a bad opinion of a teacher and used the survey as an opportunity to lie and get even with a teacher. The large size of the sample helped to offset respondent bias.

The survey design limited the types of microaggressions that could be presented to students for their consideration. Most research on college campuses used focus groups that allowed open-ended responses to questions designed to generate descriptions of microaggressions. With a survey the students were limited to the microaggressions given by the researcher. The survey questions were adapted for secondary school students and their experiences. Care was taken to allow students to report microaggressions that not

only happened to them, but to report those microaggressions they had seen happening to other students. It is conceivable that a student may have never experienced a microaggression personally, but had seen microaggressions by teachers against other students.

Definition of Terms

Microaggression - For the purpose of this study microaggression is defined as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007, p. 273). These microaggressions may be so subtle and innocuous that the person committing them is not aware of what they are doing, and the harmful effect they may be having.

Microassault - Microassault is defined as "explicit racial derogations that are verbal (i.e., racial epithets), non-verbal (behavioral discrimination), or environmental (i.e., offensive visual displays) attacks meant to hurt the person of color" (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007, p. 73). It is generally thought of as old-fashioned racism, intended to be harmful.

Microinvalidation-For the purpose of this study, microinvalidation is defined as "actions that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings or experiential reality of a person of color" (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007, p. 73). The underlying message is that people of color are not really citizens of this country.

Microinsult - A microinsult is a "behavioral action or verbal remark that conveys

rudeness, insensitivity, or demeans a person's racial identity or heritage" (Sue,

Bucceri et al., 2007, p. 73). A microinsult would be if a teacher asks a Black

student how the student was able to enroll in an Advanced Placement class,

implying that the student is not smart enough to be in the class.

Summary

Racial microaggressions are subtle, often unconscious, words or actions that

belittle or demean people of color. They may not be meant to be harmful, but the effects

can be pervasive and long lasting. It is important to study microaggressions in K-12

schools, as children are so impressionable. There is abundant research that shows that

children can be affected physically and psychologically by the prolonged stress brought

on by microaggressions. Students look to their teachers for guidance and protection.

Teachers serve as important role models to students. Professional standards at every level

of education mandate that teachers respect students, and this includes cultural and racial

differences. Because teachers are the leaders in the classroom, it is incumbent upon them

to protect students from racial microaggressions and to not commit microaggressions

themselves.

This research study was designed to identify and describe racial microaggressions

committed by secondary school teachers, the frequency of teacher microaggressions, and

the effects the microaggressions have on students. Teachers may use data taken from this

survey to heighten the awareness of microaggressions, which has great practical

application in education. All teachers, whether taught in staff development or colleges of

education, will benefit from this knowledge.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND RELATED LITERATURE

There is a growing body of research about racial microaggressions against students of color on college campuses (Nadal, 2008a; Solorzano, et al., 2000; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). Much of this research is meant to improve interracial relationships between White counselors and students of color (Juby, 2005; Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007; Sue, Nadal, et al., 2008). There is very little research, however, as it applies to students of color in secondary schools. This chapter is divided into the following sections: The definition of microaggression and what it looks like; the history of racism (including the purpose of a Critical Race Theory perspective in studying microaggressions in education); the origins of microaggressions; the effects of racial microaggressions on students of color; the subtypes or themes of microaggressions as they apply to each race; and the role of teacher leaders in effecting change.

Microaggression

Microaggression is a term that was first introduced by Pierce (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzales, & Willis, 1978) in the 1970's and refers to "subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are 'put downs'" (p. 66). Solorozano et al. (2000) described racial microaggressions as "subtle insults (verbal, non-verbal, and/or visual) directed toward people of color, often automatically or unconsciously" (p. 60). The definition given by Sue is that microaggressions are "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racist minority group" (Sue, Bucceri, et al., p. 72).

For the purpose of this study, people of color (POC) refer to Asians (including Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders), Blacks, and Hispanics or Latinos. The Office of Management and Budget for the United States allows the term Hispanic or Latino for the US Census (What are, 2010). Hispanic will be used for this study because it is the classification used by the researcher's local school board. It is important to note that not all POC are homogenous. They do not experience microaggressions in the same way (Huber, Johnson, & Kohli, 2006).

According to Sue (2003), White people are the perpetrators of most microaggressions against POC, and ninety percent of K-12 public school teachers were White in 2001 (Assessment of, 2004). Therefore, the study of racial microaggressions against students of color in the schools is important. The researcher recognizes that people of all ethnicities are capable of microaggressions, but that is not the focus of this study. Sue (2003) maintained that only Whites could be racists because racism "is a pervasive and systematic exercise of real power to deny minorities equal access and opportunity, while maintaining the benefits and advantages of White Americans" (p. 31). Therefore, this study addresses the ways in which students of color recognize and are affected by microaggressions perpetrated by teachers in secondary school.

Some common characteristics of racial microaggressions are that they may be verbal, behavioral, and/or environmental. They may be intentional or unintentional, consciously committed or totally unconscious in origin. Racial microaggressions communicate "hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults" (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino et al., 2007, p. 271) to POC. Microaggressive encounters may also be environmental in nature, as opposed to a personal attack. An example of this is when a

teacher displays classroom decorations that always exclude certain racial groups, or curriculum is selected by the county that does not include ethnic diversity (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino et al., 2007). Microaggressions are psychologically and physically harmful to POC (Fisher et al. 2000; Sellers et al., 2006; Paradies, 2006; Coker et al., 2009). (The effects of microaggressions on POC will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.) Microaggressions may take several different forms.

Solorzano created three general groups in which to categorize racial stereotypes/microaggressions as justification for conduct towards POC (1997). The first category is Intelligence/Educational Stereotypes, and this would include comments such as "stupid," "dumb," or "slow." Comments such as "violent," "lazy," and "savage" might be used against POC in the second category, which is Personality/Character Stereotypes. Physical Appearance Stereotypes is the third category and hateful terms like "unclean," "dirty," and "scary" might be used. Solorzano stated that, unfortunately, teachers might use these beliefs to justify such things as having low expectations for students of color, therefore not placing them in advanced classes or encouraging these students to attend college or seek professional careers (1997).

Sue, a professor at Teachers College, has been leading a five-year study into the manifestation and impact of racial microaggressions (Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal, & Torino, 2008). Sue categorized microaggressions into microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007, Sue, Nadal et al., 2008). Microassaults are the more overt acts against POC that resemble old-fashioned racism. It is called "micro" because the beliefs by the perpetrator are usually held privately and are only displayed publicly when they "(a) lose control or (b) feel relatively safe to engage in a

microassault" (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007, p. 274). An example of this would be when Mel Gibson, the actor, made slanderous remarks against Jews when he was arrested for driving under the influence. The police officer was a Jew, and Gibson said he just lost control. The focus of this study is on microinsults and microinvalidations because they are more unconscious and unintentional than microassaults. They also represent the kind of behaviors in which teachers are more likely to engage. It is important to note that just because there may not be a conscious intention to harm another with a microaggression, the impact to the one harmed may be just as great as if there had been intention.

Microinsults convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean POC in some way, usually related to their racial heritage or identity (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). They may be verbal, as when a teacher asks a Black student "How did you get in my Advanced Placement class?" indicating the student was not smart enough to be in an advanced class. They may also be nonverbal, as when a teacher never calls on a student of color, sending the message that the student has nothing to contribute to the class. The teacher may not realize that an insult was committed, but intent has nothing to do with the harm that the insult does to the student. Even if a student of color is not sure whether the teacher meant to insult, the student will spend time and mental energy considering the possibility that it was intentional.

Microinvalidations attempt to exclude or negate the thoughts and feelings of a student of color, making it seem as if the student's racial heritage or nationality does not matter (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). If a teacher compliments an Asian for speaking English well, or asks a Hispanic student how long the student has lived in the country, or when the teacher tells a Black student that the teacher does not see color, then all of these

serve to invalidate the racial experiences and culture of the student. It is as if the student's racial identity does not matter. Racial identity is very important to an individual and this will be discussed in more detail under the effects of microaggressions on POC.

Racial microaggressions happen daily, and there is a need to understand them better to help eliminate them, particularly in education where children are so impressionable. Microaggression is sometimes called modern racism (Zuriff, 2002), which then begs the question, what is the old racism? While a comprehensive study of racism is beyond the scope of this study, it would be instructive to study certain aspects of racism, particularly as it applies to the growth of microaggression in education.

The History of Racism Related to Education

Solorzano et al., (2000) said that racism is the belief that one race is superior over all the others and, therefore, has the right to dominate. Anderson and Collins (2007) cited Lorde's definition of racism "as the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and therefore the right to dominance" (p. 53). Sue (2003) made the distinction between racial prejudice, racial discrimination, and racism when he said that racial prejudice is an attitude towards people of color while racial discrimination is a behavior towards people of color. Racism, on the other hand, is the exercise of power by White people to maintain the privileges of society for themselves (Sue, 2003).

Jones (1972), a noted racism scholar, identified three forms of racism: (a) individual, (b) institutional, and (c) cultural. Utsey, Ponterotto, and Porter (2008) described individual racism as occurring when individuals discriminate against members of another racial group because they believe their racial group is superior. Overt acts of violence against POC, such as those done by hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan, is an

example of individual discrimination. Institutional racism involves social systems and institutions (such as schools – researcher's emphasis) that formulate policies that are discriminatory to POC. These policies might include racial profiling, curriculum selection, and educational segregation. Cultural racism occurs when the culture of Whites is viewed as superior to those of other racial groups, and this may include when a White person deems a POC's dress, emotional behavior, and linguistic ability to be inappropriate. From a societal point of view, racism has been woven into the fabric of American life since the beginning of slavery and is "structured into society, not just in people's minds" (Anderson & Collins, 2007, p. 68.)

It is in the realm of individual racism that microaggression in the classroom is explored in this study. White teachers in the classroom have the opportunity to discriminate because the teacher is in control of the classroom and the students (Sue, Lin et al., 2009). The idea of White dominance in society can be explored through Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Huber et al., 2006; Lynn & Parker, 2006; Solorzano, 1997). Critical Race Theory is a critique of racism in the law and society that can be applied to how racism is viewed in education (Huber et al., 2006; Solorzano, 1997). According to Solorzano (1997), CRT has five unifying themes that define the movement: (a) racism is central in American life and it is endemic, (b) CRT challenges the traditional, dominant claims of race neutrality, colorblindness, and equal opportunity as being a camouflage for the self-interests of the dominant group, (c) CRT is committed to social justice and the elimination of racism, (d) CRT recognizes that the experiential knowledge of POC are appropriate, legitimate, and necessary to understanding the law and the lived experiences of POC, and (e) CRT uses interdisciplinary methods of analyzing race and racism. The

history of racism in American education can be found in the ways in which Whites have subjugated students of color.

The landmark Supreme Court case that set the stage for race relations in education was Plessy v. Ferguson (1896). The case involved whether the plaintiff, Plessy (who was a Black man), had the right to ride on a passenger train car reserved for White passengers. Mr. Justice Brown delivered the opinion of the court that said segregated train cars were legal as long as the facilities offered were equal. This then could be applied to other institutions, including education. In rendering his decision Brown said, "We consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it." As an interesting side note, this is an early example of a microaggression that infers the Black man is guilty for questioning the fairness of the law.

The case that overturned Plessy v. Ferguson was Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954). This landmark case said that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" (1954), and ruled that a young Black girl had the right to attend a nearby White school. Mr. Chief Justice Warren, in delivering the opinion of the court, cited the need to consider the intangibles in education that could not be measured objectively, such as the ability to study and to engage in discussion with other students. Warren went on to say that to separate them (in reference to the Black children) "from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a

way unlikely ever to be undone" (1954). The stage was set for integration, but the full effect of the law would not be felt until the Civil Rights era of the 1960s.

Lynn and Parker, in their 2006 review of research in U.S. schools for the last decade, stated that the Civil Rights era was a vital time period in eliminating classical racism in America. The full force of law was behind the civil rights laws that were enacted during that time, so overt forms of racism subsided. As the years have passed since the civil rights movement, however, overt racism has shown resurgence in the form of "neo-racism" (Josey, 2010), which manifests itself in hate speech. Racial microaggression is not to be confused with this, more overt forms of racism. The moral authority of the civil rights movement helped to make white European Americans have a dislike of obvious discriminatory actions against POC (Lynn & Parker, 2006). As a result, racism developed and took on a new, less obvious form, known as racial microaggressions.

Origins of Microaggressions

According to Fiske and Taylor (2008), "genetic markers for race do not support the commonsense view of race" (p. 297). In other words, there is no biological basis for people to believe there are separate races. There is only one race, the human race. Therefore, belief in races is a social construct, particularly true in America where designations of race originated to justify slavery (Fiske & Taylor, 2008).

According to Jones (1972), racial prejudice is the reason for many of the problems in American history. It is common knowledge that there has been a racial divide in America since Columbus enslaved the first natives, and then later slaves were imported into the Americas. Jones (1972) calls this type of racism cultural racism, and it is based

on the view that White Western-European culture is the best, certainly better than any other culture. Sociologists and psychologists would say that cultural racism is based on normal rather than abnormal processes regarding prejudice (Dovidio, 2001).

Stangor (2000) stated that social categorization is a natural process that people do to simplify and store information, thus making sense of the world and the people they meet. Allport's (1988) work in the 1950's laid the foundation for social cognition and social identification studies that would follow. He said that categorization led to the development of in-groups and out-groups, and these groups were many times based on prejudice (Allport, 1988). Prejudice, according to Allport (1988) is defined as "an aversive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group" (p. 22). Dovidio (2001) cited Sherif's Robber's Cave Study that showed the hostility that developed between two groups of boys at summer camp and how competition was the catalyst for prejudice between the two groups. Prejudice is the link that binds social and cultural categorization with microaggressions, but there are other reasons for microaggressions.

The bias against people of a different race (based on skin color) begins very young in life (Katz, 2003). Stereotypes are learned first from parents, then peers. Observational learning is picked up early by a child, then reinforced by society and the media. Unfortunately, illusory correlations are made based on the actions of one member of a racial group, then generalized to all members of that race (Stangor, 2000).

A longitudinal study of 100 Black children and 100 White children was conducted by Katz (2003) to determine at what age children develop bias for members of their own

race. The children (ages six months–six years) were tested nine times until they were six years old. The researchers showed six-month old babies photographs of faces from the same race as the baby, habituating them to the pictures. They then showed the babies a new face taken from another race, and they measured the amount of time the baby spent staring at the novel face. The findings clearly showed that children as young as six months of age preferred the faces of their own race (Katz, 2003).

Some of the most exciting new research in the field of microaggressions is in the field of social cognition, that which measures how automatically and unconsciously prejudice operates. With the help of a functional magnetic resonance imaging scanner (fMRI), researchers are able to locate an area of the brain, the insula, that registers disgust when seeing a picture of a homeless person (Fiske, 2008), the same area of the brain that registers disgust when shown human waste and garbage. This relates to work by Dovidio (2001) who cited Schacter's work with implicit and explicit memories. The reaction to the homeless person comes from an implicit memory that involves lack of conscious awareness. Given time to study the picture, the explicit memory, which is based on conscious awareness and is controllable, might not show the disgust that comes unbidden when viewing the picture.

Another area of the brain activated when a person is judged as untrustworthy is the amygdala. In less than 100 ms., a person will evaluate the trustworthiness of another person, with the amygdala showing the most activity for "emotionally significant stimuli-especially negative stimuli" (Fiske & Taylor, 2008, p. 295). Where this automatic processing of information can turn deadly, however, is when White police officers may shoot a Black suspect. Correll and his colleagues (Correll, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink,

2002) used a video game to show not only that a White police officer would "shoot" an armed Black man faster than an armed White man, but also that the White officer would avoid shooting a White unarmed man faster than a Black unarmed man.

Fortunately, the research also showed that if the White participants were given an opportunity to judge the Black participants as individuals, they reacted no differently for the black faces than they did to the white faces (Fiske, 2008). The key to this change was to give the White officer time to discriminate some feature about the Black person, to engage the cerebral cortex in a cognitive process that changed the way the amygdala looked at the person. When this happened, the White police officer reacted the same to the Black participant as to a White participant. Cognitive discrimination that allows the individual to study another POC and to undermine the emotional intent is the key to avoiding racial discrimination that could be deadly. Cognition, when used another way, is also one of the underlying reasons for other causes of racial microaggressions.

White Americans are faced with a moral dilemma when forming their attitudes towards POC. Whites are taught to believe in the American ideal of all men being equal, entitled to liberty, democracy, and justice. As such, they are supposed to be inherently against segregation. But Whites are also conditioned by a history of racism in the United States that leads Whites to hold racial prejudices (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). Some of these prejudices might involve stereotypes of the members of a race that are not flattering and are derogatory, such as the shiftless Black man who is on welfare, or the lazy Hispanic taking a siesta. Unfortunately, this stereotype causes Whites to have negative views about POC when faced with images and stories that show POC as being lazy or

deviant. According to Gaertner & Dovidio (1986), this dichotomy manifests itself in either racial aversion or racial ambivalence, with both leading to racial microaggressions.

Racial aversion is when Whites experience anxiety and discomfort from opposing views, that of supporting the rights of all people, and that of having negative feelings about POC. Gaertner and Dovidio (1986) proposed the theory that this anxiety in interracial situations caused Whites to repress their negative views from conscious awareness. Because these feelings are at an unconscious level, Whites may express their feelings in more subtle ways, such as in microaggressions (Juby, 2005). Bias is most likely to occur when norms are not clear or ambiguous, and Whites are unaware of their feelings or actions (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). But when the expectations of society are clear, bias is unlikely to happen as Whites believe they are not being prejudiced (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). Racial aversion most often leads Whites to subconsciously try to avoid being around POC to eliminate the distress or feelings of discomfort.

Similar to racial aversion, but at a conscious level, is racial ambivalence. Katz and Haas (1988), as cited in Stangor (2000), said the two components of racial ambivalence is individualism and communalism, and it is the tension generated between these two that causes ambivalence. Individualism values self-reliance, personal freedom, and a devotion to work (Katz & Haas, 1988). America is an individualistic society in which the value of hard work is rooted in the Protestant work ethic (Juby, 2005). Those who are self-reliant and work hard will get ahead. Those who do not will fail. Unfortunately, one of the stereotypes of Blacks is that they do not have ambition and do not work hard (Juby, 2005; Katz & Haas, 1988).

Communalism, on the other hand, "embraces egalitarian and humanitarian precepts" (Katz & Haas, 1988, p. 102), principles upon which the United States was founded. These feelings of equality for all and social justice can create sympathy towards Blacks by Whites (Juby, 2005). Katz and Haas, (1988) maintained that this overt conflict between the two strong ideals of individualism and communalism leads to racial ambivalence. The stronger the ambivalence, the more psychological discomfort the individual experiences (Katz & Haas, 1988). To resolve the discomfort that comes from ambivalence, a White person will react to a Black person in an extreme way to handle the anxiety. For example, when a Black person is cast in an unfavorable light, the White person may react more negatively towards the Black. Likewise, when a White person sees a Black person in a very positive way, the White may respond much more favorably towards the Black person. In either case, racial microaggressions that are hurtful and harmful to POC may occur.

Effects on People of Color

Microaggressions have a tremendous psychological effect on POC, but the cumulative effect of the stress from microaggressions also results in a host of physical symptoms (see Table 2.1). Franklin (2004) asserted that POC spend a lifetime being vigilant to perceived microaggressions. The end result, as applied to the Black males that he studied, is that these men saw themselves as being invisible. By this he meant that Black males struggle with feelings of self-worth, personal abilities, and dreams for the future. But because of prejudice and racism, these males are not validated or recognized, and thus feel invisible (Franklin, 2004). Franklin called the end result of being invisible and living under siege from racial microaggression the invisibility syndrome (2004). It is

characterized by frustration, increased awareness of perceived microaggressions, chronic indigestion, anger, disillusionment, internalized rage, depression, substance abuse, and loss of hope, to name the more salient characteristics (Franklin, 2004).

An earlier study by Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) affirmed the psychological problems brought on by microaggressions. The researchers conducted a qualitative, focus-group study of how African American students assessed the racial climate of their college campuses. Thirty-four African American men and women attending three predominantly White universities were questioned in ten focus groups. Many students said they felt invisible in their classrooms as the professors ignored them. Others reported negative interactions with the faculty, who had low expectations for the students of color. Some said they were "drained" (Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000, p. 67), depressed, suffered from self-doubt and felt personally diminished.

Sue, Nadal, et al. (2008) conducted a qualitative study of thirteen Black Americans divided into two focus groups. The students were graduate students or worked in higher education on a college campus. As a result of their studies the researchers were very emphatic when they stated that:

> Microaggressions have a harmful and lasting psychological impact that may endure for days, weeks, months, and even years. Participants reported feelings of anger, frustration, doubt, guilt, or sadness when they experience microaggressions and noted further that the emotional turmoil stayed with them as they tried to make sense of each incident (p. 336).

Paradies conducted a large study of 138 empirical quantitative population-based studies of self-reported racism and mental health in 2006. The results showed that

seventy-two percent of the examined studies were correlated positively with self-reported racism and negative mental health (psychological distress, depression, anxiety, and stress). In other words, the more people who reported self-racism, the worse the mental health outcomes were found to be (Paradies, 2006).

It is the contention of Dovidio, et al. (2002) that one of the reasons anxiety is so high among POC is that it is very difficult to recognize and control implicit attitudes, such as those prevalent in microaggressions. Dovidio et al. (2002) conducted research in aversive racism and found that the more overt forms of explicit attitudes were easier to recognize, plan for, and shape a reasoned response to. Aversive racists are unaware of their prejudices and would deny being prejudiced, but because of the conflicting subconscious belief in traditional American values, they will discriminate subconsciously against POC, particularly when their behavior can be justified on some factor other than race. Aversive racists use nonverbal behavior to transmit their unconscious prejudicial beliefs, and POC are very accurate at detecting racial bias (Dovidio, 2001; Dovidio et al., 2002).

Salvatore and Shelton's (2007) research added to the study of aversive racism when ambiguity is involved. Because microaggressions may be subtle and ambiguous, POC may suffer cognitive impairment as they try to understand the negative events they may be encountering. Salvatore and Shelton (2007) gave two hundred fifty-five Princeton students one of four different fictional scenarios that were hiring recommendations of a mythical company. The scenarios were either blatantly or ambiguously motivated, or were not motivated at all by racial prejudice. The students were then given a Stroop color test to complete on the computer while the experimenter was absent. This test measured

depletion in high level cognitive functioning. The results showed that "Blacks are particularly vulnerable to cognitive impairment resulting from exposure to ambiguous prejudice" (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007, p. 814). Given the difficulty in analyzing microaggressions, and the effect it has on the body and the mind, it is understandable, then, that POC might approach interracial reactions with "anxiety, guardedness, and underlying mistrust" (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005, p.624).

Most of the studies of POC and the effects of microaggressions have been conducted on college campuses (Sue, Nadal et al., 2008; Solorzano et al., 2000; Juby, 2005). It is important to examine the few studies that relate to microaggressions and its effect on younger POC (see Table 2.1), particularly since this study examines secondary school students. A very large study of 5,147 fifth grade students attending public schools in and around Birmingham, Alabama, Los Angelos County, California, and Houston, Texas, was conducted by researchers who wanted to correlate perceived racial/ethnic discrimination with mental health disorders (Coker et al., 2009). The results showed that fifteen percent of children reported perceived racial discriminations, and 80% reported that these events took place at school. Further, the children who reported perceived racial/ethnic discrimination showed a positive association with symptoms of depression, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD), and Conduct Disorder (CD). The correlation between perceived discrimination and mental health, however, was strongest for depression (Coker et al. 2009).

An interesting longitudinal study of adolescents was conducted by Greene, Way, and Pahl (2006) that measured the trajectories of perceived ethnic and racial discrimination over a four year time period and related it to well being and development.

Data was collected from 136 Black, West Indian, Puerto Rican, Dominican American, other Latino, Chinese Americans, and non-Chinese Asian American high school students living in New York City. Various instruments were used to measure self-perceived discrimination due to race or ethnicity, perceived discrimination by peers, ethnic identity, self-esteem, and depressive symptoms. The data was collected in six waves over the course of four years. The results showed that adolescents who experienced more adult and peer discrimination suffered from lower self-esteem and more depressive symptoms than adolescents who reported lower levels of discrimination. The depressive symptoms also escalated over the course of the study for students who reported higher levels of discrimination.

Another finding from the study was the role that identity formation plays in discrimination and psychological well being. Those students who had achieved a strong sense of identity with an ethnic/racial group used their identity as a buffer against the effects of discrimination. Those students who were in the process of developing a sense of identity seemed to suffer more from discrimination, and those students who reported low commitment to their ethnic identity had a weaker association with discrimination by their peers. Thus, the vulnerability of identity formation by an adolescent may be one of the effects discrimination has on the adolescent, as well as one of the strengths (Greene, Way & Pahl, 2006).

A similar study was conducted by Sellers et al. (2006), who surveyed 314 African American adolescents. The students completed the Daily Life Experiences Scale (DLE) developed by Harrell (1994, 1997b). This is a Likert type survey that measures microaggressions, the daily life hassles that are related to racism. (The instrument that

was used in this research study is a survey adapted from the Harrell survey and the Nadal Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS) (2010), which was also adapted from the Harrell DLE.) The results of the Sellers et al. (2006) research was that for African Americans there was a strong sense of identity with their race, but those who lacked this identity suffered higher amounts of perceived discrimination. The main contribution of this study, however, is that for adolescent students of color "the results from the present study indicate that experiencing racial discrimination is not only associated with negative psychological outcomes such as psychological distress, but that it is also associated with fewer positive psychological outcomes such as psychological well-being" (Sellers et al., 2006, p. 207).

Another longitudinal study of African American adolescents was conducted by Wong, Eccles, and Sameroff (2003). Data was collected in two waves: The first wave in 1991 had 1480 seventh grade students take part and the second wave in 2000 surveyed 1067 of these students at the end of their eighth grade year. Each student took a self-administered questionnaire that measured the perceived discrimination by peers and teachers, the frequency of these events, the student's feeling of positive connection to their ethnic group, the achievement motivation of the student, the students' academic achievement, the mental health (depressive symptoms, anger, and self-esteem) of each participant, the selection of friends by the student of color, and problem behaviors reported by the adolescent (Wong et al., 2003) The study confirmed that adolescents' experiences of discrimination by peers and teachers posed significant risks to academic motivation, positive mental health and self-esteem. There was an increase in the likelihood that adolescents who experienced discrimination would engage in problematic

behaviors and associate with friends of dubious qualities. One significant observation from this study is that the "experiences of ethnic discrimination also influence development during early adolescence" (Wong et al., 2003, p. 1221), which could have negative long term implications.

One area of concern that is not mentioned very often in the literature is the view of secondary school teachers about student's dress. A qualitative, two-year study by Rolon-Dow (2004) of nine Puerto Rican middle school girls revealed that some on the faculty felt that the girl's dress was provocative and "oozing with sexuality" (p. 15). The faculty also felt that schooling and sexuality were incompatible desires, that "the image of the hypersexual girl was cast in opposition to the image of the educable girl" (p. 17). The study reminded teachers that to help students be successful it would be necessary for teachers to reflect on their own images of minority student identities.

Not all studies showed flagrant microaggressions, however. Moore-Thomas (2009) conducted a phenomenological study of ten Black high school students, five males and five females. With some exceptions, most of the students responded "positively that they have never been mistreated by a teacher nor have any bad experiences to share with regard to race" (p. 121). Those who had experienced microaggressions were able to channel that negative energy into positive growth.

All of these effects of microaggressions have studied the health and well-being of the individual, whether adult or adolescent. This literature review would not be complete without mentioning the racial microaggressions that effect students on campus and in the classroom (see Table 2.1). Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) reported on the effect that racial microaggressions have on a college campus, including a professor's low

expectations for academic achievement by POC. Students said they felt "invisible" (p. 65) in class, not recognized as a capable student by the teacher or the students. They also felt excluded when forming study groups, and being overly scrutinized by campus police at minority social events.

Similar results were recorded by Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso (2000) in a qualitative study of thirty-four Black students attending three predominantly White universities. The students were divided into ten focus groups and they answered questions taken from seven different areas of inquiry. The results indicated that Blacks and Hispanics felt they were made to feel inferior in the classroom, and that they could not succeed academically. Students reported not being included in study groups or group projects because other students thought they were not smart enough to do the work. They also felt as if others thought they were admitted to the university as "tokens", only because of their race, or because they were good in athletics and not very smart. Being called upon in class to act as the "spokesperson" for their race was a frequent perception of these students, and they felt as if White students looked at them as all being the same. Outside of class the students reported being followed by campus security, as if they were criminals.

Solorzano conducted another qualitative study with Allen and Carroll (2002) using twenty-five Asian, Black, Hispanic and White students for eight focus groups. The study was conducted at the University of California, Berkley. It is interesting that the students felt most of the microaggressions they perceived were aimed at the Blacks and Hispanics on campus; the Asians were treated as the "model minority" and the Whites were assumed to be "unquestionably, academically qualified" (p. 33). Based on the

number and nature of racial microaggressions recorded in the study, the researchers felt that much work still needed to be done to improve relations between the White students and the Black students (Solorzano et al., 2002).

A recent study by Kawakami, Karmali, and Dunn (2009) gave some insight into why racism persists. White participants in a study directly viewed a racial slur against a POC, or had a slur described to them. The results showed that those who did not experience the event but read about it were much more likely to be morally offended and speak out against the offense. On the other hand, those who actually saw the event were much less likely to speak up, despite their earlier assurance that they were liberal and would renounce racism. Their silence gave tacit approval to the slur, and made it easier for racial slurs to continue. The authors maintain that "these findings provide important information on actual responses to racism that can help create personal awareness and inform interventions, thereby helping people to be as egalitarian as they think they will be (Kawakami et al., 2009, p. 278).

A year after affirmative action was abolished in California, Teranishi and Briscoe (2006) conducted a qualitative study of thirty-six Black eleventh and twelfth grade students and six counselors in two predominantly Black high schools in Los Angeles, California. Students discussed how teachers and counselors made them feel that they, Blacks, would have a difficult time getting into the better public colleges in California (UCLA and Berkeley), particularly without affirmative action to help them through. The students felt that if they had gotten in with affirmative action then they would feel like they were tokens and would be looked down on. The students said that counselors and teachers stressed the value of attending other colleges that were not so difficult to get

into, which made them feel like they were not wanted. The researchers concluded by saying "Racial microaggressions in the college choice process causes students to struggle with self-doubt and feel frustrated in a process that is otherwise difficult in itself" (Teranishi & Briscoe, 2006, p. 17).

One hundred seventy-seven racially diverse urban public high school students were given the Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index (ADDI) and the Racial Bias Preparation Scale (RBPS) to measure how self-perceived discrimination effected adolescent's development (Fisher, Wallace & Fenton, 2000). Ethnic minority students in the study reported that teachers discouraged them from joining advanced level classes. The Hispanic and Black students said they were wrongly accused and more harshly disciplined at school, and between a quarter to one-half of the participants felt they received a lower grade than they deserved, due to their race. The Asian students (which was a small sample) felt that teachers had higher expectations of them because of their race. High percentages of the teenagers reported being called racially insulting names and they were excluded from joining school activities because of race. Finally, Hispanic and Asian students felt they were being discriminated against because of their command of the English language (Fisher, Wallace & Fenton, 2000).

There is no doubt that immigrants to America suffer from prejudice and discrimination (Ladson-Billings, 2001), and a large part of that is due to their not speaking English well. English has always been the language of America, as taught in the schools, and as proscribed by either rule, policy, law, or by social, political, and economic pressure (Madrid, 1988). Madrid (1988) stated that "becoming American was learning English and its corollary-not speaking Spanish" (p. 18). The belief was that if

immigrants learned to speak English well they would be welcomed into mainstream America, particularly if they did not have an accent. One of the reasons microaggressions are related to language is because the English language contains words that lead to stereotyping. (Some might argue that English as the official language in schools is a form of institutional racism.)

Language is a reflection of society's thoughts and attitudes. If the White culture is racist (Sue, 2003), then it stands to reason that the English language contains racist terminology, symbolism, politics, context, and ethnocentrism (Moore, 1988). Some racist words are easier to notice than others. As an example, good guys wear white hats and bad guys wear black hats. If someone calls an Asian a "chink" or a Hispanic a "spic", then that is obviously racist. However, people who use language to say a nation is "culturally deprived" or "underdeveloped" are not as obvious in their implication that those being described are somehow to blame for their own condition. Moore (1988) maintained that while it may not be possible to change the English language, people could change how they use the language, particularly in the presence of non-English speakers.

Many immigrants who are learning to speak English face the prejudice and discrimination that comes from native English speakers (LaBelle, 2005). Native English speakers stereotype the immigrants they hear, such as anyone who speaks Spanish must be from Mexico. LaBelle (2005) stated that stereotyping by language creates an in-group, out-group scenario, in which the native English speaker feels superior. LaBelle conducted a qualitative study of six immigrants, three men and three women, who were from Mexico and Vietnam. The purpose of the study was to "uncover elements of ethnic acceptance and prejudice that either increased or decreased the anxiety of the English

learner" (LaBelle, 2005, p. 44). The findings showed that while the immigrants felt powerless and frustrated because of their inability to speak well and the lack of acceptance by native English speakers, they also realized the value of ethnic acceptance when it was encountered. They found it especially helpful to recognize others who were also learning English as a second language. For the participants in LaBelle's study, the times when they did receive ethnic acceptance outweighed the times when they faced ethnic prejudice.

Table 2.1

The Effects of Racial Microaggressions on People of Color

STUDY	METHODOLOGY	OUTCOME
Psychological Effects		
Franklin, A. J. (2004)	Counseling and Clinical Studies	The Invisibility Syndrome
Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000)	Qualitative study of thirty-four African American college students who participated in ten focus groups	Microaggressions create negative racial climate resulting in self-doubt, frustration, and isolation. Some felt invisible in the classroom to professors who had low expectations of them.
Sue, D. W., Nadal, K. L., Capodilupo, C. M., Lin, A. I., Torino, G., & Rivera, D. P. (2008)	Qualitative study of thirteen Black graduate students in two focus groups	Emotional distress caused by microaggressions may last for long periods of time.
Paradies, Y. (2006)	A review of 138 quantitative studies of self-reported racism and health, including microaggressions	Seventy-two percent of examined negative mental health outcomes were significantly associated with self-reported racism.

Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. L., Kawakami, K. R., & Hodson, G. (2002)	Report of a series of studies of aversive racism	Aversive racists subconsciously discriminate on grounds not related to racism. This leads to distrust and anxiety by POC who detect mixed messages.
Salvatore, J., & Shelton, J. N. (2007)	A study that examined the impairment of cognitive skills of 255 Black and White undergraduates who were exposed to blatant and ambiguous targets of prejudice	Black students were particularly vulnerable to ambiguous prejudice, while White students had cognitive impairment for blatant prejudice.
Effects on Adolescents		
Coker, T. R., Elliott, M. N., Kanouse, D. E., Grunbaum, J. A., Schwebel, D. D., Gilliland, M. J., et al. (2009)	A quantitative study of 5147 racially diverse fifth-grade students studying prevalence, characteristics, and mental health problems of children who perceived racial discrimination	Fifteen percent of the children reported perceived racial discrimination, of which eighty percent of the discrimination occurred at school. An association between perceived racial discrimination and depressive health symptoms was found for Black and Hispanic children, but not for White children.
Greene, M. L., Way, N., & Pahl, K. (2006)	A longitudinal four-year quantitative study of 225 high school students	Perceived discrimination by adults resulted in lower levels of self-esteem and increased depressive symptoms for students of color.
Sellers, R. M., Copeland-Linder, N., Martin, P. P., & Lewis, R. L. (2006)	A quantitative study of 314 Black adolescents measuring perceived racial discrimination	Perceived racial discrimination was associated with lower levels of psychological functioning, characterized by perceived stress, depressive symptoms, and fewer positive psychological outcomes.

Wong, C. A., Eccles, J. S., & Sameroff, A. (2003)	A two-year longitudinal quantitative study of 629 Black middle school students, studying perceived racial discrimination by peers and teachers	Perceived racial discrimination by peers and teachers resulted in threats to academic motivation, self-esteem, and positive mental health. Perceived racial discrimination by younger, more impressionable students led to forming friendships that resulted in problem behaviors.
Rolon-Dow, R. (2004)	A qualitative study of nine Puerto Rican middle school girls	Faculty feel the dress of Puerto Rican girls to be sexual, and not compatible with learning
Moore-Thomas, S. A. (2009)	A qualitative study of ten Black high school students	Few students encountered racial microaggressions.
Effects in Class/On Campus		
Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000)	Qualitative study of thirty-four African American college students participated in ten focus groups	Black students reported low expectation from professors, racial stereotypes that effected academic performance, and having to represent their race in class discussions. All of this resulted in a negative racial climate.
Solorzano, Allen, &Carroll (2002)	A qualitative study of twenty-five college students in eight focus groups	Asians were viewed as the model minority and Black students and Hispanic students were at a disadvantage on campus and in class.

Kawakami, K. R., Karmali, F., & Dunn, E. (2009)	A study of 120 White participants who either personally saw a racial slur or just read about it to determine why racism persists.	Those who read about the racial slur were more likely to condemn the action than those who saw the action firsthand. Silence condoned the action and gave approval for racial slurs to continue.
Teranishi, R. T., & Briscoe, K. (2006)	A qualitative study that interviewed thirty-six Black eleventh and twelfth grade students and six high school counselors, to determine the self perception of racial microaggressions that influenced the process of students entering college.	Perceived racial microaggressions by teachers and counselors in the college choice process can lead to frustration and self-doubt that can result in stereotype threat. It also may discourage students from applying to the more selective colleges.
Fisher, C. B., Wallace, S. A., & Fenton, R. E. (2000)	A quantitative survey of 177 high school students of color to study the effect of perceived racial discrimination on the development of youth	Students of color reported being discouraged from joining advanced level classes, and they attributed unfair discipline and lower grades to racial discrimination.
LaBelle, J. T. (2005)	A qualitative study of six Vietnamese and Mexican immigrants in a focus group to study the effect of ethnic prejudice or acceptance on the learning of language	Ethnic prejudice can be a source of frustration and anxiety that hinders the development of learning the language. It can also be a source of motivation, depending on the individual. Ethnic acceptance was a much greater motivator than ethnic prejudice.

Microaggressions may be small and seemingly inconsequential, but the literature shows that the effects from microaggressions, whether intentional or not, are profound.

The psychological toll that is taken on the individual leads to mental and physical problems that can be long lasting. Adolescents are not immune from these effects either. Studies showed that the stress from microaggressions in children led to lower self esteem, fewer positive outcomes, difficulty with identity formation, and depression. Students of color perceived that their teachers had low expectations of them in the classroom, that teachers would not recommend them for advanced classes, and that teachers discouraged them from applying to colleges.

Themes of Microaggressions

The studies on microaggressions have been organized by some researchers into different themes or subscales of microaggressions (see Table 2.2). Classification may be very broad, such as the global themes of explicit and implicit microaggressions (Boysen & Vogel, 2009). The themes may also be catalogued according to domains: Incident, perception, reaction, interpretation, and consequence (Sue, Copodilupo, & Holder, 2008). Some of these themes appear to be universal to all ethnicities. Much of the work with themes or subscales, however, is related to specific microaggression categories that can be linked correlationally to a particular race. Examples of this would be the theme of "criminality" being laid at the door of Blacks (Sue, Nadal et al., 2008), and "an alien in their own land" being attributed to Asians (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007). The main theorists to develop these themes are Sue, Bucceri, Capodioupo, Holder, Rivera, and Torino, and these are the subscales on which this research was based (See Table 2.2). The subscales are grouped under the categories of microinsults and microinvalidation. All microaggressions require POC to have to assess the intent and the motivation of the

person committing the microaggression, and then they have to decide how to respond to the microaggression (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008).

Microinsults

Ascription of Intelligence

An ascription of intelligence theme assumes that a student's intelligence may be viewed as being either inferior or superior when compared to other students. Many microaggressions take the form of an assumption of intellectual inferiority, particularly when relating to Blacks (Sue, Nadal et al., 2008). White Americans will sometimes say things like "You speak so well," or a teacher will acknowledge a White student who repeats something a Black student had just said, overlooking the Black student completely (Sue, Nadal et al., 2008, p. 333). A teacher will not call on a Black student to answer a question, particularly if a White or Asian offers to answer. This theme of intellectual inferiority is borne out in the work of Sellers et al. (2006); Solorzano et al. (2000); Solorzano et al. (2002); Sue, Bucceri et al. (2007); Sue, Capodilupo et al. (2008).

In the case of Asians, however, a White will assume the opposite, that Asians are very smart (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007). A teacher might say to a class something like "I know this is going to be a great year because we have so many Asian students in here." While an ascription of superior intelligence might appear to be a compliment, it puts an undue burden on the student to have to live up to expectations not placed on other students (Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007). Solorzano's (2002) research at the University of California, Berkeley confirms this theme of the Asian's being the model minority, as does the work of Nadal (2008) and Sue, Bucceri et al. (2007).

Second-Class Citizen

When a POC is treated as a lesser human being, as being inferior when compared to a White person, they may think of themselves as a second class citizen (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2008; Sue, Nadal et al., 2008). This category could apply equally to any ethnicity other than Whites. An example would be if an Asian or Hispanic family went into a restaurant at the same time as a White family and the White customers were given preferential seating and service. In a classroom setting a teacher might give hugs to her White children but not hug a Black or Hispanic student.

Assumptions of Inferior Status

When a Black is assumed to be poor, or not have the proper credentials for a position, an assumption of inferior status is assumed (Sue, Nadal et al., 2008). A teacher who wants to know if any students need a new coat for the winter and looks directly at her Black students may be assuming that they are poor and the White students are not. A teacher who is considering the application of a Black student and a White student to enter an Advanced Placement class may just assume that the Black student will not have the qualification needed to get in. Others who researched in this area are Solorzano, Allen et al. (2002) and Solorzano, Ceja et al. (2000).

Assumptions of Criminality

This microaggression theme is almost always attributed to Blacks in America today. An example would be when a teacher follows a Black student around campus, expecting some type of bad action, similar to a security guard following Blacks in a department store to see if they are going to shoplift (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). Over-scrutiny makes a Black person feel like "you are guilty of something…like you are a

criminal" (Sue, Nadal et al., 2008, p. 333). Many researchers have studied this phenomena, including Sue (2003); Sue, Bucceri et al. (2007); Sellers et al. (2006); Solorzano, Allen et al. (2002); Solorzano, Ceja et al. (2000).

Invisibility

When a POC is overlooked as if they are not there, they oftentimes feel invisible (Franklin, 2004). Many theorists have borne this out in their work with microaggressions (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007; Sue, Lin et al. (2009); D.W. Sue & D. Sue (2008). Asian students may feel left out when the discussion is on race and the only students involved are Black students. Teachers may get so carried away teaching a lesson on slavery or the Japanese involvement in World War II that they forget they have students in the class who are Black or Japanese.

Microinvalidation

Assumed Superiority of White Cultural Values/Communication Styles

When a POC assumes they have to "act White" in their dress and language to get ahead in the business world, or to belong in a classroom, then they may be suffering from microaggressions relating to White superiority (Sue, Nadal et al., 2008). If a White person goes to church and sees a Black wearing native African attire and wonders what makes them think that is appropriate for church, the White is assuming the White culture is the only appropriate culture. Another example of condemning a cultural value (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007) would be Asian students who are taught by their parents to be quiet and respectful at home but in class they may be penalized for not participating in class discussions led by a White teacher. Moore (1988) and Sue, Bucceri et al. (2007) have confirmed these assumptions in their studies.

Assumed Universality of the Ethnic Experience/Invalidation of Interethnic Differences

When a teacher calls on a Black student to speak for the views of the entire Black race regarding the civil rights movement, this is an assumption that all Blacks are alike (Sue, Nadal et al., 2008). If a teacher asks an Asian student how to pronounce another Asian name the teacher is assuming all Asians are alike. Another way of explaining this microaggression theme would be to invalidate interethnic differences (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007; Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007), by saying that there is no difference between Asian students, or that all Hispanic students are from Mexico. Solorzano (1997) said that people have ideas about POC, such as that they are stupid, lazy, dirty, and so on. These ideas become the basis of stereotypes in which POC will occupy certain positions in society, including education. These stereotypes may include the idea that people from India are all shopkeepers, Blacks make good basketball and football players, and Hispanics should all be on soccer teams.

Denial of Racial Reality

Whites may sometimes say something like "I do not recognize color. All people are alike to me," which is an insult to POC who do suffer from racial inequality (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007). Utsey et al, (2008) and Bonilla-Silva (2002) refer to this type of microaggression as color-blind racism. White teachers who assume Asian students are the "model students" deny the racial identity of Asian students who should be treated according to their individual needs.

Alien in Own Land

A teacher who asks a Hispanic student when the family came to America assumes that the student is an illegal alien. A teacher who asks an Asian student to teach them words from the student's language may make the student feel like a foreigner. Even innocuous questions like "where are you from" or "where were you born" can be a microaggression to a student who is sensitive to the status of illegal immigration in America (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007; Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2008; Sue, Buccerri et al., 2007).

Exoticization of Asian/Hispanic Women

Asian women who are thought to be "china dolls", or to wait hand and foot on men, or have a "certain look" may be victims of this particular microaggression. Sue, Bucceri et al. (2007) regard this as a category unique to White's views of Asian women. It is the contention of the researcher that this category should be expanded to include Hispanic women, who are thought by some Whites to dress in provocative clothing that accentuates the figure, and may be thought of as "Latin lovers" due to their suggestive dress (Rolon-Dow, 2004).

Table 2.2

Microaggression Themes

Theme	Research
Ascription of Intelligence Assumption of Intellectual Inferiority	Sellers, R. M., Copeland-Linder, N., Martin, P. P., & Lewis, R. L. (2006) Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000)

	Solorzano, D., Allen, W. R., & Carroll, G. (2002)
	Sue, D. W., Bucceri, J., Lin, A. I., Nadal, K. L., & Torino, G. (2007)
	Sue, D., Capodilupo, C. M., & Holder, A. M. B. (2008)
	Sue, D. W., Nadal, K. L., Capodilupo, C. M., Lin, A. I., Torino, G., & Rivera, D. P. (2008)
Assumption of Intellectual Superiority	Nadal, K. L. (2008)
	Solorzano, D., Allen, W. R., & Carroll, G. (2002)
	Sue, D. W., Bucceri, J., Lin, A. I., Nadal, K. L., & Torino, G. (2007)
Second Class Citizen	Sue, D. W., Bucceri, J., Lin, A. I., Nadal, K. L., & Torino, G. (2007)
	Sue, D., Capodilupo, C. M., & Holder, A. M. B. (2008)
	Sue, D. W., Nadal, K. L., Capodilupo, C. M., Lin, A. I., Torino, G., & Rivera, D. P. (2008)
Assumption of Inferior Status	Solorzano, D., Allen, W. R., & Carroll, G. (2002)
	Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000)
	Sue, D. W., Nadal, K. L., Capodilupo, C. M., Lin, A. I., Torino, G., & Rivera, D. P. (2008)
Assumption of Criminality	Sellers, R. M., Copeland-Linder, N., Martin, P. P., & Lewis, R. L. (2006)

	Solorzano, D., Allen, W. R., & Carroll, G. (2002)
	Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000)
	Sue, D. W. (2003)
	Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Budderi, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., & Esquilin, M. E. (2007)
	Sue, D. W., Nadal, K. L., Capodilupo, C. M., Lin, A. I., Torino, G., & Rivera, D. P. (2008)
Invisibility	Franklin, A. J. (2004)
	Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000)
	Sue, D. W. (2003)
	Sue, D., Capodilupo, C. M., & Holder, A. M. B. (2008)
Assumed Superiority of White Cultural Values/Communication Styles	Moore, R. B. (1988)
	Sue, D. W., Bucceri, J., Lin, A. I., Nadal, K. L., & Torino, G. (2007)
	Sue, D. W., Nadal, K. L., Capodilupo, C. M., Lin, A. I., Torino, G., & Rivera, D. P. (2008)
Assumed Universality of the Ethnic Experience/Invalidation of Interethnic Differences	Sue, D. W., Bucceri, J., Lin, A. I., Nadal, K. L., & Torino, G. (2007)
	Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Budderi, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., & Esquilin, M. E. (2007)
	Sue, D. W., Nadal, K. L., Capodilupo, C. M., Lin, A. I., Torino, G., & Rivera, D. P. (2008)

	Solorzano (1997)
Denial of Racial Reality	Bonilla-Silva, E. (2002)
	Sue, D. W., Bucceri, J., Lin, A. I., Nadal, K. L., & Torino, G. (2007)
	Utsey, S. O., Ponterotto, J. G., & Porter, J. S. (2008)
Alien in Own Land	Sue, D., Capodilupo, C. M., & Holder, A. M. B. (2008)
	Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Budderi, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., & Esquilin, M. E. (2007)
	Sue, D. W., Bucceri, J., Lin, A. I., Nadal, K. L., & Torino, G. (2007)
Exoticization of Asian/Hispanic Women	Rolon-Dow, R. (2004)
	Sue, D. W., Bucceri, J., Lin, A. I., Nadal, K. L., & Torino, G. (2007)

Opposition to Microaggressions

Not everyone agrees with the concept of racial microaggressions to the same extent as the theorists mentioned thus far. Zuriff (2002) claimed that by reconceptualizing racism, which is the heart of modern-racism theory, the bar for being a racist has been lowered. Anyone who stands by political principles or questions public policy may be deemed a racist, and the very word "racist" leads others to believe that modern racists are the same as bigoted, old-fashioned racists. This would include all those thought to be aversive racists who hold to liberal ideals while unconsciously discriminating against POC (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2002). Zuriff claimed that "aversive racism guarantees that no white person can ever be sure of being free of racism" (2002, p. 7).

Thomas (2008) argued against Sue and his colleagues by challenging the basis for some of the themes of microaggressions. As an example, Sue and his colleagues maintained that bringing up racial and ethnic differences in conversations may be a microinvalidation, but at the same time Thomas claimed minorities want to have validation as being different from the White majority. Thomas said it is difficult to have it both ways, and "why should it be unusual for any American, native born or foreign born, to ask questions regarding whether some such individuals are native born or foreign born?" (2008, p. 274). Finally, Thomas said that when a person says they do not see color and are accused of a microinvalidation, Sue is emphasizing the importance of race over the importance of the individual. It is Thomas's contention that growth can never take place if one is inhibited from speaking honestly.

Goodstein (2008) challenged Sue on his (Sue's) broad concept of races and not taking into account for ethnic differences. She said that in counseling it is important to be able to distinguish the ethnic/cultural background of the individual. She was also concerned that by focusing on only racial microaggressions, Sue creates a "hierarchy of suffering" (p. 276) that is a disservice to clients who may suffer other microaggressions that are equally harmful, such as for gender, sexual orientation, and physical ability. In fact, a colleague of Sue's, Nadal (2008b), published an article that addressed the many other types of microaggressions against lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) persons, women, ethnic and religious minority groups, and the physically handicapped. He argued that the definition for microaggressions should be broadened to include oppressed groups.

Sue's answer to both Thomas and Goodstein was that it is difficult for White people to confront "ones own unintentional complicity in the perpetuation of racism. As a result, it is easier for Whites to find other reasons for their beliefs and actions rather than entertain the possibility of racial bias" (Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal et al., 2008). Sue maintained that it is one thing for a POC to confront racial microaggressions as a way of life and quite another for a political conservative to be insulted by something like an offensive bumper sticker. Sue did admit to Goldstein that he does not want to play the "Who is more oppressed?" (p. 278) game, comparing microaggressions. But, he still asserted that racial microaggression is "more than an intellectual concept" (p. 278), and that sometimes those who are confronted with racism may try to escape their own bias by saying things like "As a women, I have been oppressed too, so don't blame me" (p. 278). Despite the critics of racial microaggression the research in this field is burgeoning. As more is known about racial microaggression the question then becomes what can be done to improve life for POC by reducing microaggressions, particularly in the schools?

What Can Be Done – Teacher Leadership

According to the National Education Association (Assessment of, 2004), ninety percent of K-12 public school teachers were White in 2001, six percent were Black, and less than five percent were other races (2004). More than 40 percent of schools do not employ even one teacher of color, as mentioned in the NEA report, which means that most youth grow up with predominantly White teachers (2004). If, according to Sue (2003), White people hold the power and perpetuate the idea of White dominance in the United States, and if the majority of teachers in the United States are White, then if any

change is to be made to reduce microaggressions, it is important for White teachers to be trained in multi-cultural diversity. But that is easier said than done in America today.

Most teachers are trained in colleges and universities, in their schools of education, which are staffed by predominantly white faculty. One of the difficulties experienced by college faculty teaching White students about white privilege (the idea that the Whites are the superior race) is that it can have a negative impact on their careers. In a study conducted at the University of Rhode Island (Boatright-Horowitz & Soeung, 2009), 456 students were given one of four scenarios relating to either White privilege or social learning theory (observational learning). The teachers giving the exercise were either African American or White college professors. Those instructors who were teaching White privilege were rated significantly more negatively than those teaching social learning theory. This negativity impacted the faculty when students completed course evaluations at the end of the semester and judged the teacher harshly. The authors maintained, however, that teaching White privilege and helping students learn about race, prejudice, discrimination, and microaggressions is a moral obligation for all teachers (Boatright-Horowitz & Soeung, 2009).

Awareness of microaggressions is only a first step. Teachers should think critically about their role as a perpetrator or recipient of microaggressions. Sue (Sue, D. W. & Sue, 2008) said that a "culturally competent helping professional" (p. 43) is one who is aware of their own "assumptions, values, and biases (p. 44). This should be based on the knowledge of how society and culture helped shape their views of POC. It is not only important for teachers to learn how to confront and manage microaggressions in the classroom (Nadal, 2008b.), it is also required by professional standards of education at all

levels. According to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (The five core, 2010), a competent teacher is one who respects the "cultural and family differences students bring to their classroom," they know how to manage and monitor student learning, and they think about their practice and learn from experience. Competent teachers develop skills that allow them to manage microaggressions when they may occur, and also not be guilty of committing microaggressions. A teacher's most sacred obligation is to always do what is best for students. Racial microaggressions are definitely not best for students or teachers.

Summary

The review of research and related literature has defined racial microaggressions from many different theorists. The common ingredient in all of the definitions is that racial microaggressions are brief, everyday exchanges that send a denigrating message of some kind to people of color. Racial microaggressions may be conscious or unconscious, they may or may not have the intent to harm, and oftentimes they are perpetuated by family and friends. They may be verbal, behavioral, or environmental. Irregardless, the end result is that racial microaggressions are harmful to POC.

Racial microaggressions cause POC to have to expend mental energy analyzing whether a comment or behavior was intended as an insult or an invalidation of their race. The cumulative effect for a POC who has to constantly analyze the remarks and behavior of others leads to psychological problems such as depression. Many POC, especially Black males, talk about how racial microaggressions make them feel invisible, that no one values their self-worth or abilities. Physical problems both cause and are a result of depression. There have been several qualitative studies conducted on college campuses

with focus groups that have identified the depressive symptoms that arise from racial microaggressions. There have also been four quantitative (including longtitutinal) studies cited in the research that surveyed large numbers of adolescents, that determined that racial microaggressions by adults (including teachers in one study), and peers caused depression. Students who have a strong sense of identity with their race, or a very weak identity with their race, seem to be more immune to depression from racial microaggressions. But students who are in the process of forming an identity seem to suffer the most from racial microaggressions.

In addition to psychological problems, racial microaggressions can cause cognitive impairment, particularly when a situation is ambiguous to a POC. Many White people may be either aversive or ambivalent in their relationships with POC and this can be confusing. A White person who is aversive is unconsciously against the stereotypes learned in society of POC being lazy, or criminal, or some other derogatory thought. But they are also in favor of the values of freedom and justice expounded in America. Because the conflict between these two thoughts is at an unconscious level, the White person feels discomfort when around a POC and may try to avoid a relationship or contact with a POC. An ambivalent racist, on the other hand, is aware of the conflict between wanting to be an egalitarian, but recognizing that some members of a non-White race may not embrace the Protestant Work Ethic that made this country famous. When given a chance to support a POC who is apparently not a bad person and clearly fulfills the ideal of the White person, then the White person may form a relationship with the POC. But if the situation with the POC is not so clear, is ambivalent, then the White person may go against the POC, but always for some other, non-racist reason. The POC,

however, can sense the aversion and ambivalence from years of practice, and this affects cognition.

Unfortunately, the effects on students of color can be very harmful in a school setting. A teacher may hold back a student by placing them in a special education or remedial track that will stigmatize the child and make it difficult for the student to ever get out of that track. A teacher may not recommend a student of color for an Advanced Placement or honors class, thus hurting the chances the student will have of getting into a college. The classroom setting may not be inviting to the student, with no decorations or mention of people representing the race of the student. The teacher may overlook a student in the class, so the student feels inferior or invisible. The teacher may call on the student to explain the race the student belongs to, to have the student speak on behalf of the race, thus embarrassing the student. If racial microaggressions go on in the classroom and are not controlled by the teacher, then a student of color will not feel welcome. Honest dialogue about race will not happen in a classroom where a teacher is uncomfortable talking about race, or if the teacher is unsure of their own racial stance. Where there is no honest dialogue, there is no growth.

Different researchers gave definitions for prejudice, discrimination and racism. The emphasis on understanding racism is that racism occurs when the Whites in American society do not share power. Because White people have traditionally been the oppressor race, have made the laws of the country, have written the history books, and have established the customs and mores by which society operates (including schools), then POC have suffered from racism. Since overt racism is no longer legal or morally and

socially acceptable, racial microaggressions have taken the place of old fashioned racism. But there is more to racism than just a social and cultural perspective.

With the rapid advancement of brain imaging technology much more is known about the physical operation of the brain. Babies under the age of one develop a preference for the faces of those the same color as the baby. The insula is the part of the brain that registers disgust for filth, and it is the part of the brain that activates when seeing a homeless person, who is oftentimes of another race from a White person. The amygdala is the seat of emotion and is responsible for impulses. Recent studies show that White police officers are more likely to shoot an armed Black suspect than they would a White suspect, all a function of the amygdala. Studies also show that if the frontal cortex of the brain, the seat of judgment, can be engaged, then the impulse from the amygdala can be controlled. Classes for police officers try to teach officers how to control their impulses, particularly against POC.

Racial microaggressions can be grouped into many different themes or subscales. Researchers have identified these themes and correlated some of the themes with a certain race. As an example, the theme of criminality is most often associated with a Black person. If something is missing in the classroom a teacher might suspect the Black student of stealing it before a child of another race. Asian students, on the other hand, make up the model minority and are ascribed intelligence that they may or may not have, putting undue pressure on the student. Hispanic students can be classified as an alien in their own land when it is assumed the student is in America illegally. Hispanic and Black students are assumed to be inferior and not capable of advancing into more rigorous classes or attending a good college. All students of color may be made to feel invisible if

they are never called on in class or ever taken seriously by the teacher. When a teacher or student makes fun of the speech or accent of a POC, or says something about the native dress of the POC, then the White person is assuming the superiority of White cultural values and communication. Asian girls are stereotyped at school as being unique and like a china doll. Hispanic girls are thought of as being "easy" due to their suggestive dress. Both are made to feel exotic and like they may be taken advantage of if care is not taken. White people who assume that all Hispanic students are Mexicans and all Asian students are Chinese are assuming a universality of the races that does not exist. And when a White person claims they are not racist, or they do not see color, then they are denying the reality of the race and not giving the POC a chance as an individual member of that race.

Teacher leadership is needed to improve racial relations in the classroom and to diminish the number of racial microaggressions that occur in school. This leadership begins in the colleges of education, where teachers should be taught how to handle diversity in the classroom. Leadership extends to the county board of education to make sure staff developments about tolerance, diversity, and racial microaggressions are in place in the schools for all those who work with children. The school principal must make sure that racial microaggressions are not occurring in the classroom and that students of all colors are safe to learn and to grow in the school environment.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Microaggressions are subtle, may be unconscious, and yet they are harmful to POC, no matter whether intentional or not. They may take many forms and everyone is capable of committing them, any place, any time. One of the areas where there is little research is in the role teachers play in committing racial microaggressions in the secondary schools. The purpose of this study is to determine whether teachers commit microaggressions against students of color as perceived by the students, to measure the amount of harm perceived by the student from the microaggression, and to identify themes that may relate to specific races.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following four research questions:

1. To what extent do students of color experience racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

2. To what extent are students of color bothered by racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

3. To what extent do students of color experience by race the racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

4. To what extent are students of color by race bothered by racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

Research Method

The purpose of the study was to assess the perceptions of twelfth grade secondary students of color about teacher microaggressions. A quantitative, descriptive, non-experimental survey method was used for this study. The survey is an affective tool since it examines the attitudes and perceptions of the subjects (Creswell, 1994). Individual students responded to survey questions that asked them to self-report their perceptions about microaggressions. The study is cross-sectional since the information was collected at one point in time (Creswell, 1994). There are several reasons why a survey was used for this study and not a focus group.

Very little is known about microaggressions in the secondary school classroom, so it is important to ask students many questions about this topic, which gives flexibility to the study. The survey being used in the study is a compilation of two other studies, so a survey format allowed the researcher to creatively design an instrument that is suitable for secondary school students. Since each survey is the same, standardization of the questions makes measurement more precise, and data could be legitimately compared between groups if desired (Advantages, 2010). The survey format can be administered to large numbers of students and a survey can gather large amounts of descriptive data in a very short amount of time (Creswell, 1994). A survey is anonymous, compared to gathering data in a focus group, and a survey is self-paced by the student, rather than being led by a focus group leader (Creswell, 1994). The survey method would be a departure from the more predominant method used by researchers in colleges, which has been the focus group (Sue, Bucceria et al., 2007; Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2008; Solorzano et al., 2002). In addition, the information on the survey was analyzed to identify patterns

and themes of microaggressions as they relate to race. The data was collected not only for this study, but for future research as well (such as investigating the perception of White students towards microaggressions).

A survey would leave a smaller lasting impression on the students, compared to the in-depth discussions in a focus group. The researcher is concerned that some students of color may not be aware of microaggressions and, therefore, not bothered by them. Indeed, the data may show that secondary students are not cognizant of racial microaggressions by teachers, compared to older students reported in the literature. On the other hand, a survey might enlighten students to different scenarios in which microaggressions might occur, thus serving as a benefit of learning to the student.

Since few research studies have been conducted in K-12 schools in the last ten years, it was beneficial to gain as much information as possible from as many racial groups as possible. This is possible with a survey. There have been a few studies in secondary schools using surveys, such as Taylor and Turner (2002), Coker et al. (2009), Fisher, Wallace & Fenton (2000), Greene, Way, and Pahl (2006), and Sellers et al. (2006). Focus groups have been used almost exclusively in college settings, with a notable exception by Nadal (2008), who surveyed 448 Filipino and Chinese American college students.

The researcher selected a quantitative approach for this study because the quantitative method lends itself to objectivity and reduces multiple forms of bias. If a survey is well constructed, researcher bias may be minimized. While students may not tell the truth on the survey, if the sample size is large enough the survey should be reliable. The quantitative method allows the researcher and the participant to study the

emotional issue of race from a more mechanistic point of view. There are some preconceived themes or subtypes that the researcher may uniformly apply in quantitative research, as was done in this study. Finally, with the quantitative method it is possible to use statistical methods to analyze large amounts of data, and then to generalize the findings to the population. (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007).

Participants

The population for the survey was all of the twelfth grade students in a large suburban high school (grades 9-12) in the southeastern United States. A sample (N=342) was taken of the approximately 450 twelfth grade students. The sample was a non-random or non-probability sample. This was a convenience sample since all seniors must take a social studies class in the fall and spring term, therefore, all twelfth grade students were accessible to be surveyed. Another reason for selecting the social studies classes was because the researcher is a social studies teacher and has good rapport with the colleagues teaching economics and political systems. All seniors were asked, but not required, to take the test so as to not single out minorities. The researcher purposively selected twelfth grade students because they are more mature and have experienced more teachers throughout their high school career. Therefore, they had more opportunities to experience microaggressions by teachers.

The five, White, social studies teachers who teach economics and political systems were asked to allow the administration of the test. A certified, Black, male teacher who did not teach any of the students administered the test to the students. Granted, a random survey of the senior class with fewer subjects would have been less cumbersome and time-consuming for data input than surveying the entire senior class,

but it would have presented problems in the administration of the test. High school students have a keen sense of justice and would have sensed an inequity in only having certain students take the test. The data gathered from a large sample of students strengthened the reliability and generalizability of the instrument and gained valuable data for future research.

This is an affective survey measuring the sensitive issue of race, so the researcher was sure to follow the guidelines set forth by the county Institutional Review Board (IRB), which only required the principal's permission. The researcher also secured the approval of the researcher's university IRB. No student was required to take the survey. Because the survey subjects are minors, parental consent and student assent (Appendix C, D) was required. Permission letters were sent home by the social studies teachers with each student and were signed by the parents and student, and returned by the student before the student could take the survey. The survey has a disclaimer at the top that assured the student that the survey would be completely anonymous, the surveys would be kept under lock and key at the researcher's home, and that the results of the study would not be used against them.

Context

The high school where the study took place is located in the heart of what used to be a small, rural town. Information taken from the city government web page in 2009 showed it to be a growing city of an estimated 27,000 people, and is considered to be a suburb of the largest city in the southeastern United States. While the population of approximately 2,300 students may be large relative to many schools, this high school has the second lowest number of students of any high school in the school district.

When the researcher first started teaching at this school in 1987 there were approximately 800 White students, with less than 2% Black students, and less than 1% Asian and Hispanic students. In 2009-2010 the student population, according to the school records, was 23 percent Asian, 20 percent Black, 25 percent Hispanic, 27 percent White, 4 percent Multi-racial, and 47 percent free and reduced lunch. It is expected by the principal that the minority population will continue to grow for the next five years.

Instrumentation

The instrument used was the Student Life Experiences Scale (SLES), a survey developed by the researcher for high school students that is a compilation of two existing surveys and contains twenty-one questions (front and back of one page), with room for comments at the end. The first scale from which the SLES was created is *The Daily Life Experiences (Racial Hassles) Scale* (DLE) (Harrell, 1997b), which was one of several different scales called the *Racism and Life Experiences Scale* (RaLES) designed by Harrell in 1997. The RaLES is a collection of five primary scales (including the DLE) designed to measure the multiple dimensions of race-related stress among people of color. In two racially diverse samples of college and graduate students, "internal consistency, split-half, and test-retest reliabilities were between .69 and .96, with 93% of the coefficients above .75" (Harrell, 1997a, p. 2). The DLE is a twenty-item scale which measures the various types of random microaggressions that people experience. The researcher adopted a similar format to that of the DLE and used some of the DLE questions to draft questions for the SLES.

The second survey that was used to create the SLES is the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS), developed by Nadal in 2010. It is a twenty-eight

question scale that has six subscales. The researcher adapted some of the survey questions for high school students and used some of the subscales in the SLES. The Nadal subscales (what the researcher also calls themes of microaggressions) are: Assumptions of Inferiority; Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality; Microinvalidations; Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity; Environmental Microaggressions; and Workplace and School Microaggressions. Nadal (2010) conducted a pilot study of 506 racially diverse adults, and formulated the psychometric properties of each subscale as follows:

Assumptions of Inferiority (α= .896)

Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality (α= .882)

Microinvalidations (α= .888)

Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity (α= .849)

Environmental Microaggressions (α= .850)

Workplace and School Microaggressions (α= .854)

The SLES has only three subscales or themes: Assumptions of Inferiority; Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality; and Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity. The reason the researcher selected these three subscales from the REMS is that based on years of experience in the classroom, the researcher thought these are most applicable to secondary school students. The SLES subscale questions are:

Assumptions of Inferiority Subscale: Question # 1, 5, 9, 12, 15, 19

Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality: Question # 2, 6, 10, 13, 16, 20

Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity: Question # 3, 7, 11, 14, 17, 21

Note that three questions (# 4, 8, 18) were not analyzed as they were included to provide positive responses.

When taking the SLES the subjects were asked to rate how frequently they experienced a microaggression and how much it bothered them. A five-point, Likert-type scale was used to record the frequency of the microaggression perceived by the student over the course of four years of high school with the following labels: 1=never happened, 2=one-three times, 3=four-six times, 4=seven to nine times, and 5=frequently, weekly. A five-point, Likert- type scale was used to record how bothered the students were by the microaggressions, with the following labels: 1=has never happened to me, 2=did not bother me at all, 3=bothered me a little, 4=bothered me a lot, and 5=bothered me extremely. After the last question there is an open-ended request, asking for student comments of their perceptions of microaggressions that may not be included in the survey items.

The survey was completely anonymous, and there are two questions in the beginning of the survey requesting the demographic information of sex and race. The races included on the survey are the same used on most of the major studies done by Sue and Nadal. They are Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, and Other. The survey is designed in such a way that it will not be a microaggression to any student taking part. Care was taken to make sure that the language was easy to understand and the instructions were clear. The student answered the questions on the survey and the surveys were collected for analysis.

To assure content validity the researcher used qualitative validation by asking six veteran colleagues to review the instrument and provide feedback and recommendations

for improvement. Further, three students of color who are alumnae of the high school were asked for their input about the survey. By having more than one person review the survey inter-judge reliability was assured (Dereshiwsky, 1993).

Data Collection

The data collected was the perceptions of the student about whether a teacher committed a microaggression, the frequency that it happened, and how the student was affected. This is an affective survey that measures student's attitudes and dispositions that are favorable or unfavorable toward perceived microaggressions. It is an attempt to understand the effect of racism-related stress on students (Harrell, 1997b).

All of the economics and political systems teachers at the researcher's high school (five teachers) were asked to allow the survey to be given to their twelfth grade students, thereby testing all of the approximately 450 seniors. The gatekeepers for gaining the permission of the social studies faculty to administer the test was the school principal, followed by the social studies department chairperson and the team leaders for those two subjects. No teacher was required to take part in the research. It was suggested by the researcher that the test be given to all classes during the same week, at the convenience of the teachers. Permission letters asking for parental consent and student assent were distributed by the social studies teachers to the students the week before the surveys were administered.

The surveys were all administered on the same day by the same person, a certified, Black male teacher who did not teach any of the students. The researcher believed that bias was avoided by using someone other than the classroom teachers to administer the survey. If a teacher was guilty of a microaggression it might have been

awkward for a student to take the survey. The teacher who administered the survey was an experienced teacher with no ties to the students. This veteran teacher was also selected because he was experienced enough to recognize if a student might become distressed over the contents of the survey. Counselors and the administration at the school had been contacted by the researcher and were available for counseling if needed. The teachers left the room while the students took the survey. The surveys were collected by the administering teacher and taken directly to the researcher. The confidence level of survey completions was high because the social studies faculty is very collegial and cooperative with each other. The survey was designed so that all answers were made on the survey and all the administrator had to do was pass the survey out to the students and collect them at the end.

Data Analysis

The researcher entered the data collected from the survey into the Statistical Program for the Social Studies (SPSS) database for analysis. The SPSS was chosen because it is a widely used program in educational research. The response rate was high (342 surveys completed, 76% of the population) so a respondent/nonrespondent analysis was not done (Creswell, 1994). A descriptive analysis of the demographic data for sex and ethnicity was conducted in SPSS.

The variables entered into the SPSS database were taken from the SLES and included the demographic information of race, eighteen questions that measured the occurrence of racial microaggressions, and eighteen questions that measured how bothered a student was by the racial microaggression. Three questions were discarded. Values were assigned for each variable based on the five-item Likert-type scale. In

addition, the questions were grouped into three themes and the themes were analyzed for occurrence and how bothered the students were by the racial microaggressions in each theme.. The data was analyzed using the SPSS program to answer each of the research questions.

Research Question One

For Research Question One, to what extent do students of color experience racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools, a frequency distribution was conducted in SPSS to determine the mean and standard deviation for all items, arranged in thematic order (six questions for each theme). A five-point Likert-type scale was used to measure the occurrence of the item over a four-year period. The mean related to the average reported occurrences as perceived by the students. The means were then compared for each racial microaggression as ordered by themes.

Research Question Two

Analysis was similar for Research Question Two: To what extent are students of color bothered by racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools? A frequency distribution showing the mean and standard deviation for all items, arranged in thematic order, was transacted in SPSS. A five-point Likert-type scale was used to measure how bothered the student was for each racial microaggression over a four-year period. The means were compared for how bothered students were for each racial microaggression, categorized in themes.

Research Question Three

Research Question Three is to what extent do students of color experience by race the racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools? To answer this question an

analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed at a significance level of .01 using the SPSS computer program. This test was performed to determine if there was any significant difference in the mean response by race. The ANOVA was performed because it is a test that is frequently chosen to determine whether there is a significant difference between several sample means (Sprinthall, 2003). If the ANOVA test indicated there was a significant difference at $p=<.01$, then to determine which mean differences among the races was significant, a post hoc Tukey Honestly Significant Difference (Tukey HSD) test was performed at the .01 significance level using the SPSS computer program. It is a post hoc test because it is used after a significant ANOVA test (Sprinthall, 2003). The Tukey HSD test indicated which races showed a significant difference among their means for each item, analyzed under the three themes.

Research Question Four

Again, analysis for Research Question Four was similar to that of Question Three. Question Four is to what extent are students of color by race bothered by racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools? An ANOVA test was performed at a significance level of .01 using the SPSS computer program. This test was performed to determine if there was any significant difference in the mean response by race as to how bothered a student was by a racial microaggression. If the ANOVA test indicated there was a significant difference at $p=<.01$, then to determine which mean differences among the races was significant, a Tukey HSD test was performed at the .01 significance level using the SPSS computer program. The Tukey HSD test indicated which races showed a significant difference among their means for each item, analyzed under the three themes.

Themes

All four research questions were organized by items that represented racial microaggressions, grouped under three themes: Assumptions of Inferiority; Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality; and Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity. To determine which theme had more racial microaggression occurrences, a frequency distribution was conducted in SPSS to determine the mean and standard deviation of the student responses for the six racial microaggressions in each theme. Likewise, a frequency distribution was conducted in SPSS to determine the mean and standard deviation of the student responses for how bothered the students were by racial microaggressions for each theme. To determine to what extent racial microaggressions occurred by themes by race, an ANOVA test with a significance level of $p<.01$ was performed using the SPSS computer program to show differences among the races. A Tukey HSD test was then performed to determine which race or races had a significant difference in the means to a .01 level. The means of those races were then compared to see which theme had more racial microaggressions occur by race.

In addition to an analysis of the racial microaggressions presented in the SLES, room was left at the end of the survey asking students for qualitative comments about their experiences with racial microaggressions that may not have been included in the survey. The comments from these respondents were recorded and summarized to determine the kinds of racial microaggressions the students reported. An analysis was made to correlate the student comments to the three themes of racial microaggressions in the study, to determine the frequency of these racial microaggressions and how bothered

the students were by them, and if there were any types of racial microaggressions that students perceived that were not on the survey.

Reporting the Data

The demographics for race were presented in the text. Each research question was presented and organized by themes. The data were reported using eight tables with complete textual explanations of the analysis. Qualitative information taken from one question on the survey was analyzed and presented in text format.

Summary

This study addressed the following four research questions:

1. To what extent do students of color experience racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

2. To what extent are students of color bothered by racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

3. To what extent do students of color experience by race the racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

4. To what extent are students of color by race bothered by racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

To answer these questions the researcher administered a twenty-one question survey called the Student Life Experiences Survey (SLES). It was created by the researcher for secondary school twelfth grade students to measure their perceptions of racial microaggressions by teachers during their four years of high school. The survey used a five point Likert-type scale to record the number of times students experienced or perceived a racial microaggression, and also a five point Likert-type scale to record how

the racial microaggression affected or bothered them. The survey had one question at the end that asked for student comments about racial microaggressions that might not have been on the survey. The only demographic information requested on the survey was the students' sex and race. The choices for race were Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, and Other.

The population being studied was all the twelfth grade students in a very large suburban school district. The sample was taken from the approximately four hundred and fifty twelfth grade students at the researchers high school, also in the same district. The school and the county are known for its rapidly changing demographics. The researchers high school has an almost equal division in population of the four races in the school, so the school is very diversified, which makes it an excellent choice for this study.

The survey was a good choice for this quantitative study, for it could be administered easily by the political systems and economics teachers in the school to a large number of students. This was a convenience sample because all of the twelfth grade students had to take one of these two courses each semester. The teachers sent home a letter to the parents and the student from the researcher to gain parental consent and student assent. The letter explained the purpose of the study, requested their help, and assured the anonymity of the student. No teacher had to give the survey, but the confidence level was high that all teachers would. Likewise, no student had to take the survey.

The instrument used, the SLES, is a compilation of two other surveys, one by Harrell and one by Nadal. The format of the SLES was taken from the Harrell survey, and the subscales used on the SLES were taken from the Nadal survey. The subscales or

themes for this research survey are: Assumptions of Inferiority; Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality; and Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity. There are six items or questions relating to racial microaggressions that go with each theme. The survey was shared with six veteran colleagues and three high school graduates who are students of color to determine validity and reliability.

Data were recorded and then entered into SPSS for analysis. The data were analyzed by each research question. The first two questions involved the students' perceptions of the frequency of the occurrences of racial microaggressions by secondary school teachers, and the perception of the students as to how bothered they were by the racial microaggressions. The third and fourth research question concerned the occurrences of racial microaggressions and students' being bothered by racial microaggressions by race by theme. Then, the three themes were analyzed by overall occurrences, how bothered the students were overall, and which theme by race experienced more microaggressions and were more bothered by racial microaggressions. Finally, the students' written comments on the survey were analyzed and categorized by occurrences, how bothered the students were by racial microaggressions, and with which themes their comments most correlated.

CHAPTER FOUR

REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

Racial microaggressions are "subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed toward people of color, often automatically or unconsciously," according to Solorzano et al. (2000, p. 60). They may communicate "hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults that potentially have a harmful or unpleasant psychological impact (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). Whether intentional or not, microaggressions may result in frustration, alienation, anger, and other emotions that come from being belittled. These negative emotions may eventually result in mental problems that include anxiety and depression (Nadal, 2008a). Because students are so impressionable, it is the duty of the teacher to protect students from microaggressions. Therefore, it is important for educators to be able to recognize microaggressions and to control them in the school.

The literature showed that there were few research studies in a secondary school setting that studied the relationship between the teachers and students of color as it related to microaggressions. Most of the previous studies had been qualitative and on college campuses. Therefore, the researcher (who is a secondary school teacher), decided to study this topic.

The researcher conducted a quantitative study of the perceptions of all twelfth grade students in a secondary high school (grades 9-12). The students were given the Student Life Experiences Scale (SLES) that asked their perception of the frequency with which secondary school teachers committed racial microaggressions over a four-year period, for the total number of respondents and by race. The survey also asked for their

perception of how bothered they were by the microaggressions, for the total number of respondents and by race. In addition, students were given the opportunity to write comments about racial microaggressions they had seen or experienced. The researcher analyzed all of the data by themes and by races. It is the purpose of this chapter to report the results of the survey. Demographic information was given in the text about the respondents, and data analysis was given by using tables. All research findings were related to the research questions.

Research Questions

Microaggressions were measured and analyzed by individual items and themes relating to the survey. There are eighteen items that are addressed in each analysis, and there are three themes: Assumptions of Inferiority, Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality, and Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity. There are six items (survey questions) under each theme. The data are analyzed and reported by each Research Question.

There are four research questions:

1. To what extent do students of color experience racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

2. To what extent are students of color bothered by racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

3. To what extent do students of color by race experience racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

4. To what extent are students of color by race bothered by racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

Research Design

The data gathering instrument used was the SLES, a survey developed by the researcher for high school students that is a compilation of two existing surveys and contains twenty-one questions, three of which were designed to provide a positive aspect to the survey, but were not used in the analysis. The validity and reliability of the SLES is based upon the psychometrics of the scales from which it was created. The first scale from which the SLES was created is *The Daily Life Experiences (Racial Hassles) Scale* (DLE) (Harrell, 1997b), which was one of several different scales called the *Racism and Life Experiences Scale* (RaLES) designed by Harrell in 1997. The RaLES is a collection of five primary scales (including the DLE) designed to measure the multiple dimensions of race-related stress among people of color. In two racially diverse samples of college and graduate students, "internal consistency, split-half, and test-retest reliabilities were between .69 and .96, with 93% of the coefficients above .75" (Harrell, 1997a, p. 2). The DLE is a twenty-item scale, which measures the various types of random microaggressions that people experience. The researcher adopted a similar format to that of the DLE and used some of the DLE questions to draft questions for the SLES.

The second survey that was used to create the SLES is the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS), developed by Nadal in 2010. It is a twenty-eight-question scale that has six subscales. The researcher adapted some of the survey questions for high school students and used some of the subscales in the SLES. The Nadal subscales (what the researcher also calls themes of microaggressions) are: Assumptions of Inferiority; Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality; Microinvalidations; Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity; Environmental

Microaggressions; and Workplace and School Microaggressions. Nadal (2010)

conducted a pilot study of 506 racially diverse adults, and formulated the psychometric

properties of each subscale as follows:

Assumptions of Inferiority (α= .896)

Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality (α= .882)

Microinvalidations (α= .888)

Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity (α= .849)

Environmental Microaggressions (α= .850)

Workplace and School Microaggressions (α= .854)

The SLES has only three subscales or themes: Assumptions of Inferiority;

Second- class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality; and Exoticization and

Assumptions of Similarity. The reason the researcher selected these three subscales from

the REMS is that based on years of experience in the classroom, the researcher thought

these are most applicable to secondary school students. The researcher also used

qualitative validation by asking six veteran colleagues to review the instrument and

provide feedback and recommendations for improvement. In addition, three high school

graduates who are students of color were asked for their input regarding the survey.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

A total of 444 permission letters were sent to the parents of all twelfth grade

social studies students asking for parental consent and student assent. Of these, 378

(85%) permission letters were completed and returned. There were a total of 342 surveys

(76% of the population) actually given and completed by twelfth grade students at the

researcher's high school. The information for race is the only demographic given

because the research studied microaggressions against students of color, studied by race only. Of the 342 twelfth grade students studied, 26 percent were Asian, 21 percent were Black, 13.5 percent were Hispanic, 33.3 percent were White, and 6.1 percent were Other. This compares favorably to the school population of 23 percent Asian, 20 percent Black, 25 percent Hispanic, 27 percent White, and 4 percent Other. The school has been a majority/minority school (White student population <50 percent) since 2003. While the sample surveyed is not a direct correlation with the school population, it is representative of the diversity in the high school.

The teachers at the high school where the study took place are predominantly White. In 2009-2010, two percent were Asian, ten percent were Black, two percent were Hispanic, and eighty-six percent were White. The nineteen classrooms where the surveys were actually given had five teachers who were all White. A Black, male, certified teacher who did not teach any of the students administered the survey, thus reducing respondent bias.

Findings

Research Question One: To what extent do students of color experience racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

Table 4.1 presents the information from the survey that gives the students' perception of experiencing a racial microaggression by a secondary school teacher over a four-year period. A frequency distribution showing the mean and standard deviation for all items, arranged in thematic order, was taken and is reported in Table 4.1. A five-point Likert-type scale was used in the survey to measure the occurrence of the item over a four-year period. Therefore, the results for the mean relate to average reported

occurrences over a four-year term. As an example, a mean of 2.04 would indicate that students perceived they were ignored, on average, about one-to-three times during their high school career. The standard deviation measures the variability from the mean, with two-thirds of the responses within the normal distribution of +/- one standard deviation. One-third of the responses will be outside this range.

Table 4.1

Students' Perception of the Occurrence of Racial Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers*

Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers Within Themes	Student Mean Response	*SD*
Theme 1: Assumptions of Inferiority		
Student Ignored by Teacher in Class	2.04	1.07
Teacher Assumed Student Work Inferior	1.48	0.86
Student Told Was Articulate and Spoke Well	2.58	1.38
Student Not Allowed to Participate in Talks About Race	1.14	0.54
Teacher Surprised by Student Success	1.87	1.11
Teacher Assumed Student Was Poor	1.16	0.56
Theme 2: Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality		
Teacher Afraid/Intimidated by Student	1.23	0.68
Student Watched Closely On Campus	1.61	1.01
Student Felt Bad in Class Involving Race	1.41	0.76
Teacher Told Offensive Racial Joke	1.48	0.79
Student Not Treated As Well In Class	1.85	1.16
Student Insulted by a Teacher	1.87	1.13

* How Often Experience Happened Over Four-Year Period?
 1 = Never happened to me
 2 = One to three times
 3 = Four to six times
 4 = Seven to nine times
 5 = Frequently, Weekly

Table 4.1 (*Continued*)

Students' Perception of the Occurrence of Racial Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers*

Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers within Themes	Student Mean Response	*SD*
Theme 3: Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity		
Student Asked to Speak and Represent Race in Class	1.51	0.81
Student Expected to Excel in Class/Sports	1.47	0.97
Student Asked to Teach Class Words in "Native" Language	1.66	1.04
Student Told by Teacher Race All Look Alike	1.36	0.80
Teacher Did Not Believe Student Was Born In USA	1.17	0.72
Teacher Made Comment About Physical Features or Dress Due to Race	1.34	0.77

* How Often Experience Happened Over Four-Year Period?
 1 = Never happened to me
 2 = One to three times
 3 = Four to six times
 4 = Seven to nine times
 5 = Frequently, Weekly

Theme One: Assumptions of Inferiority

The two racial microaggressions with the highest mean (*M*) for this theme were the items Student Ignored or Overlooked by Teacher in Class (*M*=2.04) and Student Told Was Articulate and Spoke Well (*M*=2.58). A mean of 2.04 and 2.58 indicate that the students perceived racial microaggressions for these items one-to-three times over a four-year period. All of the other items within Theme One had means that indicated the racial

microaggressions never happened to them. The racial microaggression with the lowest mean (1.16) in this category was the item Teacher Assumed Student Was Poor.

Theme Two: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality

According to the student mean responses, none of the students perceived they had experienced a racial microaggression. Within this theme, the two items with the highest, and almost identical means were Student Not Treated as Well In Class By a Teacher (*M*=1.85), and Student Insulted By a Teacher (*M*=1.87). The racial microaggression with the lowest Mean (*M*=1.23) within this theme was Teacher Afraid or Intimidated by the Student.

Theme Three: Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity

Again, for all of the items within this theme, the students perceived that a racial microaggression did not happen to them. The two racial microaggressions with the highest mean for the third theme were the items Student Asked to Speak and Represent Race in Class (*M*=1.51) and Student Asked to Teach Class Words in "Native" Language (*M*=1.66). The lowest mean within this theme category was Teacher Did Not Believe Student Was Born in the USA (*M*=1.17).

In analyzing Table 4.1 overall, the items with the highest means for all items in the table were Student Ignored By Teacher in Class (2.04), and Student Told Was Articulate and Spoke Well (2.58). These were both in Theme One: Assumptions of Inferiority, and indicated that the students experienced these microaggressions one to three times during their four years of high school. For the other four racial microaggressions listed under Theme One, and for the six microaggressions listed under

both Themes Two and Three, respectively, the students indicated from their responses

that these microaggressions, on average, never happened.

Research Question Two: To what extent are students of color bothered by racial

microaggressions?

        Table 4.2 presents the information from the survey that gives the students'

perception of being bothered by a perceived racial microaggression by secondary school

teachers for the sample (N=342). A frequency distribution showing the mean and

standard deviation for all items, arranged in thematic order, was taken and is reported in

Table 4.2. A five-point Likert-type scale was used in the survey to measure how

bothered the students were for each racial microaggression over a four-year period.

Therefore, the results for the mean relate to average reported perceptions of being

bothered over a four-year term. Thus, as an example, a mean of 3.04 would indicate that

students perceived being bothered a little by a racial microaggression during their high

school career. The standard deviation measures the variability from the mean, with two-

thirds of the responses within the normal distribution of +/- one standard deviation. One-

third of the responses will be outside this range.

Table 4.2

Students' Perception of Being Bothered by Racial Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers*

Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers within Themes	Student Mean Response	*SD*
Theme 1: Assumptions of Inferiority		
Student Ignored by Teacher in Class	2.22	1.10
Teacher Assumed Student Work Inferior	1.67	1.14
Student Told Was Articulate and Spoke Well	1.84	0.70
Student Not Allowed to Participate in Talks About Race	1.21	0.71
Teacher Surprised by Student Success	1.75	1.00
Teacher Assumed Student Was Poor	1.22	0.72
Theme 2: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality		
Teacher Afraid/Intimidated by Student	1.25	0.67
Student Watched Closely On Campus	1.85	1.29
Student Felt Bad in Class Involving Race	1.65	1.10
Teacher Told Offensive Racial Joke	1.59	0.95
Student Not Treated As Well In Class	2.17	1.42
Student Insulted by a Teacher	2.11	1.36

* How Much Did It Bother You?
 1 = Has never happened to me
 2 = Did not bother me at all
 3 = Bothered me a little
 4 = Bothered me a lot
 5 = Bothered me extremely

Table 4.2 (*Continued*)

Students' Perception of Being Bothered by Racial Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers *

Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers within Themes	Student Mean Response	SD
Theme 3: Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity		
Student Asked to Speak and Represent Race in Class	1.25	0.67
Student Expected to Excel in Class/Sports	1.44	0.92
Student Asked to Teach Class Words in "Native" Language	1.47	0.73
Student Told by Teacher Race All Look Alike	1.40	0.91
Teacher Did Not Believe Student Was Born In USA	1.17	0.64
Teacher Made Comment About Physical Features or Dress Due to Race	1.38	0.88

* How Much Did It Bother You?
 1 = Has never happened to me
 2 = Did not bother me at all
 3 = Bothered me a little
 4 = Bothered me a lot
 5 = Bothered me extremely

Theme One: Assumptions of Inferiority

All six items under this theme had a mean of 2.22 or less. This indicates that the students did not perceive that they were bothered at all by any of these racial microaggressions. The racial microaggression with the highest mean in this category was Student Ignored or Overlooked in Class by a Teacher with a mean of 2.22. The two lowest items within this theme had almost identical means. The Teacher Assumed

Student Was Poor had a mean of 1.22, and the Student Was Not Allowed to Participate in

Talks About Race had a mean of 1.21.

Theme Two: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality

All of the six racial microaggressions within this theme had means of 2.17 or less.

This indicates that the students did not perceive that they were bothered at all by any of

these racial microaggressions. The racial microaggressions with the highest, and almost

identical means in this category were Student Insulted By a Teacher (*M*=2.11), and

Student Not Treated as Well in Class (*M*=2.17). The racial microaggression with the

lowest mean was Teacher Was Afraid or Intimidated by a Student (*M*=1.23).

Theme Three: Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity

Within Theme Three, all of the racial microaggressions had a mean of less than 2.

This indicates that the students perceived that the racial microaggressions had not

happened to them. Thus, if the racial microaggression did not happen, the students could

not perceive that they were bothered by it. The highest racial microaggression items

within this theme were the Student Asked to Teach Class Words in "Native" Language

(*M*=1.47), and Student Expected to Excel in Class/Sports (M=1.44). The lowest racial

microaggression within this category was Teacher Did Not Believe Student Was Born in

the USA (*M*=1.17).

In summary, an analysis of Table 4.2 indicates that all of the racial

microaggressions received a student mean response of 2.22 or less. This indicates that

none of the racial microaggressions in any of the themes bothered the students. While

Table 4.1 and Table 4.2, respectively, report the students' perception of the occurrence of

racial microaggressions and the perception of how bothered the students were by the incident, the next two tables examine racial microaggressions by race.

Research Question 3: To what extent do students of color by race experience racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

Table 4.3 is a statistical presentation of the students' perception of the occurrence of racial microaggressions by high school teachers based on race. All items are grouped in the three themes, and for each item the mean and standard deviation are given for each race. A Likert-type scale was used in the survey to measure the occurrence of the item over a four-year period. Therefore, the results for the mean relate to the frequency of the items in the table, and not to the actual number of times the event occurred.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed at a significance level of .01 using the SPSS computer program. The ANOVA was performed because it is a test that is frequently chosen to determine whether there is a significant difference between several sample means (Sprinthall, 2003). The null hypothesis was that for all of the races (Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, and Other), there would not be a significant difference in the way students responded to the occurrence of microaggressions by race. Based on the results of the ANOVA test, there were seven items that had a significance level of less than .01. This indicated that there was a significant difference in the means of the survey responses by two or more of the races. There were three items that were all in Theme One (Assumptions of Inferiority) that showed significant differences in the means among the races. The remaining four items showed significant differences among the races in Theme Three: Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity.

To determine which mean differences among the races were significant, a post hoc Tukey Honestly Significant Difference (Tukey HSD) test was performed at the .01 significance level using the SPSS computer program. It is a post hoc test because it is used after the ANOVA test (Sprinthall, 2003). The Tukey HSD test indicated which races showed a difference among their means for each item, analyzed under the three themes.

It is important to note that the means being compared in the Tukey HSD test were all very low on the Likert-type scale, indicating few occurrences of racial microaggressions over a four-year period. However, the test clearly showed differences between the races as they perceived racial microaggressions. It is vital, therefore, to study these differences even if the values are low for occurrences.

Table 4.3

Statistical Analysis of the Students' Perception of Racial Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers Based on Occurrences by Themes by Race*

Microaggressions of Secondary School Teachers within Themes	Asian		Black		Hispanic		White		ANOVA	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	F	Sig(p)
Theme 1: Assumptions of Inferiority										
Student Ignored by Teacher in Class	1.73	1.00	1.97	1.03	1.98	0.97	2.31	1.01	4.10	0.003
Teacher Assumed Student Work Inferior	1.42	0.90	1.42	0.78	1.50	0.72	1.61	0.94	1.11	0.354
Student Told Was Articulate and Spoke Well	2.31	1.28	3.10	1.48	2.67	1.23	2.44	1.32	3.84	0.005
Student Not Allowed to Participate In Talks About Race	1.16	0.50	1.25	0.85	1.04	0.21	1.13	0.43	1.53	0.194
Teacher Surprised by Student Success	1.58	0.96	1.94	1.10	2.46	1.19	1.75	1.09	5.65	0.000
Teacher Assumed Student Was Poor	1.06	0.35	1.20	0.67	1.28	0.72	1.16	0.54	1.43	0.225

* How Often Experience Happened Over Four-Year Period?
1 = Never happened to me
2 = One to three times
3 = Four to six times
4 = Seven to nine times
5 = Frequently, Weekly

\# Note: "Other" Race data not significant and excluded from Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Statistical Analysis of the Students' Perception of Racial Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers Based on Occurrences by Themes by Race*

Microaggressions of Secondary School Teachers within Themes	Asian		Black		Hispanic		White		ANOVA	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	F	Sig(p)
Theme 2: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality										
Teacher Afraid/Intimidated by Student	1.09	0.33	1.26	0.67	1.17	0.44	1.31	0.80	2.15	0.075
Student Watched Closely On Campus	1.41	0.97	1.68	1.05	1.74	0.91	1.65	1.01	1.36	0.248
Student Felt Bad in Class Involving Race	1.34	0.74	1.49	0.79	1.70	1.03	1.29	0.59	2.76	0.028
Teacher Told Offensive Racial Joke	1.42	0.86	1.46	0.77	1.57	0.75	1.51	0.78	0.35	0.842
Student Not Treated As Well In Class	1.78	1.16	1.92	1.25	1.89	1.16	1.82	1.09	0.26	0.903
Student Insulted by a Teacher	1.90	1.21	1.76	1.12	1.80	1.11	2.01	1.11	0.89	0.471

* How Often Experience Happened Over Four-Year Period?
1 = Never happened to me
2 = One to three times
3 = Four to six times
4 = Seven to nine times
5 = Frequently, Weekly

Note: "Other" Race data not significant and excluded from Table 4.3

Table 4.3

Statistical Analysis of the Students' Perception of Racial Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers Based on Occurrences by Themes by Race*

Microaggressions of Secondary School Teachers within Themes	Asian		Black		Hispanic		White		ANOVA	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	F	Sig(p)
Theme 3: Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity										
Student Asked to Speak and Represent Race in Class	1.67	0.85	1.56	0.87	1.74	0.88	1.22	0.58	6.27	0.000
Student Expected to Excel in Class/Sports	1.71	1.18	1.47	0.96	1.33	0.56	1.35	0.91	2.06	0.086
Student Asked to Teach Class Words in "Native" Language	2.09	1.05	1.26	0.80	2.52	1.26	1.17	0.53	28.05	0.000
Student Told Race All Look Alike	1.87	1.08	1.18	0.70	1.33	0.60	1.06	0.28	16.54	0.000
Teacher Did Not Believe Student was Born In USA	1.15	0.47	1.08	0.50	1.63	1.61	1.02	0.13	7.05	0.000
Teacher Made Comment About Physical Features or Dress	1.38	0.80	1.53	1.06	1.39	0.71	1.16	0.45	2.88	0.023

* How Often Experience Happened Over Four-Year Period?
1 = Never happened to me
2 = One to three times
3 = Four to six times
4 = Seven to nine times
5 = Frequently, Weekly
# Note: "Other" Race data not significant and excluded from Table 4.3.

Theme One: Assumptions of Inferiority

The ANOVA test indicated that three out of the six items comprising the Assumptions of Inferiority theme differed significantly (p<.01) by race. Those twelfth grade students who perceived that they were Ignored or Overlooked in Class by the Teacher had a Tukey HSD that showed a significant difference in the means in the way the Asian students responded (*M*=1.73) and the White students responded (*M*=2.31). This indicated that the White students were more likely to perceive that they were ignored in class than the Asian students (one-to-three times over a four-year period). There was no significant difference in the mean for the Black students (*M*=1.97) and the Hispanic students (*M*=1.98).

For the item, Student Told was Articulate and Spoke Well, the Tukey HSD test indicated there was significant difference in the means between the Asian students (*M*=2.31) and the Black students (*M*=3.10), indicating that Black students were more likely to perceive that teachers commented on their ability to articulate and speak well four-to-six times during a four-year period. This compared to the Asian students whose mean response was that teachers commented on their speech one-to-three times during the same period. Based on the Tukey HSD test*,* there was no significant difference between the Hispanic students (*M*=2.67) and the White students (*M*=2.44) regarding this item.

For the last item within Theme One, there was a significant difference in the mean at the .01 level for the Tukey HSD test between the Hispanic students (*M*=2.46) and the Asian students (*M*=1.58), and the Hispanic students and the White students (*M*=1.75), in how they responded to the item Teacher Surprised by Student Success. This indicates

that Hispanic students are more likely to perceive teachers being surprised by their success than both the Asian and the White students.

Theme Two: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality

The ANOVA test indicated that none of the items in Theme Two: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality had a significance level of less than .01. This indicates that there was no significant difference in the means among the races for all the items in this theme. Since there was no significance, there was no need to apply the Tukey HSD test.

Theme Three: Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity

There are four items in this theme that showed a significance of <.01 on the ANOVA test, indicating significant differences in the means between the races for these items. Using the Tukey HSD test, there was a significant difference at the .01 level in the mean between the Asian students (*M*=1.67) and White students (*M*=1.22) for Student Asked to Speak and Represent Race, indicating that Asian students were asked by teachers to speak and represent their race more frequently than White students. Within this same item, there was also a significant difference in the means between the Hispanic students (*M*=1.74) and White students (*M*=1.22). Again, the Hispanic students were asked to speak more often for their race then were the White students. There was no significant difference in the means from the Tukey HSD test for this item among the Asian students (*M*=1.67), the Black students (*M*=1.56), and the Hispanic students (*M*=1.74).

For the item Student Asked to Teach the Class Words in "Native" Language, there were significant mean differences identified by the Tukey HSD test between the

Asian students (*M*=2.09) and Black students (*M*=1.26), and Asian students and White students (*M*=1.17). This indicates that Asian students were more likely to be called on by a teacher to teach the class or teacher words in the student's "native" language one-to-three times over a four-year period compared to Black students and White students. Similarly, the Tukey HSD test identified significant mean differences between the Hispanic students (*M*=2.52) and both the Black (*M*=1.26) and the White students (*M*=1.17). In this case, the Hispanic students were more likely to be asked one-to-three times over a four-year period to teach words in their "native" language than the Black or the White students.

For the item, Student Told Race All Look Alike, there was a significant difference in the mean between the Asian students (*M*=1.87) and the Black students (*M*=1.18), the Hispanic students (*M*=1.33), and the White students (*M*=1.06), using the Tukey HSD test. This indicates that the Asian students were more likely to perceive a microaggression from teachers that all Asian students look alike to the teacher, compared to the other races. There was no mean significant difference for this item among the Black, Hispanic, or White students.

The item, Teacher Did Not Believe That Student Was Born in The USA, showed a significant difference using the Tukey HSD test between the Hispanic students (*M*=1.63) and the other three races, (Asians, *M*=1.15; Blacks, *M*=1.08, and Whites, *M*=1.02). This indicates that Hispanic students were more likely to perceive that their teachers did not believe they were born in the USA than students from the other races. The mean difference for this item was not significant among the Asian, Black, and White students.

In summary, an analysis of Table 4.3 shows that there were three items of significance under Theme One, Assumptions of Inferiority. The Tukey HSD test identified that White students perceived that they were ignored or overlooked more often than Asian students. Black students felt their teachers recognized them more often than Asian students for being articulate and speaking well. Hispanic students thought teachers were more surprised more often by their success than did the Asian and the White students.

The ANOVA test indicated that none of the items in Theme Two: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality had a significance level of less than .01. This indicated that there were no significant differences in the means among the races for all the items in this theme. Four items had significant mean differences among the races, according to the Tukey HSD test, under Theme Three, Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity. Asian students perceived that they were called upon more often by their teachers to speak for their race than the Whites students, while Asian and Hispanic students thought they were called upon more often by their teachers to teach the class words in their "native" language, compared to the Black and White students. The Asian students very clearly perceived they experienced more racial microaggressions when teachers told them that members of their race all looked alike, more so than the other three races. Likewise, Hispanic students perceived that teachers thought they were more often not born in the USA as compared to the other three races.

Research Question Number Four: To what extent are students of color by race bothered by racial microaggressions?

Table 4.4 is a statistical presentation of student perception of how twelfth grade students were bothered by racial microaggressions by secondary school teachers based on race. All items are grouped in the three themes and for each item the mean and standard deviation are given for each race. A Likert-type scale was used in the survey to measure how bothered the student was by an item over a four-year period. Therefore, the results for the mean relate to the level of being bothered for the items in the table.

Again, as for Research Question Three, the means being compared in the Tukey HSD test were all very low on the Likert-type scale, indicating that the students by race were either not bothered at all by racial microaggressions, or it never happened to them. However, the Tukey HSD does show a difference between the races as they perceive how bothered they were by the racial microaggression. Therefore, even though the values are low for being bothered, it is important to study the differences between the races.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed at a significance level of .01 using the SPSS computer program. The null hypothesis was that for all of the races (Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, and Other), there would not be a significant difference in the way students responded to the level of being bothered by microaggressions by race. Based on the results of the ANOVA test, there were five items that had a significance level of less than .01. This indicated that there was a significant difference in the means of two or more of the races.

To determine which mean differences among the races were significant, a Tukey HSD test was performed at the .01 significance level using the SPSS computer program.

The Tukey HSD test indicated which races showed significant mean differences for each item, categorized under the three themes. Once the significant mean differences by race were identified by the Tukey HSD test, the differences among the races were compared and contrasted.

Table 4.4

Statistical Analysis of Perception of How Students Were Bothered by Racial Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers Based on Themes by Race*

Microaggressions of Secondary School Teachers within Themes	Asian		Black		Hispanic		White		ANOVA	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	F	Sig(p)
Theme 1: Assumptions of Inferiority										
Student Ignored by Teacher in Class	1.93	1.09	2.21	1.10	2.29	1.12	2.44	1.00	2.84	0.024
Teacher Assumed Student Work Inferior	1.53	1.08	1.60	1.12	1.91	1.30	1.80	1.20	1.75	0.139
Student Told Was Articulate and Spoke Well	1.87	0.91	1.96	0.68	1.85	0.47	1.78	0.62	1.53	0.193
Student Not Allowed to Participate In Talks About Race	1.19	0.62	1.28	0.89	1.09	0.46	1.26	0.79	1.10	0.355
Teacher Surprised by Student Success	1.56	1.03	1.94	1.10	2.09	0.91	1.64	0.93	3.20	0.013
Teacher Assumed Student Was Poor	1.15	0.61	1.25	0.82	1.37	0.83	1.22	0.73	1.08	0.365

*How Much Did It Bother You?
1 = Has never happed to me
2 = Did not bother me at all
3 = Bothered me a little
4 = Bothered me a lot
5 = Bothered me extremely

Note: "Other" Race data not significant and excluded from Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 (*Continued*)

Statistical Analysis of Perception of How Students Were Bothered by Racial Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers Based on Themes by Race*

Microaggressions of Secondary School Teachers within Themes	Asian		Black		Hispanic		White		ANOVA	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	F	Sig(p)
Theme 2: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality										
Teacher Afraid/Intimidated by Student	1.18	0.59	1.32	0.78	1.24	0.64	1.26	0.62	0.52	0.725
Student Watched Closely On Campus	1.43	0.95	2.03	1.40	2.20	1.42	1.86	1.28	4.17	0.003
Student Felt Bad in Class Involving Race	1.56	1.11	1.76	1.09	1.96	1.25	1.52	1.02	1.65	0.162
Teacher Told Offensive Racial Joke	1.43	0.86	1.68	1.10	1.87	1.11	1.55	0.83	1.93	0.106
Student Not Treated As Well In Class	2.09	1.46	2.31	1.51	2.11	1.34	2.17	1.37	0.27	0.900
Student Insulted by a Teacher	2.07	1.34	1.92	1.29	2.11	1.54	2.30	1.35	1.01	0.403

*How Much Did It Bother You?
1 = Has never happed to me
2 = Did not bother me at all
3 = Bothered me a little
4 = Bothered me a lot
5 = Bothered me extremely

Note: "Other" Race data not significant and excluded from Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 (*Continued*)

Statistical Analysis of Perception of How Students Were Bothered by Racial Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers Based on Themes by Race*

Microaggressions of Secondary School Teachers within Themes	Asian		Black		Hispanic		White		ANOVA	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	F	Sig(p)
Theme 3: Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity										
Student Asked to Speak and Represent Race in Class	1.64	0.84	1.47	0.71	1.53	0.66	1.24	0.60	4.50	0.001
Student Expected to Excel in Class/Sports	1.70	1.19	1.46	0.90	1.30	0.59	1.31	0.82	2.65	0.033
Student Asked to Teach Class Words in "Native" Language	1.82	0.83	1.21	0.67	1.83	0.57	1.18	0.57	17.71	0.000
Student Told Race All Look Alike	1.74	1.02	1.33	1.06	1.50	0.96	1.08	0.38	7.68	0.000
Teacher Did Not Believe Student Was Born In USA	1.19	0.65	1.10	0.59	1.61	1.16	1.01	0.09	8.02	0.000
Teacher Made Comment About Physical Features or Dress	1.38	0.80	1.53	1.06	1.39	0.71	1.16	0.45	2.88	0.023

*How Much Did It Bother You?
1 = Has never happed to me
2 = Did not bother me at all
3 = Bothered me a little
4 = Bothered me a lot
5 = Bothered me extremely
Note: "Other" Race data not significant and excluded from Table 4.4.

Theme One: Assumptions of Inferiority

An analysis of data for Theme One determined microaggressions within this theme either did not happen or did not bother the students at all. An ANOVA test determined that all items within this theme were higher than the .01 significance level. Thus, there were no significant differences in the means among the races within Theme One. Therefore, the Tukey HSD test was not performed. This was not the case, however, for Theme Two.

Theme Two: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality

There was one item within this theme that showed a significance of <.01 on the ANOVA test, indicating significant differences in the means between the races for this item. There was a significant difference at the .01 level on the Tukey HSD test in the means for Asian students (M=1.43) and Hispanic students (M=2.20) for the item Watched Closely on Campus. This indicated that Hispanic students perceived they were more bothered by being watched more closely on campus than were Asian students.

Theme Three: Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity

For Theme Three, there were four items with a Tukey HSD of less than .01, indicating that there were significant mean differences in these items among the races. However, based on the statistical mean of each item from Table 4.4, none of the students were bothered to a significant degree, given that the means were all in the (1) Did not happen to me, or (2) Did not bother me at all categories, taken from the Likert-like scale for being bothered.

For the item, Student Asked To Speak and Represent Race in Class, the difference in the means using the Tukey HSD test for the Asian students (M=1.64) and the White

students (M=1.24) was significant at the .01 level, indicating the Asian students were more likely to be bothered by being asked to speak in class and represent their race than were the white students. There was no significant difference in the means between the Black students (M=1.47) and the Hispanic students (M=1.53) for this item.

The item, Student Asked to Teach the Class Words in "Native" Language, had a mean for the Asian and Hispanic students that were similar at 1.82 and 1.83, respectively. However, using the Tukey HSD test, the respective means were determined to be significantly different for the Asian students from the means of the Black students (M=1.21) and the White students (M=1.18), and also the Hispanic students from the Black students and the White students. This indicates that the Asian students and the Hispanic students were more bothered than the Black students and the White students by being asked to teach the class words from their native language.

There was a significant difference using the Tukey HSD test in the means for the Asian students (M=1.74) and White students (M=1.08) for being bothered when told the Student's Race All Looked Alike. This indicates that the Asian students were more bothered by being told by a teacher that all of the Asian students look alike than the White students. The mean for the Black students (M=1.33) and the Hispanic students (M=1.50) for this item was not deemed significantly different at the .01 level for the Tukey HSD test.

For the item that the Teacher Did Not Believe the Student Was Born in the USA, the Tukey HSD test determined there was a significant difference in the mean for the Hispanic students (M=1.61) as compared to the Asian students (M=1.19), Black students (M=1.10), and White students (M=1.01). This indicates that the Hispanic students were

more bothered by a teacher not believing they were born in the USA than the other races.

The mean difference for the other races was not significant at the .01 level.

In summary, Table 4.4 is an analysis of students' perception of how bothered they were by race for each racial microaggression item, by themes. Based on the ANOVA, there was no significant difference at the .01 level for Theme One, Assumptions of Inferiority. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there was no variation between the races for this item was accepted. Under Theme Two, Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality, Hispanic students indicated they were more bothered by their feeling of being watched on campus by teachers as compared to the Asian students.

Theme Three, Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity, had four items with a Tukey HSD of less than .01, indicating there were significant mean differences in these items among the races. Asian students were more bothered than White students by being asked to speak for their race. Asian and Hispanic students perceived they were more bothered than the Black and the White students when asked by the teacher to teach the class words in their "native" language. Asian students were more bothered when told by their teachers that the members of their race all looked alike. On the other hand, Hispanic students indicated they were bothered more by having teachers not believe they were born in the USA when compared to all of the other races.

Themes

Table 4.5

Table 4.5 gives the mean and standard deviation for each theme: Assumptions of Inferiority; Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality; and Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity. Theme scores are the sum of all six items within each theme.

The mean was determined using the SPSS program and represents the mean of the student responses for the six racial microaggressions in each theme.

Table 4.5

Means and Standard Deviations of the Racial Microaggressions by Themes

Theme	Mean	SD
Inferiority	10.27	3.20
Criminality	9.43	3.50
Exoticization	8.50	3.21

Upon analysis of Table 4.5, the theme with the highest mean was the Inferiority theme (*M*=10.27). This would indicate that there were more occurrences of racial microaggressions perceived by the students for the total population in the Inferiority theme than in the other two themes. The standard deviations for all three themes were similar.

Table 4.6

Table 4.6 gives the mean and standard deviations of how bothered the students were by individual racial microaggressions for the three themes: Assumptions of Inferiority, Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality, and Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity. Theme scores were derived by summing responses to each of the six items within each theme.

Table 4.6

Sums of the Means and Standard Deviations of How Bothered Students Were By Racial Microaggressions by Themes

Theme	Mean	SD
Inferiority	9.89	3.30
Criminality	10.60	4.22
Exoticization	8.31	3.20

An analysis of Table 4.6 shows that the theme with the highest mean was the Criminality theme (M=10.60). This would indicate that more students were bothered for the total population with the items in the second theme: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality. This theme also had the highest standard deviation (SD=4.22), indicating a greater degree of variability.

Table 4.7

Table 4.7 records the sum of the means and standard deviations for occurrences of racial microaggressions by themes by race. To determine to what extent racial microaggressions occur by themes by race, an ANOVA test with a significance level of <.01 was performed using the SPSS computer program to show differences among the

races. A Tukey HSD test was then performed to determine which race or races had a

significant difference in the means at a .01 level. The means of those races were then

compared.

Table 4.7

Occurrences of Racial Microaggressions by Themes by Race

Race/	Asian		Black		Hispanic		White		Other		F	p(Sig.)
Theme	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Inferi-ority	9.26	3.12	10.92	3.54	10.91	2.69	10.39	3.11	10.38	3.04	3.548	.007
Crimi-nality	8.84	3.44	9.59	3.79	9.87	3.17	9.59	3.32	9.71	4.36	.928	.448
Exotic-ization	9.87	3.65	8.08	3.46	9.93	3.17	6.97	1.59	9.38	3.31	15.707	.000

The ANOVA test for variability (p=.007, F= 3.54) at a < .01 significance level

showed that there was a significant difference between the mean for the Inferiority

Theme. The Tukey HSD test indicated there was a significant difference between the

Asian students (M=9.26) and the Black students (M=10.92) within the Assumptions of

Inferiority Theme. This indicates that the Black students perceived there were more

microaggression occurrences in the Inferiority theme than the Asian students.

The ANOVA test indicated that within the theme of Exoticization, there was a

significant difference between the means (p=.000, F=15.707). The Tukey HSD test

indicated that within the theme for Exoticization, there was a significant difference

between the Asian students (*M*=9.87) and both the White students (*M*=6.97) and the

Black students (*M*=8.08). This indicates there were more Asian students who perceived

they experienced racial microaggressions within the theme than White students and Black

students. Further, there was a significant difference between the Hispanic students (*M*=9.93) and both the Black students (M= 8.08) and the White students (M=6.97). This indicates that the Hispanic students perceived they experienced more racial microaggressions within this theme than the Black students and the White students.

An overall analysis of Table 4.7 indicates that more Black students perceived they experienced more racial microaggressions in the Inferiority theme than the Asian students. The null hypothesis was accepted for the second theme, Second-class Citizen and the Assumptions of Criminality, because the ANOVA test showed a significance level greater than .01. For the Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity theme, the Asian and Hispanic students perceived they experienced more racial microaggressions than the White students or the Black students.

Table 4.8

Table 4.8 records the sum of the means and standard deviations for how bothered students were by racial microaggressions by themes by race. To determine to what extent racial microaggressions occurred by themes by race, an ANOVA test with a significance level of < .01 was performed to show variability among the themes. A Tukey HSD test was then performed to determine which race or races had a significant difference in the means to a .01 level. The means of those races were then compared.

Table 4.8

How Bothered Students Were by Racial Microaggressions by Themes by Race

Race/ Theme	Asian		Black		Hispanic		White		Other		F	p(Sig.)
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Inferi-ority	9.22	3.65	10.25	3.53	10.58	3.09	10.12	3.01	8.81	2.29	2.336	.055
Crimi-nality	9.75	4.12	11.01	4.27	11.48	4.75	10.64	3.83	10.76	5.09	1.579	.180
Exotic-ization	9.52	3.81	8.08	3.52	9.33	3.27	7.04	1.80	8.66	2.56	9.719	.000

The ANOVA test for variability (F=9.719, p=.000) showed a significance level of less than .01 for the third theme, Exoticization and the Assumptions of Similarity. The Tukey HSD test indicated there was a significant difference in the means between the White students (*M*=7.04) and both the Asian students (*M*=9.52) and the Hispanic students (*M*=9.33). This indicates that both Asian and Hispanic students were bothered more by racial microaggressions than White students within the third theme. Even though the Black students showed a higher mean than the White students, the Tukey HSD did not show a significant difference in the means at the .01 level for the Black students.

An overall analysis of Table 4.8 indicates that only the third theme had a significance difference in the means of the students by race. The Asian and Hispanic students were more bothered by racial microaggressions in the Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity theme than the other races. The ANOVA for Themes One and Two was not significant at the < .01 level, thus, the null hypothesis is accepted that there was no significant differences between the means of all the races for how bothered students were by racial microaggressions.

Results of Qualitative Data Taken From SLES

The SLES asked students for written comments regarding their personal experiences and what racial microaggressions by teachers they may have witnessed. This request for comments was placed at the end of the survey and stated, "Please write below any other school or class experiences that are not mentioned here that you may have experienced, or that you may have witnessed with others." Sixteen percent (54 of 342) of the twelfth-grade students responding to the SLES prepared brief written comments regarding other school or class experiences not specifically addressed in the survey.

Thirty-one students (57 percent) responded with comments that related to the three themes of racial microaggressions. By race, the students who commented on racial microaggressions were: Asian students, seven; Black students, six; Hispanic students, nine; and White students, nine. Five percent (3 of 54) of the comments related to racial microaggressions within Theme One: Assumptions of Inferiority; twenty-eight percent (15 of 54) related to racial microaggressions in Theme Two: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality; and twenty-four percent (13 of 54) related to racial microaggressions within Theme Three: Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity. Forty-three percent (23 of 54) of the students' comments were classified as Other since the comments did not readily fit into any of the other theme categories.

Theme One: Assumptions of Inferiority

Five percent (3 of 54) of the comments related to racial microaggressions within the assumptions of inferiority theme. A Black female student commented that some teachers are surprised at how "really" articulate the student is. Also within this theme, a Hispanic male said "teachers don't pay a lot of attention towards some students."

Theme Two: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality

Twenty-eight percent (15 of 54) of the comments related to racial microaggressions in the Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality theme. The majority of students who made comments relating to this theme were the Hispanic students (two males, and six females), which correlates with the statistical data for Research Question Four, the number of students who were bothered by race by racial microaggressions over a four-year period. Five comments related to a student being insulted by a teacher. In one comment that really hurt a Hispanic female student's feelings, a teacher told the student and friends that based on the news, "the student and the family would be leaving the U.S. really soon." In a similar comment, one student and friends were told by a teacher to stop speaking Spanish or "go back to where they came from." A very personal comment that was insulting to a Black female student was a teacher told the student that all persons in the student's race were ghetto, and men in the her race aren't likely to succeed. An Asian male student commented that a teacher said that the student's country of origin "was a political disaster," and this bothered the student a lot. Finally, a White female student commented on teachers making unnecessary comments about race, and commenting on the ratio of minorities in gifted classes.

There were four comments regarding students not being treated well in class. Two students, one a Hispanic female and the other a White female, commented separately that two different teachers treated Muslim girls differently than girls in other races. They were rude to the Muslim girls and did not treat them with respect. A Hispanic female student commented about being treated inferior to more talented students, although the student

worked "twice as hard" and "helped a lot with the program." She also noted that a teacher treated her differently from "those who are louder and a different race."

Five comments related to teachers telling racial jokes. Although some of the jokes were considered "in good humor," the students in general found the jokes offensive. One of the Hispanic male students commented that a racial joke told by a teacher was reported to the principal, and the teacher apologized by telephone to the student. A White female student said "some teachers do make certain racist jokes or pick on people for race, but mostly in a joking, good humor way, and "I believe they would stop if they knew it hurt students." An example of this is a teacher told a Black male student two jokes, in jest, relating to slavery, but the student still found them offensive.

Theme 3: Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity

Twenty-four percent (13 of 54) of the students' comments related to racial microaggressions within the Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity theme. By far, the majority of the comments within this theme (12 of 13) related to teacher expectations and favoritism of some groups over others. Six of these comments are by White male students, and all refer to coaches preferring students of another race in selecting sports teams, or coaches who make a disparaging remark about the ability of the White students compared to students of another race. Three Asian male students remarked that some teachers treat certain groups better than others, and that teachers may show favoritism to a certain race. A Black female student thought that teachers favor "kids because of race, and or separating kids by race." A White female student noted that teachers favor Asian students, especially females as smarter than other students. One White female student found it "very bothersome" when a teacher had high expectations of the student and

treated the student like an accelerated student when the student was not. There were no comments that pertained to students being exotic in any way.

Other Topics

Forty-three percent (23 of 54) of the students' comments were classified as Other. This included such things as non-racial microaggressions, student love/hate relationship with school/teachers, and items that were unrelated, non-sensical or incomplete. Students commented that certain non-racial microaggressions bothered them. For example, a student commented that people assumed the student did not know the Bible since the student was not Christian. Another student felt inferior because of a personal life situation, and teachers did not perceive that another student could have financial issues because the student was White and dressed well. Yet another student commented about being treated like a snob since the student was perceived by teachers as wealthy, and the student found this to be "really offensive." One student reported that a teacher made an offensive comment regarding a student's size (weight). Another student commented that it makes them "feel like a 5" (Bothered me extremely) when teachers stand by and watch kids get picked on.

Regarding students' love/hate relationship with teachers/school, students made comments that they liked their teachers very much and the school is "really well respected." Other students commented that teachers are jerks, con artists, and awful. Some student comments were very positive, such as the student was appreciated for being different and not of U.S. origin. One student said that most of the problems with racial microaggressions "are with the students, not the teachers." Another student commented

that the student survey "deals with it all." There were also student comments that were unrelated, incomplete or non-sensical.

In conclusion, sixteen percent of the twelfth grade students thought enough about microaggressions to make comments on the survey sheets. Of these, thirty-one students related specific acts by teachers that they thought were racial microaggressions. Within Theme One: Assumptions of Inferiority, three students related how they perceived teachers treated some students as inferior.

A much larger number of students (fifteen) thought teachers treated students as if they were second-class citizens and assumed they acted like criminals (Theme Two). Many of these comments related to the national origins and language of the student, making the students feel as if they were unwelcome in the USA. Some of the students took the comments as personal attacks, particularly when they were told that male students of their race were not likely to succeed. Five students were offended by racial jokes that teachers made, even though they conceded the jokes were made in a friendly manner. Still other students felt like some students did not receive as much attention as other students did, particularly if the students were Muslim.

Under the Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity theme, thirteen of the students had comments. Most of the comments could be classified as teachers having higher expectations of the Asian students, and teachers showing favoritism. This was reported to be particularly true of coaches who favored one race over another in sports.

Summary

Chapter Four is a report of the data and a data analysis taken from the information given by 342 twelfth grade students on the SLES. The survey is divided into three themes, with six questions (items) each, taken from the survey related to racial microaggressions in each theme. The survey data were analyzed according to the four research questions developed by the researcher. Questions One and Two, respectively, relate to the total number of students who perceived the occurrence of racial microaggressions over a four-year period, and the total number of students who perceived how bothered they were by the racial microaggressions over the same four-year period.

Questions Three and Four, respectively, indicate the students' perception by race of the occurrence of racial microaggressions, and how bothered the students were by race of the racial microaggressions. The themes were then analyzed separately to determine which theme had more racial microaggression occurrences, and how bothered the students were by racial microaggressions for each theme. The results of the survey were summarized by each research question.

It is important to note that over a four-year period, there were relatively few racial microaggressions reported in the aggregate, and most races were not overly bothered by the racial microaggressions. Therefore, the findings from these data are not significant with large numbers from each Likert scale, but it is relative to what was reported. There are, however, written comments given by the students as requested on the survey that magnify and personalize the effect that racial microaggressions have on students of color. These will be summarized by theme.

Research Question One: To what extent do students of color experience racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

There were two items, both under Theme One: Assumptions of Inferiority, in which students recorded they experienced occurrences of racial microaggressions one-to-three times over a four-year period. The items were Students Ignored by Teacher in Class, and Student Told Was Articulate and Spoke Well. All other items on the SLES scored in a range of (1) Never happened to me.

Research Question Two: To what extent are students of color bothered by racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

According to the data, students perceived they were not bothered by racial microaggressions. This was true for all items on the SLES. All of the mean scores for all items ranged in the Likert-type value scale of either (1) Has never happened to me, or (2) Did not bother me at all.

Research Question Three: To what extent do students of color by race experience the racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

Under Theme One: Assumptions of Inferiority, White students felt they were ignored by teachers one-to-three times over a four-year period as compared to Asian students. Black students perceived they were told they articulated or spoke better four-to-six times over a four-year period as compared to Asian students, and Hispanic students (over Asian and White students) thought the teachers were more surprised by their success one-to-three times over four years. Under the second theme, Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality, there were no significant differences among the races for occurrences by race.

Note that the results for many of the items under Research Questions Three and Four have a mean that would indicate the students in each race did not experience racial microaggressions, nor did it bother them if they did. However, using the ANOVA test, there were significant differences in the means at the .01 level between the races. Using the Tukey HSD test, the races with significant mean differences were identified and reported in this chapter.

Under Theme Three, Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity, Asian students felt they were asked to teach the class words in their "native" language one-to-three times over four years as compared to Black students and White students. For the same item, Hispanic students also perceived they were asked one-to-three times over four years to teach the class words in their "native" language as compared to the Black students and White students. Asian students perceived that there were more occurrences when they were called upon by their teachers to speak for their race as compared to the Whites students. Likewise, Hispanic students felt they were called upon more often by their teachers to speak for their race as compared to White students. Two items that did not appear under the overall occurrences of racial microaggressions (Research Question One), but did register significance under Research Question Three, were: Students told race all look alike, and a teacher not believing a student was born in the USA. The Asian students very clearly perceived they experienced more racial microaggressions when teachers told them that members of their race all looked alike, as compared to the Black, Hispanic, and White students. Likewise, Hispanic students perceived that teachers thought they were not born in the USA, more than the other three races. There was no

significant data that teachers treated Asian or Hispanic female students differently because of their looks or dress.

Research Question Four: To what extent are students of color by race bothered by racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools?

While there were students in each race who perceived the occurrence of racial microaggressions under Theme One: Assumptions of Inferiority, none of the races compared to the other races appeared to be bothered by them. This was not the case, however, for Theme Two: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality. The race that perceived they were more bothered by racial microaggressions was the Hispanic students who felt they were being watched more closely on campus than the Asian students. Theme Three, Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity, had four items that indicated there were significant mean differences between the races in how bothered they were by racial microaggressions. Asians were more bothered than White students by being asked to speak for and represent their race in class lessons. When asked by the teacher to teach the class words in their "native" language, Asian students were more bothered than the Black and the White students. Hispanic students, however, were also bothered by teaching words in their "native" language, more so than the Black students and White students. Asian students were more bothered by being told by their teachers that the members of their race all looked alike, as compared to the White students. On the other hand, Hispanics indicated they were bothered by having teachers not believe they were born in the USA, as compared to all of the other races.

Themes

When comparing the themes and looking for a correlation between the races and themes, Theme One had more occurrences of racial microaggressions than the other two themes, and more Black students perceived there were more microaggression occurrences within the Inferiority theme than the Asian students. Theme Two results indicated that more students were bothered by racial microaggressions than the other two themes. Theme Three had the highest number of Asian and Hispanic students perceive occurrences of racial microaggressions (as compared to both Black students and White students), and Theme Three had more Asian students and Hispanic students (as compared to Whites students) report being bothered by racial microaggressions.

Results of Qualitative Data Taken From SLES

Fifty-four twelfth grade students who took the SLES provided written comments, thirty-one of which related to racial microaggressions. Three of the comments related to the first theme, Assumptions of Inferiority. One comment concerned a student's perception that a teacher was surprised when a Black student was articulate. The other two comments describe being ignored in class, and teachers not paying some students a lot of attention.

Many more comments (fifteen) related to the second theme, Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality. Five students related incidents of themselves or others being insulted by a teacher, and four comments were about not being treated well in class. Five students were disturbed by jokes teachers made that were racial and in poor taste.

Another large number of comments (thirteen) was matched with the third theme, Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity. Twelve of these comments related directly to teachers favoring some groups over others and having higher expectations of some students by race over others. No comments were made indicating exoticisms of any kind.

In conclusion, twelfth grade students witnessed and were bothered by microaggressions to some degree. In each instance of inferiority, second-class citizen and criminality, and exoticization and similarity, Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White students all reported having seen or experienced microaggressions by their teachers. They also reported being bothered by it to varying degrees.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Racial microaggressions are "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial group" (Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007, p. 72). Whether intentional or not, microaggressions may result in frustration, alienation, anger, and other emotions that come from being belittled. These negative emotions may eventually result in mental problems that include depression and anxiety (Nadal, 2008b). It is the duty of the teacher to protect students from microaggressions and to personally not commit them, especially because students are so impressionable. Therefore, it is important for educators to be able to recognize racial microaggressions and to control them in the school environment. The literature showed that there were few research studies in a secondary school setting that studied the relationship between the teachers and students of color as it related to microaggressions.

The researcher conducted a quantitative study of the perceptions of students of color in a secondary school. The twelfth grade students (N=342) were given the Student Life Experiences Survey (SLES) that asked their perception of the frequency with which secondary school teachers committed racial microaggressions over a four-year period. The survey also asked for their perception of how bothered they were by the racial microaggressions. The students were given the opportunity to write comments on the survey regarding racial microaggressions that they either experienced or observed. Demographic information was given about the respondents, and data analysis was presented using tables, with explanation in the text. The researcher analyzed the data by

themes and by races. All research findings were related to the research questions. It is the purpose of this chapter to analyze the major findings from Chapter Four, discuss the findings relative to the literature presented in Chapter Two, and make conclusions based on the research findings. Recommendations will be discussed for future research on the topic of racial microaggressions, and ways to disseminate this information to the stakeholders in education.

Analysis of Research Findings

The most obvious finding in this research is the relatively low number of racial microaggressions that students in the sample perceived they experienced over a four-year period, and how they were not bothered by the racial microaggressions. For the eighteen items that represented racial microaggressions on the SLES, students perceived that they experienced racial microaggressions for only two items, and that they experienced them from one-to-three times over a four-year period. The two items are: Student Ignored by Teacher in Class; and, Student Told Was Articulate and Spoke Well (See Table 4.1). Both are in Theme One: Assumptions of Inferiority. Students were not bothered by any of the items in Theme One (See Table 4.2). While the overall sample indicated students experienced few racial microaggressions in Theme One, and were not bothered had they occurred, this is not the case for students' perception of occurrence by race (See Table 4.3). It is important to note that not all races experienced racial microaggressions in the same way and all occurrences for all races were very low, in the never to one-to-three category.

Of the students who felt ignored by the teacher, White students perceived they were ignored by the teacher in class when compared to Asian students. Two students

wrote comments on their surveys about instances where teachers ignored students in class. Black students, more than Asian students, experienced that a teacher told them that they were articulate and spoke well. A Black female student specifically related in the comments section of the survey an instance of a teacher telling her how well spoken she was. Hispanic students perceived that teachers were surprised by their success more than the Asian and White students.

These research findings are borne out when the themes are compared against each other, bearing in mind that even though there were race differences for occurrence and how bothered the students were by racial microaggressions, the means were quite low. This indicates a lack of occurrence and being bothered by racial microaggressions. Theme One had a mean that indicated that students perceived there were more racial microaggressions that occurred in this theme (See Table 4.5). In addition, there were more Black than Asian students who perceived the occurrence of racial microaggressions in Theme One (See Table 4.7).

Theme Two: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality had a mean for total occurrences (See Table. 4.1) and for being bothered by racial microaggressions (See Table 4.2) that indicated that students did not perceive racial microaggressions occurred for this theme, nor were they bothered if they occurred. The only item that had a significant mean difference between the races for being bothered by a racial microaggression (See Table 4.4) was Student Being Watched More Closely on Campus. The Hispanic students were bothered more than the Asian students at their perception of being watched more closely on campus. Fifteen students wrote comments about racial microaggressions they had experienced or observed in Theme Two. Again, when

comparing the themes against each other, Theme Two (Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality) had a mean that indicated more students were bothered by racial microaggressions under this theme (See Table 4.8) than in the other two themes.

The theme that had the most activity by race for students' perception of racial microaggressions by secondary school teachers based on occurrences (See Table 4.3) was the third theme: Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity. The Asian students perceived that they were asked to teach the class words in their "native" language more than the Black and the White students. They also perceived more than the White students that they were asked to speak and represent their race in class. In addition, the Asian students perceived that teachers thought the members of their race all looked alike when compared to the other races. The Hispanic students are not to be left out of this category, as they, too, thought there were more occurrences of teachers asking Hispanic students to teach native words from their language to the class, more than the Black students and the White students. Finally, the Hispanic students, over all the other races, felt there were more instances of a teacher not thinking they were born in the USA.

Theme Three also had five incidents of students' perception of how students were bothered by racial microaggressions by secondary school teachers based on themes by race (See Table 4.4). The Asian students were more bothered than the White students when asked by their teacher to represent their race in class, and Asian students were also more bothered than the Black or the White students when called upon by the teacher to teach words in their "native" language. Likewise, Asian students were bothered more than the White students when they were told that all members of their race look alike.

Hispanic students were bothered more than the other races when a teacher did not believe they were born in the USA.

Thirteen students wrote comments that related to Theme Three and racial microaggressions. A comparison of the themes (See Table 4.7) to each other bears out the results that indicate the highest number of perceived racial microaggression occurrences for Asian and Hispanic students when compared to Black students and White students was in Theme Three. Theme Three also had more Asian and Hispanic students bothered by racial microaggressions (See Table 4.8) as compared to White students when compared to the other two themes. These findings are consistent with some, but not all of the literature reviewed in the research.

Discussion of Research Findings

Two major categories discussed in the literature review in Chapter Two were racial microaggressions made against students of color, and the themes that were developed ordering racial microaggressions. There were many studies that dealt with the psychological effects of racial microaggressions on people of color (POC). Most of the studies discussed the cumulative effect of microaggressions, resulting in frustration, stress, anxiety, hypertension, depression, and assorted mental illnesses (Solorzano et al., 2000; Coker et al., 2009; Green et al., 2006; Sellers et al., 2006). As pointed out by Franklin (2004) and Sue (2003), benign intent does not negate the harm done to students of color who experience a racial microaggression. This is an underlying tenant to this research and weighs heavily on the following results.

The outcome from the eighteen items on the SLES that represent racial microaggressions indicated that a low number of microaggressions were perceived by

students from all races over a four-year period, and what microaggressions were observed, were not perceived to be bothersome. There were written comments, however, made by students on the SLES that indicated students were bothered or upset by racial microaggressions they either experienced or observed. The qualitative study of ten Black high school students by Moore-Thomas in 2009 matches this study in that few students reported overt acts of discrimination by teachers. Some of the students, however, did have comments about microaggressions they had seen or experienced.

Theme One is Assumptions of Inferiority. Inferiority is an underlying theme in much of the literature discussed in Chapter Two (Sellers et al., 2006; Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007; Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2008). Indeed, students recorded that they perceived experiencing more racial microaggressions in this theme than in the other two themes, (bearing in mind that the frequency was still very low), and Black students more than Asian students perceived the occurrence of racial microaggressions in Theme One, compared to the other two themes. An analysis of the six items that represent racial microaggressions under Theme One show that there were only two items those students perceived they experienced from one to three times over a four-year period. These items are Student Ignored by Teacher in Class, and Student Told Was Articulate and Spoke Well. Specific to students' perception that they are ignored by their teacher in class, a Black student in a study by Solorzano et al. (2000) said that "being viewed as a numerical racial minority seems to translate into being ignored in class" (p. 65), and that when "professors see that there's fewer of you, they're less likely to address your concerns" (p. 65). This is confirmed in this research when a Hispanic male wrote on the SLES that teachers "do not pay a lot of attention towards some students."

But there is a difference in this research from the literature, and it is that White students more than Asian students experienced more occurrences of feeling ignored by teachers in the class. This is a contradiction of the work by Rosenbloom and Way, as reported by Greene et al. (2006). Their work said that Black students and Hispanic students could be so frustrated by the preferential treatment of Asian students by teachers that higher levels of discrimination against Asian students was more likely. The literature on racial microaggressions does not report White students as perceiving racial microaggression as a rule. In fact, it is just the opposite. A study by Steele et al. (2000) stated that White students "reported experiencing less educational discrimination than students from visible minority groups" (np). Salvatore and Shelton (2007) concurred and stated that Whites were not as inclined as Blacks to recognize prejudice.

The other item on the SLES from Theme One in which students perceived an occurrence of racial microaggressions one-to-three times over a four-year period was the Student Told Was Articulate and Spoke Well. In fact, Black students more than Asian students experienced that they were told they were articulate and spoke well. The fact that the Black students noticed this most often is not surprising according to the literature. A student comment from the SLES was a Black female who said, "I think some teachers are surprised that I, an African American, am really articulate." Sue, Capodilupo, et al. (2008) argued that the decision Blacks have to make as to whether or not a comment such as this is a microaggression or not falls under the Interpretative Domain, and it is mentally and emotionally draining to the POC. Sue, Nadal et al. (2008), in another study, placed this racial microaggression under the Assumption of Intellectual Inferiority in the development of their themes. They claimed that a statement such as this to a Black person

might be considered as a compliment by the microaggressor, but is generally interpreted as an insult by the POC.

Another finding from the SLES under the Theme of Inferiority is that Hispanic students over Asian and White students perceived that teachers were surprised by their success. Much of the literature depicts teachers as being surprised at the success of Black students. Solorzano et al. (2000) discussed the low expectations of college faculty towards Black students. One Black student related how the professor insisted that the student retake a math quiz because the teacher did not believe the student could do so well on the test and must have cheated. But the finding on the SLES is that teachers were surprised by Hispanic students' success. Put another way, teachers must have low expectations of Hispanic students to be surprised by their success. Perhaps the best discussion of the expectations of teachers towards Hispanics is given by Solorzano (1997). Solorzano said that teachers view Hispanic students as under-performing because they are viewed as either genetically or culturally deficient. He goes on to say that "the cultural deficit model, along with related popular and professional racial stereotypes, remains the hidden theory of choice at many elementary and secondary schools, teacher education departments, professional meetings, and settings where the topic of minority inequality is discussed" (Solorzano, 1997, p. 14).

Theme Two is Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality. When comparing the three themes, more students were bothered by racial microaggressions under this theme than the other two. Fifteen students wrote comments on the SLES that related to either being treated as a second-class citizen or as a criminal by teachers. These comments are similar to the findings of Sue, Bucceri et al. (2007); Solorzano (2002);

Utsey et al. (2008); and Nadal (2008). Several examples taken from the SLES corroborate the research of these theorists. According to an Asian male, he was asked by a "couple of teachers of my origin and then told that my country is a disaster and wanted to exploit my political views which bothered me a lot." A Hispanic female and a White female commented that a teacher was not nice or respectful to two Muslim girls from Pakistan, and treated them rudely. A Hispanic female noted that a teacher who does not teach her treated her differently than "those who are louder and of a different race." She went on to say, "Happens often, and I am not the only one." Five students related being told racist jokes by teachers that made them feel like they were not as good as other students (second-class citizens) or that they had done something wrong (criminality). Perhaps the comment that is most closely related to the literature is the one made to a black female student. A teacher told her "…all people in my race are ghetto, and bad. The men in my race aren't likely to succeed." This quote could have been taken from a page in Franklin's (2004) book about the invisibility syndrome of Black males in America.

The only item that had a significant mean difference between the races for being bothered by a racial microaggression was Student Being Watched More Closely on Campus, and the Hispanic students more than the Asian students had this perception the most. The literature usually indicates that it is the Black student, not the Hispanic student, who is watched more closely not only on campus, but also in public settings such as department stores (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). Many researchers have studied this phenomena, including Sue (2003); Sue, Bucceri et al. (2007); Sellers et al. (2006); Solorzano, Allen et al. (2002); and Solorzano, Ceja et al. (2000). There is little research

that discusses Hispanics being bothered by being watched more closely on campus, thus making them feel as if they were criminals.

Theme Three is Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity. There are many research studies (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007; Sue, Nadal et al., 2008; Rolon-Dow, 2004) that investigated racial microaggressions under the theme of Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity. In a comparison of the three themes that comprise the SLES, Theme Three had the highest number of perceived racial microaggression occurrences for Asian and Hispanic students compared to Black students and White students. Theme Three also had more Asian and Hispanic students bothered by racial microaggressions compared to White students when the three themes are compared. This is borne out in the ANOVA test for significance between the races. It is also indicated in the thirteen written comments made by students on the SLES.

Theme Three had the most activity by race for students' perception of racial microaggressions by secondary school teachers based on occurrences. The Asian students perceived they were asked to teach the class words in their "native" language more than the Black and the White students. The Hispanic students also perceived that there were more occurrences of being called upon to teach words from their language over the Black students and the White students. The Asian students were also more bothered by being asked to teach words in their native language than the Black or White students. Sue, Capodilupo et al. (2007) addressed this issue by saying these students would feel like they were aliens in their own land. Similar to this is a written comment by a student on the SLES, saying, "I have a name that doesn't match my features. I hate it when people keep asking how to say it and turn it into a game of who can say it better."

Asian students also were upset that they were asked to speak and represent their race in class more than White students. Likewise, the Asian students were more bothered than the White students when asked by the teacher to represent their race in class. Sue, Nadal et al. (2008) noted that it was Black students who resented being called upon to represent the entire race whenever the teacher was discussing slavery or the civil rights movement. This is not the finding for this study, however.

Asian students, in particular, compared to all of the races, thought there were more occurrences of a teacher thinking that the members of their race all looked alike. Another way of viewing this, according to researchers (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007; Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007) would be to say inter-ethnic differences are not important to the teacher, and that all Asians are the same, thus devaluing their ethnic differences. While not excusing the racial microaggression as perceived by the students, it could be explained in part by the work of Allport (1988) and Stangor (2000) with social categorization. Likewise, work by Katz (2003) on early stereotypes based on skin color showed that children as young as six-months preferred the faces of people of their own race.

Hispanic students, over all the other races, felt there were more instances of a teacher thinking they were not born in the USA. Likewise, this bothered Hispanic students over all the other races, that teachers would not believe they were citizens of the USA. Hispanic students are made to feel as if they are aliens in their own land. This corroborates the work done by several researchers (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal et al., 2008; Sue, Buccerri et al., 2007). This theme of not being believed to be a legal citizen is illustrated in the student comments taken from the SLES.

One student, a Hispanic female said, "One time, a teacher stopped my friends and me and assumed we were illegal. He told us that based on the news, we (and our family) were going to be leaving the USA really soon. That really hurt my feelings." Another Hispanic female said a teacher told her and her friends to "stop speaking Spanish because this was America, and if we didn't, we should go back from where we came."

There were many written student comments taken from the SLES that do not address the specific items already mentioned, but are very powerful indicators of student distress over feeling like they were all thought to be similar by their teachers. There were no comments that indicate students felt like teachers were treating them exotically, as being unique due to their racial features, such as Asian girls being "china dolls" or Hispanic females being "promiscuous." The written comments for this theme can be divided into two categories, that of teacher's having expectations of a person based on race, and coaches preferring one race over another in various sports.

One White female student who wrote on the SLES, "I have witnessed teachers favoring Asian students, especially females as smarter than other students," exemplifies the comments regarding a teacher having expectations of students of a particular race. Another student said, "Teachers sometimes have certain expectations of a person based on race." A Black female thought teachers favored students because of race and separated students by race. While only one comment was made stating that teachers favored Asian students, the tone of the comments overall fit the mold of the model Asian student. This topic has been studied by many, including Sue, Bucceri et al. (2007); Solorzano (2002); and Nadal (2008a).

The other category of written comments that students made on the SLES under Theme Three was that of coaches preferring students of one race or the other in various sports. Six of these comments came from White students. A White male said, "Due to my race, I have been thought less capable compared to others in my sport," and another White male said, "It was assumed by a teacher that a certain race was better at a sport than me." Solorzano (1997) and Solorzano et al. (2000)) stated that the idea that students of one race may be better at a sport than other races is because some White people stereotype the races into certain categories, including athletics. In opposition to this, however, three White male students noted that coaches were not putting any other race besides White students on their teams.

In summary, the results from the SLES are in keeping with previous research studies, and are reinforced by the literature in most instances. The written comments by the students on the SLES bear tribute to students who do notice racial microaggressions when they occur and are bothered by them. One variance from the literature is that White students more than Asian students experienced more occurrences of feeling ignored by teachers in the classroom. The literature is also lacking regarding Hispanic students over Asian students and White students, perceiving that teachers were surprised by their success. Another item in which there appears to be a gap in the literature is that Hispanic students believed they were being watched more closely on campus. Most of the research for this item is about Black people being watched more closely in society. Asian students, and not Black students, resented more than White students being called upon to speak for their class and represent their class in lessons about their race. It is usually the Black student who is most bothered by this, according to the literature. The literature confirms

the results of the SLES in some instances, but not all. It is the purpose of the next section to make conclusions and gain insight about the students who took the SLES for this study for this secondary school.

Conclusions

Perception is everything, and nowhere is this more clear than on the SLES, an affective, self-perception survey that asks twelfth grade students to give their perception about the emotional topic of teachers making racial microaggressions against students of color over a four-year period. The results of the SLES are both heartening and disturbing. They are heartening because there are relatively few racial microaggressions that are perceived by the students at the researcher's high school, nor are the students very bothered by the microaggressions, according to the statistical data from the survey. Of course, it may be difficult for adolescents to recall events over a four-year period. The results are disturbing, however, because the racial microaggressions that are reported, particularly in the written comments, indicate that students are bothered by the actions of the teacher. One bad incident may be etched on a student's heart and mind forever. If reality is based on perception, then it is important to try to understand the reality these students present in the SLES.

The most noticeable feature of the results from the survey is the low number of perceived occurrences of racial microaggressions reported by the students over a four-year period. Similarly, there are a low number of students who perceive being bothered by the racial microaggressions over a four-year period. The perception of being bothered was higher than the number of occurrences, which would make sense. It only takes one racial microaggression for a student to become very upset. In fact, the significance of the

number of occurrences and the amount by which students were bothered is the fact that any microaggressions occur at all, particularly in a school setting.

One of the things that may account for the low numbers for occurrence and being bothered is that the community in which this school is located is very racially diverse, accounting for the diversity in the school. Many of these students have been in school together since kindergarten and may not notice or they may not be bothered by racial diversity. They may have become desensitized. If so, then they may not be accustomed to having to determine if the comments and behaviors of teachers are a microaggression. On the other hand, the secondary school students taking this survey may have had years of experience learning to develop strategies to cope with diversity. The process of identifying racial microaggressions and coping with them may be a natural process in the world of these students, showing progress in tolerance between the races.

Another reason for low occurrences and being bothered may be because secondary school seniors are not yet mature enough to recognize racial microaggressions. Most research studies have been in a college setting and have asked for the qualitative experiences of students who are on their own. High school seniors are not exposed to the real world in the same way that college students may be. They are sheltered to a certain extent by their parents and teachers. If the effects of racial microaggressions are cumulative, then secondary school students may not have had as much time as college students to develop an enhanced sensitivity to racial microaggressions.

The fact that twelfth grade students are given a survey with eighteen examples of racial microaggressions may be limiting, or suggestive, to the students. If they are not aware of racial microaggressions then this survey may serve to educate them, but it limits

all students who take the survey to only the items on the survey. The survey itself may be offensive to the students if they are not used to discussing race. Likewise, students may not be comfortable reporting on the actions of teachers on a written document.

Another factor in the low occurrence and being bothered by racial microaggression rates may be the teachers. These teachers may be more experienced in teaching a racially diverse student population, and therefore do not commit as many racial microaggressions. While the majority of faculty at the researcher's high school is predominantly White (86 percent), there are 14 percent Asian, Black, and Hispanic teachers. This particular mix of faculty may serve to enlighten the faculty about diversity and tolerance. A few of the faculty members are graduates of the high school and have been taught in a county that is very diverse. While not a factor in this research, it would be interesting to know how much staff development on diversity and tolerance has been given to the faculty by the principal and county office. Finally, teachers are by nature people helpers who want what is best for students. It is not in the nature of most teachers to willingly commit racial microaggressions, and they may be more observant of their own actions to prevent the subtle, subconscious microaggressions from occurring. To the credit of the faculty in reference to racial microaggressions, four students made very positive remarks about the school and teachers. An Asian male observed that the school is very well respected and he had never encountered any problems. Another student said race was not "…considered any kind of big deal."

The perception of the occurrence of racial microaggression took place most often in Theme One and not in the other two themes. Theme One is Assumptions of Inferiority, and one of the two items that had a significant mean for occurrence was Student Ignored

by Teacher in Class. Students are very observant and also have a keen sense of equity, which would add to their perception of an injustice in class. It is interesting that it is the White students who perceive that they are being ignored by the teacher in class, compared to the Asian student. According to the literature (Franklin, 2004; Solorzano et al., 2000), it is usually the Black student who feels they are being ignored compared to the White student.

One explanation for why the White students may be so cognizant of not being recognized by the teacher compared to the Asian student is the idea of the model Asian student. Because these students have been in school together for so many years, and even if they have not, the White students may think that the Asian students make higher grades than anyone else (if that is the case in this school). The literature (Jones, 1972; Sue, 2003) would suggest that coming from a position of social superiority, the White students may resent not being recognized as first in class. Due to the changing demographics in this school, the White population of students has been shrinking each year for the past several years. White students are no longer in the majority in a class, and may tend to be overlooked by the teacher more often. In a similar vein, the Black students and the Hispanic students may be used to not being recognized by the teacher. On the other hand, they may be recognized by the teacher often, which would account for this item not being significant to them.

The other item that had a significant mean for occurrence under the theme of inferiority is Student Told Was Articulate and Spoke Well. Black students, more than Asian students, experienced that they were told this by a teacher. Many of the Asian students have been enrolled in the English As A Second Language classes at some point

in their K-12 education. Therefore, it is expected that they might have an accent, and teachers might be more sensitive about saying anything to them about how well they speak. Or, if teachers do comment to them about their articulation, Asian students may take it as a compliment and it does not register as a racial microaggression.

Black students, on the other hand, who speak no foreign language, have no reason to assume this is a compliment, as teachers have no rationale to comment on their articulation. For teachers to say this, they must have some standard to which they are holding students. Language and language acquisition is rooted in the culture of the student. The changing demographics of this secondary school may be an influence on a predominantly White faculty who may not be familiar with the Black culture. Added to this may be the recent influx of Black students at this school. While not a part of the study, the patterns of change in the student racial population may be an influence on how teachers perceive the students and their language. And nowhere has change been greater at the school than in the Hispanic population.

It is interesting that Hispanic students perceived that teachers were surprised by their success more than the Asian and the White students when the ANOVA significance test was conducted by race. Because the increase in the Hispanic population at this school is fairly recent and still growing, the teachers may have a cultural stereotype that Hispanic students are not as successful in the classroom as the other races. Therefore, teachers may not recognize Hispanic students as being successful very often, and when they are it may have more of an impact on them. Asian students, representing the model minority student, may be used to teachers acknowledging their success. Likewise, White students who have always been predominant at this school until the last few years, may

be acclimated to being recognized for their success, and thus, are not surprised when a teacher praises them.

Theme Two: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality is the theme in which more students were bothered by racial microaggressions, compared with the other two themes. This is borne out in that the highest number of written comments (15) by students on the SLES pertained to this theme. Hispanic students over the Asian students were the most bothered by the item Student Being Watched More Closely on Campus. This is surprising because the literature says it is usually the Black person who is watched more carefully in society, not the Hispanic. Again, the conclusion must be made that due to immigration the Hispanic population has burgeoned at this high school. Hispanics are the most recent immigrant group to settle in the community where this high school is located. Also, while not a consideration in this study, the presence of Hispanic gangs at the school may have influenced the teachers as to whom to watch most carefully. The Asian students reputation of being the model student would overshadow a teacher's perception of Asians as being troublemakers, even though this may be just as likely as the other races.

Theme Three is Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity. This theme, in comparison with the other two themes, had the highest number of perceived racial microaggression occurrences for Asian and Hispanic students compared to Black students and White students. Theme Three also had more Asian and Hispanic students bothered by racial microaggressions when compared to the other two themes. The fact that Asian and Hispanic students are immigrant groups and could be considered as foreigners is illustrated in the types of racial microaggressions that are items on the SLES.

Asian and Hispanic students both perceived they were Asked to Teach Class Words in My "Native" Language, and for both groups, it was more than the Black or the White students. The Asian students were also more bothered over the Black and the White students by being asked to teach words in their native language. This is one of those items that could be interpreted as a compliment or as a microaggression, depending upon the perception of the student. Because the SLES is a study of racial microaggressions, this item will be considered a microaggression. The most obvious conclusion for this racial microaggression is that Asians and Hispanics have languages that are unique to their race, and Black students and White students typically do not. Teachers may feel as if they are honoring an Asian or a Hispanic student by asking them to teach their language, and not realize that this could be offensive to students who just want to fit in. Another reason students may be upset by this request is that the students may not know their native language and are embarrassed by being asked. Students also may not want to be burdened with the task of teaching students unfamiliar with their language how to say and pronounce words, a task that usually leads to jokes that may be demeaning to the student.

Asian students perceived more than the White students that they were Asked to Speak and Represent Race in Class by the teacher. The Asian students were also more bothered than the White students by the same racial microaggression. It is interesting that the Asian students perceived the occurrence of being asked to speak for and represent their race in class and were bothered by this same item, for it is usually the Black students who have been called upon for their opinions, particularly when discussing such issues as slavery and the civil rights movement. It is not surprising, however, that the Asian

students more than the White students felt this way. According to researchers such as Sue (2003), the Whites are the ones who write the history books and who are dominant in education. The opinion of an Asian student would be much more interesting to a teacher than the opinion of a White student. Teachers who call upon Asian students to speak for their race devalue the ethnic diversity of Asian students, lumping all Asians together as the same race (Assumptions of Similarity). This could certainly cause resentment in the students who might be proud of their Korean or Vietnamese heritage, as an example. On the other hand, Asian students may not know the history of their culture well enough to answer, and this would be embarrassing to the students.

Another reason why teachers might call on Asians more to represent their race is because of the changing face of Asia, abroad and in the USA. China is a major player on the world stage, recently hosting the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. The global economy includes dynamic Asian markets that help shape the American markets. Asian immigration has been a constant factor in the school district and at the high school where this study took place. It would be logical for a teacher to ask an Asian student to speak on behalf of their race, but it might also be a racial microaggression to that student. And again, the student may not know the answer to what the teacher is asking, causing embarrassment to the student.

Asian students perceived more than all the other races that teachers Told My Race All Look Alike, and they viewed this as a racial microaggression. Asian students also were more bothered by the perception of teachers thinking all Asian students look alike, compared to White students. It has been established in the literature that there are physiological reasons for why the people of one race prefer the faces of that race, and

would recognize their own race faster. Since the faculty at this secondary school is predominantly White, but one-fourth of the student body is Asian, it stands to reason that White teachers would have more difficulty differentiating students who were not White. Likewise, they would find it easier to recognize White students, thus the White students are not bothered by this racial microaggression compared to the Black students.

Every student wants to be recognized as an individual person. It must be frustrating to the student to have a teacher not know their name from another Asian student, particularly if they are a successful Asian student. Again, this must be seen as invalidation by a teacher that the Asian student is not important enough to learn their name and to tell them apart from other students.

The final microaggression by race is that Hispanic students over all other students felt there were more occasions when a teacher Did Not Believe I Was Born in USA. They also were more bothered than all other races by this racial microaggression. The impact of legal and illegal Hispanic immigration in the school district where this research was conducted is the probable underlying reason for teachers not believing Hispanic students are legal citizens. The political and economic climate of the USA regarding immigration policy, as shaped by the media and current events, is such that suspicion is common towards all aliens. It is unfortunate that teachers may not believe a Hispanic student is legal, for the student is being penalized for something over which they have no control. Students are hurt by the teacher's beliefs, particularly when the Hispanic student is trying to be a good student and please the teacher.

Even though the statistical evidence taken from the SLES for the occurrence of racial microaggressions, and for the students being bothered by racial microaggressions

was low, the SLES is a valid tool for measuring the perception of students. It is not likely that teachers would be honest and call themselves racist in a qualitative study that attempted to gain the same information as the SLES. The self-report of students is related to their own perceptions and bias, which is what this survey attempts to measure. One of the conclusions that is apparent is that racial diversity is no longer centered in a Black-White paradigm. There are more players on the stage, and racial microaggressions are just as prevalent with Asian and Hispanic students.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations described in Chapter One were made in anticipation of the research study. One of the assumed limitations was that the school in which the survey was administered has a racially diverse population that may affect the results. Another assumption was that the maturity level of the students might bias the results. The survey also limited the students' responses to the items on the survey, with an option for written comments at the end. While these limitations are valid, it is apparent after analyzing the data that there are more limitations that should be included.

The time allowed for the administration of the SLES may not have been sufficient for accurate memory recall. The students were asked at the beginning of a class period to answer the items on the SLES, recalling the frequency of the occurrence of racial microaggressions by secondary school teachers over a four-year period, and how bothered they were by the event. Although time limitations may have affected accurate memory recall for some of the students, students who wrote comments on the SLES appeared to have no problem remembering racial microaggressions that they had witnessed or experienced themselves.

The SLES limited the responses the students could give to the grading scale presented on the survey. The scale given for how bothered the student was by a racial microaggression has a flaw in that Response 1, "Has never happened to me" and Response 2, "Did not bother me at all," are too similar. If the racial microaggression did not happen, then it should be apparent that it would not bother the student. The scale was not the only limitation on the SLES to be considered, however.

Some of the questions on the SLES might be misinterpreted by the student as a compliment rather than a microaggression, and this could be a limitation on the study. As an example, one student might feel complimented if a teacher said the student "Was Articulate and Spoke Well," while another student might feel this was a racial microaggression. The researcher might understand the purpose of the study, but the way the item is worded may not convey this to the student.

Another limitation would be if the items under each theme are valid for that theme, and whether they could also be placed under a different theme. It is feasible that one item could fit equally well under two themes. An example of this is that the item Teacher Did Not Believe Student Was Born in USA could be classified under Theme Two, Inferiority and Assumptions of Criminality, and also Theme Three: Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity.

Implications

Anyone who works with students should be interested in learning about racial microaggressions, but especially the teachers. Teachers have so much influence in the classroom and with individual students, that it is important for them to recognize racial microaggressions, know how to manage them in the classroom, and above all, try to not

be guilty of racial microaggressions with students. A careless word, an offhand joke, an impulsive action towards a student of color may be meaningless to a teacher, but it may be perceived in a very different way by the student and the result may be devastating. The individual student may suffer, but in addition, the racial climate of the class may be such that all students are impaired in the classroom. Opportunities for dialogue may be lost, and an opportunity for the teacher to model and manage appropriate human relations in the class may be jeopardized by a climate of racial microaggressions.

Teachers are not the only ones who need to know about racial microaggressions. Any one who comes in contact with students, including county office personnel, should know more about this topic. The counselors and school nurse, who work so closely with students, especially at risk students, ought to be aware of racial microaggressions. The administrative team, including the principal, assistant principals, and the athletic director should be well versed in racial microaggressions and how to handle them in a school. Teacher-coaches who supervise teams and academic clubs should be aware of the effect of racial microaggressions on students, and this might include lay volunteers who coach and sponsor clubs. Even the announcers for sports events would benefit from knowing what might be perceived as a racial microaggression. Not so obvious, but important, would be all building personnel and this might include clerks, secretaries, janitorial staff, groundskeepers, and any other staff who are on campus with children.

Others who work with students in a peripheral way are the clubs and organizations that support the school in various ways, such as the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) and the Local School Advisory Committee who may offer advice to the principal and teachers. These groups are influential in the school and the community

and it would be prudent for them to know about racial microaggressions as well. Perhaps one of the most influential category of groups who do work directly with students and teachers would be the many booster clubs who help raise money and chaperone student events. An example of this would be the numerous parents who support the fine arts as band, choral, and orchestra boosters, or the booster clubs who support practically every sport on campus. The parents in these booster groups have direct contact with many students and should know about racial microaggressions. There may be other associations who are invited on campus to work with teachers and students, such as the Mexican American Legal Defense Education Fund (MALDEF) who works with Hispanic students and parents in schools that have a high percentage of Hispanic students. From time to time representatives of the Department of Family and Childhood Services (DFACS) or other governmental agencies may have to visit the campus on behalf of a student. They, too, should be well versed in racial microaggressions. Even though the members of these fine organizations may have the best interests of the students at heart, racial microaggressions may still occur, to the detriment of the student.

It is incumbent upon the principal to see that racial microaggressions are not occurring in the school, anywhere or at any time. To do this, the principal should arrange staff developments that teach all school personnel about racial microaggressions. While less easy to monitor and manage, teachers and administrators should be aware of parents who are involved with students in any capacity. Racial microaggressions that are observed should be stopped, if possible, and reported to the principal. The teacher, coach, and principal would then need to decide how to educate the parent about racial microaggressions so they do not occur again.

There is another whole group of individuals and organizations that should be familiar with racial microaggressions, and that is anyone who helps to educate teachers and administrators. Perhaps the most logical place to begin would be with the schools of education in colleges and universities throughout the country. The schools of education are where teachers gain their primary instruction on how to educate students. Knowledge of racial microaggressions should be a part of this education. Students who do not attend a college or university school of education, but instead choose to gain their certification through national, state, or regional programs, should be exposed to information about racial microaggressions. These may include such programs as TAP™: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement, and the many Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESA) throughout the state. While these programs may not offer conventional education classes, they are designed to prepare pre-service students for the classroom. That preparation should include learning about racial microaggressions.

Once a teacher is hired by a school, continuing education takes the form of staff developments that may be offered by the state, county, or school personnel. Anyone who prepares staff development for teachers should consider incorporating information about racial microaggressions into their lessons. Once again, school principals should be responsible for adequate staff development on this topic, and that it is offered to all who have contact with students at school.

Another group who might have interest in this topic would be anyone who is researching racial microaggressions in schools. While this may not be a groundbreaking study, it is hoped that it offers some insights into the perceptions of high school students,

and how bothered they are by racial microaggressions. Perhaps this information will help lead to future studies that offer pertinent information on this important subject.

The world in which we live today is no longer simple, but is rich with the complexity of racial diversity. Teachers and administrators must recognize that racial microaggressions are a throwback to another era in which racism was more prevalent. Today, racial diversity is a way of life that requires tolerance and understanding by teachers and students. There is no room for racial microaggressions in our rapidly changing world, particularly in the classroom.

Recommendations

There are two categories of recommendations that the researcher would like to make after careful consideration of the study. One category relates to how the SLES can be improved. The other category concerns the many ways in which racial microaggressions might be studied in future research.

How to Improve the SLES

This is the first time the SLES has ever been used, so it is reasonable to assume that there are ways in which it can be improved for future use. The weakness that is most apparent after working with the data taken from the SLES is that the scale that is used for a student being bothered by a racial microaggression does not have enough variety. Response 1 is "Has never happened to me" and response 2 is "Did not bother me at all." It should be obvious (in hindsight) that if it never happened to them, then it did not bother them. The number two response waters down the survey results and does not add to the data. Therefore, the scale for being bothered by a racial microaggression should be changed by removing response 2, "Did not bother me at all."

It may be problematic to ask a student to try to remember racial microaggressions that have happened to them over a four-year period. The fact that the survey was given during class time meant that the student did not have a long time to dredge up old memories. A qualitative focus group might give students more time to consider their history of racial microaggressions. A survey that is take-home would definitely give students time to consider racial microaggressions that may have occurred in their past. Future researchers should consider whether either of these instruments would be better for their research design.

Depending upon the nature of the study being conducted, it would be beneficial for future researchers to determine if the items under each theme are valid, and whether they are redundant with another item in a different theme. As an example, Teacher Did Not Believe Student Was Born in USA is under Theme Three: Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity. Under this theme and for this item, it is meant to show similarity of race. The item about not being born in the USA might also be considered under Theme Two: Second-class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality. Researchers working with large Hispanic populations would be wise to consider where this item best fits, based on the SLES results and the qualitative comments made by Hispanic students in this study.

Future researchers should look carefully at the items that scored lowest on the SLES. While this study concentrated on the most significant data, there might be much to learn from the items that were not significant. As an example, the item "Teacher Made Comments About Physical Features or Dress," had very low scores, and was meant to indicate if a student was made to feel unique or exotic. Perhaps the title in Theme Three: Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity should be changed so that exoticization is

dropped from the study, at least for secondary school application. This, of course, would depend on the purpose of the study.

There are several items on the SLES that could be taken in either a positive or a negative way by the student: Student Told Was Articulate and Spoke Well, Student Asked to Speak and Represent Race in Class, Student Expected to Excel in Class/Sports, and Student Asked to Teach Class Words in "Native" Language. The number of occurrences and how bothered a student might be would all depend on whether the student viewed the item as a microaggression or a compliment. The researcher must communicate clearly the purpose of the study in the SLES directions so students know that racial microaggressions are the focus of the study and not compliments.

One of the difficulties encountered in this study is that it is difficult to pigeonhole a microaggression under a theme. As an example, a Hispanic student not born in the US might be considered a criminal if thought to be illegal by the teacher. However, they could also be categorized under the Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity theme if the teacher thinks all students of Hispanic descent are Mexican. Care should be taken by the researcher to consider the placement of items within themes, and also whether there are other items not in the SLES that would be appropriate for each theme.

The written comments from the SLES reveal a depth of perception and emotion by the students that was not registered in the survey section. This would indicate that more qualitative studies of racial microaggressions in secondary schools would be useful as a research tool. While there are a few focus group studies of high school students on this topic, most qualitative studies have been with college and graduate school students. The

literature would suggest that qualitative studies would be in order, both of students and the faculty in secondary schools.

Future Study

It would be interesting to study racial microaggressions by teachers in secondary schools by other demographic variables, such as sex and academic level. The data would suggest that there are differences in how male and female students perceive and are bothered by racial microaggressions, particularly by race. The academic level of a student, whether they are in a technical, college preparatory, honors, or Advanced Placement class, may effect the number of racial microaggressions a teacher would make. An intriguing hypothesis is that the technical and college prep level of academic classes would yield more racial microaggressions since classes might be more difficult to manage and teachers would be more frustrated.

It would be easy to conceive of an in-depth study of racial microaggressions by teachers for each race of students. As an example, what role does the image of the Asian as a model minority student play in a teacher's perception? Do teachers view Black males as under performing? How much does the political climate against Hispanics in a community affect how a teacher views Hispanic students? Do teachers neglect White students so they feel excluded when compared to how teachers relate to the students of color? Each race of students would have their own unique perception that could be studied in relation to the environment in which the study takes place.

There are many possibilities for research based on geographic demographics alone. This study took place in a large suburban high school in an affluent county. One line of inquiry might be the role that immigration plays in a school and how it affects racial

microaggressions by teachers. On the other hand, how might racial microaggressions by secondary school teachers change if the locale was rural and the school small? The student population in this study was very diverse, unlike many areas of the country. How would a lack of diversity affect teachers and students, and the resultant possibility for racial microaggressions? Consider what the results of this study might be if this were an inner city school, impoverished, with a low caliber of teachers?

Another whole area of research would be what role language development plays in racial microaggressions by teachers. Students who have English as a second language (ESOL) may be mainstreamed into academic classrooms in different stages, according to county and state guidelines. ESOL students may be more difficult to manage in class and may be more frustrating to teach, depending on the ESOL student, the acceptance of classmates, and the training of the teacher. All of this would make an interesting study related to racial microaggressions.

There is one voice that is unheard in this study of student perception of racial microaggressions by secondary school teachers, and that is of the faculty. There was only one study cited (Boysen & Vogel, 2009) where the faculty was asked for their perceptions, and that was of students' racial microaggressions against each other. There are many factors that could be studied relating to the faculty, such as what effect does having a racially diverse faculty have as opposed to having a faculty that is all one race? Much is made about the need for staff development in tolerance and diversity, but does it really work and to what extent does it influence a teacher to not commit racial microaggressions? Do teachers of color commit racial microaggressions against students and what are the conditions that make this probable?

One of the written comments by a student on the SLES was that the students were the ones who committed the most racial microaggressions against each other. It would be interesting to know more about this topic, and how it effects the school environment. Sue et al. (2009) examined this topic as it relates to not having good racial dialogue in a class, particularly if a teacher cannot manage racial microaggressions in the classroom. But more should be known about the students themselves, what races are more prone to racial microaggressions against each other, and the environment in which this might thrive?

Another line of inquiry would be the microaggressions that students and teachers may commit in secondary schools that are not racial. Nadal (2008) introduced this line of thought as it relates to ethnicity, gender, sexual minority, disability, and religious microaggressions. Much has been made in recent years of what constitutes hazing and bullying in schools. Are there other microaggressions that would entail comments about weight, appearance, wearing glasses, and so on? Is it possible that students and teachers alike may commit more of these microaggressions, that while not racial may be just as harmful to students?

Dissemination

The researcher would like to share the research findings from this study with the principal of the researcher's high school, the source of the data collected. With the permission of the principal, the researcher would also like to inform the faculty of the information gained from the study. Further, the researcher would like to send a copy of the research to a school board member in the researcher's school district. This school official has been instrumental in supporting the researcher and has expressed an interest in the topic. The researcher will offer assistance to anyone at the school or in the county

who might be interested in preparing staff development sessions about racial microaggressions.

Another group who may be interested in this topic would be school principals. The researcher would like to disseminate information about racial microaggressions at school principal conferences, or leadership classes, perhaps hosted by local college or university schools of education. Likewise, the researcher would seek to offer the information on racial microaggressions to schools of education in colleges and universities. The researcher has some collegial relationships with the deans of education with two colleges in the state, and would like to contact them about an opportunity to discuss racial microaggressions and how it could be used in the schools of education to teach pre-service teachers about racial microaggressions.

There may be some academic journals that might find the information on racial microaggressions interesting to their readers. The researcher hopes to prepare a journal entry and submit for their review. The researcher would also like to share the data from this study with Nadal and Harrell, whose surveys were adapted into the SLES.

The researcher will also share the results of the study with the Advanced Placement Psychology classes she teaches. It was a student report that piqued the researcher's interest in racial microaggressions, so it is only fitting that the results should be shared with the students. The topic of racial microaggressions offers many teachable moments in the classroom.

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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

| Georgia Southern University |
| Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs |

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Phone: 912-478-0843		Veazey Hall 2021
		P.O. Box 8005
Fax: 912-478-0719	IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Mary Anne Meeks
2637 Ashley Oaks Ct.
Duluth, GA 30096

CC: Charles E. Patterson
Associate Vice President for Research

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: April 19, 2010

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered **H10283** and titled **"Racial Microaggressions by Secondary School Teachers Against Students of Color"**, it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable. You are authorized to enroll up to **435** subjects.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research provided that you hire the proposed veteran substitute teacher you named in your proposal narrative to administer the survey to all students.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,
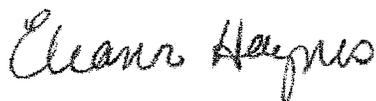
Eleanor Haynes

Eleanor Haynes
Compliance Officer

APPENDIX B

STUDENT LIFE EXPERIENCES SURVEY

DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS SURVEY. THIS IS CONFIDENTIAL AND ANONYMOUS.

STUDENT LIFE EXPERIENCES. These questions ask you to think about experiences you have had in high school (grades 9-12) as they relate to your teachers and/or coaches. Please **first** determine how often you had each experience. Use the scale in the first column and write the appropriate number on the first blank line. Next, use the scale in the second column to indicate how much it bothered you when the experience happened. Write the appropriate number on the blank line. *Please complete the information for sex and race or your results will not be tabulated. Thank you for taking part in this study.*

Sex: Male _____
      Female _____

Race: Asian _____
      Black _____
      Hispanic _____
      White _____
      Other _____

How often experience happens
over four year period?
1=never happened to me
2=one-three times
3=four-six times
4=seven-nine times
5=frequently, weekly

How much did it effect you?

1=has never happened to me
2=did not effect me at all
3=effected me a little
4=effected me a lot
5=effected me extremely

1. I was ignored or overlooked in class by a teacher, especially during class discussions. _____   _____

2. Teachers or coaches acted as if they were afraid or intimidated by me. _____   _____

3. I was asked to speak for and represent my race during class lessons about my race. _____   _____

4. A teacher recommended that I take an Honors or Advanced Placement class. _____   _____

5. A teacher assumed that my work would be inferior to other students. _____   _____

6. I was watched closely and followed by a teacher or coach while walking on campus. _____   _____

7. A teacher expected me to do better in class/sports because of my race. _____   _____

8. A teacher always treated me with respect and asked my opinion in class. _____   _____

9. A teacher told me I was very articulate and spoke well. _____   _____

10. I felt bad as a result of a classroom lesson that involved my race. _____   _____

CONTINUE ON BACK

	How often experience happens over four year period? 1=never happened to me 2=one-three times 3=four-six times 4=seven-nine times 5=frequently, weekly	How much does it bother you? 1=has never happened to me 2=did not bother me at all 3=bothered me a little 4=bothered me a lot 5=bothered me extremely
11. A teacher asked me to teach them words in my "native" language.	_____	_____
12. A teacher would not let me participate in open talks about race.	_____	_____
13. I overheard a teacher tell an offensive racial or ethnic joke.	_____	_____
14. A teacher told me that all people in my race look alike.	_____	_____
15. A teacher was surprised by my success in school.	_____	_____
16. A teacher did not treat me as well in class as other students	_____	_____
17. A teacher did not believe me when I told them that I was born in the USA	_____	_____
18. A teacher made me feel welcome in class.	_____	_____
19. A teacher assumed I was poor.	_____	_____
20. I was insulted, laughed at, or called a bad name by a teacher, or by a student while in the presence of a teacher.	_____	_____
21. A teacher said something about one of my physical features, or dress, that is due to my race.	_____	_____

Please write below any other school or class experiences that are not mentioned here that you may have experienced, or that you may have witnessed with others. Thank you again for your help with this survey.

_____

_____

_____

_____

PLEASE BE SURE BOTH SIDES ARE COMPLETED