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Black Teachers, White Schools: A Qualitative Multiple Case Study on Their Experiences of Racial Tokenism and Development of Professional Black Identities

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BLACK TEACHERS, WHITE SCHOOLS: A QUALITATIVE MULTIPLE CASE
STUDY ON THEIR EXPERIENCES OF RACIAL TOKENISM AND
DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL BLACK IDENTITIES

by

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THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

Black Teachers, White Schools: A Qualitative Multiple Case Study On Their Experiences Of Racial Tokenism And Development Of Professional Black Identities

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An emerging body of research shows that retention of minority independent school teachers creates a positive multicultural climate and increases the likelihood that minority families will enroll their children in the schools as well as preparing all students for a pluralistic society (Brosnan 2001b, AIMS 2010, Katz & Wishine 2001). However, retaining minority teachers in predominantly White and affluent independent schools has proved challenging (Brosnan 2001, 2001b, 2009). This qualitative multiple case study extends the current literature on Black private school teachers by not only examining the experiences, but also the coping strategies and professional identity development processes of nine Black teachers working in predominantly White, independent schools.

This study's main research question is: How do Black independent school teachers describe their experiences? Three key ancillary research questions are: What coping strategies do these teachers develop and/or use to navigate the independent school environment? What roles, if any, do/can these teachers' colleagues, administrators, and professional associations play in building a support network for them? How do these

teachers develop a professional Black identity as token employees? Based on Kanter's (1993) theory of tokenism, this research explores Black teachers' experiences of racial tokenism in independent schools in an effort to uncover coping strategies and support mechanisms that lead to their retention. Further, the identity development of each teacher will be examined in relationship to Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2010) modified nigrescence recycling theory.

Triangulation of surveys, interviews (both individual and group), and written responses identified four themes in the research. Theme 1 confirmed the original hypothesis that Black independent school teachers experience tokenism on a daily basis. The second theme revealed that the participants all employ similar coping strategies to counter the negative effects of tokenism; creating a personal mission, over-performing, and developing a support structure. Theme 3 confirmed the second hypothesis that Black independent school teachers develop their professional Black identity following the modified nigrescence recycling model. The final theme revealed that the participants overwhelmingly share formal school backgrounds that were similar in demographics, predominantly White and affluent, to the private schools in which they later chose to teach. The findings of this study provide independent school associations, administrators, and teachers with insight on how to create school climates that cultivate the retention of minority teachers.

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DEDICATION

To Charles, Evan, Maya, and Leah:

Thank you for always supporting me as I chase my dreams.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
DEDICATION	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
CHAPTER ONE: THE RATIONALE	1
Introduction	1
Problem Statement	3
Statement of Purpose	4
Operational Definitions	5
Class	5
Race	6
Token Employee	6
Minority	6
Private school vs. Independent school	7
Expert Ethnic	7
Black and White	7
Cultural Fluency	7
Topic Rationale	8
Self-Discovery	8
Professional Discovery	11
Theoretical Framework	11
Tokenism	11
Visibility	13
Assimilation/Role Entrapment	14
Contrast/Boundary Heightening	15
Summary of the Key Topic Literature	15
Identity Development	16
Modified Nigrescence Recycling	17
Black Teachers' Experiences as Racial Tokens	19
Shifting	20
Brief Review of the Case Study Method	20
Scope and Significance	21
Assumptions	21
Limitations	21
Scope	21
Significance	22
Chapter Summary	22
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	24
Introduction	24

Private School Teachers	25
Why Teach in an Independent School?	26
Recruitment and Retention	28
Black Teachers' Experiences of Racial Tokenism	29
Predominantly White Private Schools	29
Predominantly White Suburban Schools	33
Predominantly White Institutions of Higher Education	39
Filling the Gap	42
Black Identity Development and Documented Coping Strategies	42
Section Summary	43
Review of the Methodological Research	43
Chapter Summary	44
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	45
Introduction	45
Restatement of the Purpose	45
Research Questions	46
Approach to the Study	47
Role of the Researcher	48
Methodology	49
Setting	49
Participants and Rationale for Participant Sample	49
Data Collection and Timeline	51
Technological Impact	55
Data Analysis and Interpretation	56
Ethical Considerations	57
Limitations	57
Chapter Summary	59
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	60
Introduction	60
Participant Profiles	60
Kathleen	63
Christine	67
Pam	70
Maya	73
Charles	76
Leah	80
Michelle	85
Nikki	88
Evan	91
Section Summary	95
Theme 1: Black Independent School Teachers and Tokenism	95
Visibility	97
Assimilation/Role Entrapment	98
Contrast/Boundary Heightening	102

Theme 2: Creating a Personal Mission, Over-performing, and Developing a Support Network	106
Creating a Personal Mission Statement	107
Over-performing	109
Developing a Support Network	114
Theme 3: Professional Black Identity Development	118
Theme 4: Participants' Backgrounds	120
Chapter Summary	122
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	124
Introduction	124
Review of the Research Questions	125
Discussion	125
Participant Suggestions for New Teachers of Color	132
Have a Personal Mission	132
Be Your Best	133
Find Support	133
Implications for Recruitment and Retention	133
School Mission and Commitment	134
Candidate/Teacher Background	135
Formal Mentorship Program	136
Participant Recognition of the Need to Bridge the Gap	138
Recommendations for Future Research	139
Professional Black Identity Development Study	139
Teacher Background Analysis	140
The Experiences of Teachers of Color	140
"Model" School Study	140
Public School Comparative Study	141
Reflections	141
Conclusion	142
APPENDIX A: IRB	144
APPENDIX B: PILOT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	145
APPENDIX C: CASE STUDY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	148
APPENDIX D: JOURNAL PROMPTS	150
APPENDIX E: CASE STUDY SURVEY 1	151
APPENDIX F: CASE STUDY SURVEY 2	154
APPENDIX G: ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	158
APPENDIX H: GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	160

APPENDIX I: RECRUITMENT EMAIL	162
APPENDIX J: INFORMED CONSENT.....	164
APPENDIX K: CHARTS	166
Chart 1 Participants’ Socioeconomic Background	166
Chart 2 Highest Degree Attained	166
Chart 3 Years Private School Teaching	167
Chart 4 Certified Teacher	167
Chart 5 Grade Level Taught	168
Chart 6 Did/Do You Have a Mentor	168
Chart 7 Were/Are You a Mentor	169
REFERENCES	178
CV	184

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Overview of Participants	170
Table 2: Participant Background Snapshot	171
Table 3: Theme 1 Quotes	172
Table 4: Shifting Quotes	174
Table 5: Theme 2 Quotes	175
Table 6: Theme 3 Quotes	177

CHAPTER ONE: THE RATIONALE

Introduction

Life experiences and exposures teach us that there are different acceptable modes of behavior depending upon the situation and culture in which one finds oneself. As we experience more of the world, we develop coping strategies to accommodate our new truths and guide our actions as we navigate life. “According to widely accepted psychological theory, coping strategies are generally either cognitive (requiring you to think differently) or behavioral (requiring you to alter how you behave)” (Jones and Shorter-Gooden, 2003, p. 65). What happens when our identity, the truths about ourselves, clashes on a daily basis with the world in which we work, and possibly even live, in? What coping strategies are then incorporated into a person’s daily interactions and how do these strategies impact individual identity development? “No one knows precisely how identities are forged, but it is safe to say that identities are not invented: an identity would seem to be arrived at by the way in which the person faces and uses his experience” (Baldwin, 1972, p. 189). Baldwin believed that identity development is a process that begins with reflection and ends in action. Our identity develops nationally, spiritually, by gender, by sexual orientation, across class lines, and on multiple levels; too many to name. However, for members of racially minoritized groups it is often their racial identity that they identify with most vehemently. What are the experiences and coping strategies of people who identify with a minoritized group while working and living within a majority, White and affluent, environment?

In 1977, Kanter developed a theory of tokenism based on the experiences of women working in male-dominated industries. Known as *racial tokenism*, Kanter’s

(1993) original theory has been used to describe the experiences of racial minorities working in predominantly White institutions. This study focuses on the experiences of Black teachers as racial tokens working within predominantly White and affluent private schools. As private schools embrace diversity within their faculty and their student body, it has become evident that retaining teachers of color is the largest hurdle to the sustainment of a diverse private school population. Brosnan (2001), in an independent school guide on recruiting and retaining teachers of color, stated that “retaining teachers of color seems to be as difficult as attracting them these days. So it’s clearly necessary to think carefully and proactively about taking steps to retain teachers of color” (p. 20). Brosnan (2001) goes on to give these schools advice about how to create an inclusive and supportive educational and workplace environment. His ideas align with research focusing exclusively on the experiences of Black teachers working in predominantly white schools and colleges. When asked about their experiences working in predominantly White institutions, Black teachers discuss feelings of isolation, being on display, and being treated as outsiders (Madsen & Mabokela, 2000, 2003a, 2003b; Alexander & Moore, 2008; Hall & Stevenson, 2007; Kelly, 2007). While these experiences have been minimally documented, even less attention has been paid to examining the coping strategies of these teachers. *How do Black teachers get over the token experience to become contributing and respected faculty members? How do they develop a healthy professional Black identity within a token environment? Do their school environments play a role in their success? Do outside forces, like mentors, diversity groups, or workshops, play a role? How can schools create an environment that supports the token faculty member?* These and related concerns are explored in this

emergent qualitative study which focuses on the Black teacher's experiences in predominantly White and affluent independent schools.

Problem Statement

The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Principles of Good Practice (PGP), which define the standards and ethical behavior that independent schools' operations should follow, includes specific references to diversity and inclusion. In the area of recruitment, the PGPs state that schools should "seek a diversity of cultural, national, and ethnic backgrounds in the recruitment of teachers and administrators" (NAIS, 2012, p. 6) by creating a "procedure governing its hiring process and a strategic recruiting plan that includes strategies for seeking candidates who will add to the racial, cultural, and gender diversity of the institution" (NAIS, 2012, p. 16). Further, the PGPs call for equity and justice within each independent school by stating that "creating and sustaining an inclusive, equitable, and just independent school community requires commitment, reflection, conscious and deliberate action, as well as constant vigilance based on the overarching principles of inclusivity, diversity, and multiculturalism" (NAIS, 2012, p. 11). While these guidelines are clearly stated, there are no specific, research-based processes laid out to follow to achieve the goal of faculty diversity. In order to create and sustain a diverse environment, private schools must understand and support the unique experiences of the token Black teacher, and want to address and resolve the troubling realities they face. To date, the research on the racial token experience of Black teachers is limited at best, and that which does exist is either not research-based or not based in private school education (Alexander & Moore 2008; Brosnan 2001, 2001b, 2004, 2009; Kelly 2007; Looney 2006; Mabokela & Madsen

2003a, 2003b, 2000; et al.). This study documents the racial token experience of Black teachers in private schools, while delving into the coping and retention strategies employed by these teachers, their colleagues, their schools, and their schools' associations. While many schools and associations have programs and workshops aimed at minority teacher retention, they lack an informed, evidence-based approach to evaluating the effectiveness of and positively transforming their current programs into programs that produce greater results. This study adds to existing related research (described above) and enhances the research on the racial token experience of Black teachers in private schools, their coping strategies, and their professional Black identity development.

Statement of Purpose

This study examines the experiences of Black teachers working in predominantly White, affluent, independent (private) schools across the United States. In particular, this study examines the token experiences of Black teachers in these schools in order to determine what they experience, how they develop a professional Black identity, how they overcome negative experiences, and what schools and school associations can do to support them. Further, this study examines how these teachers experience racial tokenism based on Kanter's (1993) theory, identifies the coping strategies used by these teachers when confronted by their token status, and details how their Black professional identities develop as a result, based on Cross' (2001) modified nigrescence recycling model. Through interviews, teacher journaling, and observations, themes were identified that pertain to: 1) how racial identity develops and changes over Black teachers' careers; 2) the role of independent school associations in Black teachers' professional

experiences, specifically these associations' use of affinity-based groups and mentors to create a supportive environment for these teachers; 3) the experiences and emotional effects of tokenism on Black teachers; 4) the role of administrators and colleagues in providing a supportive work environment for Black teachers; 5) why Black teachers choose to work at independent schools; 6) the recruitment and retention of Black teachers; and, 7) how Black teachers fit in as members of the independent school community. Specifically, this research examines how Black teachers working in predominantly White, affluent, independent schools experience tokenism; the strategies they develop and/or use to counter the negative effects of tokenism; the roles colleagues, administration, and association affinity groups play in helping to them to cope with tokenism in these schools; how they develop a professional Black identity as token employees; and, the factors leading to their recruitment and retention.

Operational Definitions

Class

There are two ideals that are often intermingled within the term *class*. The first is the economic or material basis of class, and the second refers to social class, socioeconomic status (SES), or the cultural practices of class (Cole & Omari, 2003). When we, as a society, discuss the Black experience or a collective Black identity we are often referring to the cultural practices of class. Cole & Omari (2003) describe the Black experience as “styles of dress and social conduct, and aesthetic preferences (e.g., in music) influenced by Black youth culture” (p.788). Today, this social and cultural practice of class may include talking “loud”, speaking in the African American vernacular known as Ebonics, and wearing your pants low. It is even often extended to

“gangsta”, “thug”, or criminal-minded behaviors. In this study class represents the economic and achievement range that a person or the person’s family falls within. Class and SES are closely related, but SES lacks the achievement piece. This discussion on class and culture continues in more depth in Chapter 3.

Race

While race is a social construct, it acts, in society, as a human selection of attributes based on physical characteristics like skin color, hair type, and other physical features. These attributes are often stratified as “good” or “bad” and ultimately used to discriminate.

Token Employee

In this study, the token employee is a token in number only. No assumptions about why the person was hired or their role at the institution is implied by the token label used by the author. However, implications may be made by the respondents. Any mention of tokenism as either a reason for hire or as an employee role will derive solely from the experiences and/or perceptions of the participants. While these experiences and/perceptions may be a result of the numerical token status, they are still not assumed to be such by the label in this study.

Minority

The term minority is commonly used to refer to a racial or ethnic minority; for example, a minority teacher in an independent school who is Black, Latino, or Asian. In this study, however, given its focus on only the Black teacher, references to minority can be assumed to be to African Americans.

Private School vs. Independent School

“Independent schools” generally refer to non-affiliated private schools. However, some schools that are religious by founding, but not in practice, have been used in this study as these schools follow the independent school model. The terms independent and private will be used interchangeably throughout.

Expert Ethnic

The expert ethnic derives from the assumption that there is one way to act, think, and be Black or any other ethnicity or race; and that all members of that specific ethnicity or race should be able to relate to all other members of that group. This assumption does not take into account the range of cultures, experiences, and lifestyles that people who may belong to the same racial or ethnic group have; it also does not consider that group membership may be all these people have in common.

Black and White

For the purpose of this study the terms Black and White, are not necessarily used to identify the color of the skin, but a cultural/racial group, and hence will be capitalized. White is used to represent Caucasian Americans, and Black is used to represent those who identify as Black Americans. In addition, Black and African American will be used interchangeably throughout.

Cultural Fluency

Cultural fluency refers to possessing the knowledge and understanding of another culture’s language, norms, expectations, communication styles, etc. This includes understanding emotional currency and accepted means of achieving success.

Topic Rationale

Self-Discovery

I was adopted at three months old by a White family in Maryland. My parents had three biological children, but weren't able to have any more. They wanted more children and decided to adopt. They were called about a baby who was available for adoption, but were told to come see the child first because there was "a catch". On the drive from Columbia, Maryland, where they lived, to Baltimore, Maryland, where I had been born, they discussed what disabilities they were prepared to deal with and which ones they did not think they could handle. When they saw me and realized that my "catch" was that I was Black, they adopted me with no questions asked. Originally the plan was to adopt a second Black baby three years later, however, in 1972 the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) began blocking adoptions of Black children by White families. While not advocating for Black children to stay in foster care, the NABSW stated that "We stand firmly, though, on conviction that a White home is not a suitable placement for Black children and contend it is totally unnecessary" (Bremner, 1974, p. 780). It is due to this ruling that I grew up the only Black child in a White family.

I do not remember feeling any different from anyone else in the world until elementary school. My father, a college professor who wanted only to teach and not publish, moved us whenever he began to feel the pressure of perishing for not publishing. The summer before I entered first grade, my dad was offered a position at The American University in Cairo, so we moved to Egypt. It was in Egypt at Cairo American College, an international school for children from kindergarten through seniors in high school, that I began to develop an identity. I became American. My classmates were American,

Egyptian, Arab, European, and more. I recognized my difference only as being American, and I identified as such.

The summer before my fourth grade school year, my father was offered a position at the University of Miami in Miami, Florida. My mother, an English teacher, was hired at an elite private school in Miami. My sister, brother, and I attended this school for five years. From fourth to sixth grade I began to identify myself on a socioeconomic level. My classmates were all very well off. They arrived at school in Jaguars, Mercedes, and BMWs, often driven by chauffeurs. They lived in houses with elevators, went on Club Med vacations, and belonged to country clubs. They were Haitian, Cuban, and White American, but they were all rich. I began to identify myself as coming from a low socioeconomic background, although in reality we were very middle class.

It was not until seventh and eighth grade that my racial identity began to develop. I remember the moment this occurred, as it was life-changing. I had been invited to go swim at a friend's country club. The morning of this play date my friend's mom called my mom to discuss it. When my mom got off the phone she explained to me, without emotion, that I had been uninvited because the country club did not allow Black people; I was welcome to have my friend over to our house any time, but I was no longer allowed to go to her house as long as her family felt that it was appropriate to continue to belong to a country club that excluded people based on the color of their skin. It was in that moment that I realized that I was not regarded the same as all of my White family and friends. During that school year, our social studies class learned about slavery and Civil Rights. I was the only Black person in my class and I began to feel uncomfortable and different. This school year was also the start of school dances and boy/girl parties. I

learned very quickly that if I wanted to dance with a boy, I would have to bring my own date because none of the White boys ever asked me to dance.

During my eighth grade school year, I began to seek out a Black experience. I began listening to Rhythm and Blues music and watching Black Entertainment Television. My style of dress began to change from preppy to a more urban fashion. I began to spend a lot of time at my Black boyfriend's house, where I felt more at ease. I recognize now that I associated mostly with upper income Blacks, so, even in my effort to establish my racial identity, class played a large part.

The summer prior to entering high school my dad was offered a position at Towson University, just outside of Baltimore, Maryland. I was given the option to attend the all-girl, predominantly White, Catholic prep school where my mom was teaching, or attend the local public high school. I chose the public school where I could, presumably, meet African American classmates to whom I could relate. While this school had a great racial mix, Black and White students were separated across class lines. I was the only Black student in honors classes, a fact that was not only pointed out to me by my White classmates and my Black friends, but also by my teachers. One teacher even repeatedly asked me if I would feel more comfortable in a general science class. My Black friends called me "rich girl," and I was the only Black girl among my White friends. I began to understand my identity as not just a Black girl, but also a member of the upper middle class. My parents recognized the racial and class problems at the school and moved us to Columbia, Maryland, a planned community that prides itself on racial and class diversity. It was in public school in Columbia where I first found a peer group of upper middle

class Blacks that seemed to mirror the racial and class identity that I had formed.

However, I still felt as if a part of me belonged in the private school world.

Professional Discovery

As an undergraduate, I dual majored in sociology and African American studies, as I continued to try to understand my place as a Black woman in the United States. I went on to earn a Master of Arts degree in teaching, immediately returning to private schools as a teacher. My main goal was to be that Black face that I never had, that imagined Black teacher who would comfort the few Black students at the school as they came to terms with their own racial identity. However, I was unprepared for the continuing racial identity journey I would make in re-entering the private school world as a Black teacher. That journey and the development of my ensuing related concern for the recruitment and, especially, retention of minority teachers in predominantly White schools is what has fueled this research.

Theoretical Framework

Tokenism

The theory of racial tokenism developed from Kanter's (1993) theory of tokenism, originally developed to explain the experiences of women in the male dominated business world. Kanter's (1993) theory of tokenism has been generalized to describe the experiences of members of any minority in a skewed group (Kanter, 1993). "Skewed groups are those in which there is a large preponderance of one type over another, up to a ratio of perhaps 85:15" (Kanter, 1993, p.208). Black racial tokenism refers to the experiences of African Americans working in a historically White institution or organization. According to Kanter (1993), there are three basic characteristics of the

token experience: visibility, assimilation, and contrast. First, due to their low numbers tokens are highly visible. When there is a faculty room full of teachers with similar features, characteristics, and skin tones, one Black teacher stands out. This extra attention means that “tokens typically performed their jobs under public and symbolic conditions different from those of dominants” (Kanter, 1993, p.212). The second characteristic is a form of invisibility that Kanter (1993) refers to as assimilation. Also referred to as role entrapment and invisibility, assimilation involves becoming the representative of one’s group. In the independent school setting, teachers of color become the minority/diversity/racism expert, often actually being given the title of “diversity coordinator” (or some other title). “The uncomfortable role of expert ethnic was something most minority faculty of this study had experienced more times than they cared to name” (McDonald, Harvey, & Brown, 2005, p. 9). Kanter’s (1993) final characteristic of the token, contrast, is commonly referred to as boundary heightening. The perceived threat of the token (challenging the status quo dynamics and social order within the institution) can cause the members of the dominant group to exaggerate their group culture and norms, thus excluding the token from the school culture.

Racial tokenism refers to being a skewed racial minority within an institution. The theory follows Kanter’s tokenism theory. Racial tokenism is based on heightened visibility due to being the only one, or one of a very few, who look physically different; being trapped in the role of an expert in all things having to do with their race, to include dealing with the minority children, school diversity, and more; and the experience of feeling, and/or actually being, purposefully denied access to the rituals and culture of the institution. Black teachers working for predominantly White private schools *are* racial

tokens. That is, strictly based on numbers, the Black private school teacher will have a racial token experience. Accordingly, this study investigates how each participant in each case experiences racial tokenism. Thus, the racial token experience is the core shared experience of all of the study participants, but the degree to which they experience racial tokenism—inclusive of the characteristics of Kanter’s theory, as well as the specific characteristics of racial tokenism that they experience, their coping strategies, and their development of Black identity development varies.

The following three sections define and discuss the key characteristics of racial tokenism that inform this study. These characteristics are: 1) Visibility; 2) Assimilation/Entrapment; and, 3) Contrast/Boundary Heightening. I use my personal experiences as a teacher and administrator in predominantly White private schools to illustrate how these characteristics may play out in practice.

Visibility

The Black private school teacher's skin color makes him/her highly visible. I experienced heightened visibility as a teacher in a predominantly White private school. I facilitated a charity fashion show with my students. Our school typically frowned on teachers leaving campus during their lunch and/or planning hours. I got pre-approval from the headmistress to go to the mall and solicit clothing donations for our fashion show. Two days later I was confronted by the headmistress because teachers had noticed me missing from the school and questioned why I left campus. She reprimanded me for not informing my colleagues about my plans because I should have known they would notice my absence. In contrast, a White colleague who was having medical issues left campus weekly for doctor appointments. One month into her treatment I overheard her

telling another teacher about her appointments. The teacher responded that she was embarrassed to admit she had not noticed that our colleague had been absent from the lounge once a week for a month. My heightened visibility made me a target for faculty room gossip for which the blame was placed on me.

Members of the dominant group seem to most easily recognize and understand the phenomenon of being highly visible and the resultant performance pressures which will be discussed in chapters 4 and 5. However, Kanter's other two characteristics, assimilation and contrast, are not as widely accepted by the mainstream as they originate less from the situation, than from actions taken by members of the dominant group. This study documents the effects of this heightened visibility per case. In addition, this study focuses on the coping mechanisms used to compensate for being visibly different.

Assimilation/Role Entrapment

My experiences in predominantly White private schools often left me feeling like a representative of my race, and not as an individual. I was called upon to represent my schools at diversity conferences, to facilitate diversity workshops for staff and students, and to lead a *parents of color* group at the school. When I was first hired, I was unaware that the administration expected me to be the voice of multicultural education and diversity. Kanter (1993) states that role entrapment is characterized by tokens being judged by the stereotypes (familiar generalizations) of their group. "The characteristics of a token tend to be distorted to fit the generalization" (Kanter, 1993, p. 211). This role entrapment is often referred to as invisibility, as the token is not seen as an individual with her own personality and characteristics. By examining any additional roles, assigned or assumed, taken on by the Black private school teacher, this research investigates role

entrapment and its effects on the teacher. Specifically, it examines how these roles affect the teacher's internal identity, professional identity development, and perceived identity within the school.

Contrast/Boundary Heightening

In addition to experiencing visibility and assimilation, I also became a victim of boundary heightening as a private school teacher. I became aware of the White females' attempts to exclude me from conversation in the faculty lounge. I often had conversations about diversity and my life experiences with two of the male history teachers. I noticed that the White female teachers would look at each other and begin to draw the men into conversations about tanning, the male teachers' wives' Pampered Chef parties, or other topics that I had little to no cultural knowledge of, like the newest country music release. I became painfully aware of the fact that I was a guest within the faculty community, but not a full member. Isolation is one of the main findings reported by token employees. This study focuses on the isolating effect of contrast, and the strategies used by Black private school teachers to overcome the isolation caused by contrast.

Summary of the Key Topic Literature

This study examines the token experiences of Black teachers working in predominantly White private schools in order to determine what they experience, how they overcome their experiences and what schools and associations can do to support minority teachers. It is assumed that teaching at predominantly White and affluent independent schools triggers the need to re-examine and further develop their professional Black identities. There are multiple identity development models that have been developed over the past fifty years. The current literature on identity development

has been evaluated in order to identify a model that can be considered when looking at the specific experiences of the Black teacher working in a predominantly White private school. In addition to identity development, this study looks at shifting as a coping strategy. A working definition of shifting has been included so that its use in this study is clearly defined.

Identity Development

Teachers develop a professional identity as they interact with their school community. Pearce and Morrison (2011) stated that "the shaping of a professional identity takes place during teachers' social exchanges and as a result of interactions with other members of the school community such as students and parents" (p. 56). When a Black teacher working in a predominantly White private school shapes his/her professional identity, he/she is also factoring in race and his/her token role within the school. With only 3.5% of all faculty members of NAIS schools being African American (Lewis, 2011), private schools attempt to recruit an increasingly more diverse staff by launching issues of minority faculty retention to the forefront of many articles in issues of the NAIS' magazine, *Independent School*. A key issue in the retention of faculty of color lies in fostering their professional ethnic/racial identity development.

A person develops an identity so he/she knows how to behave in various situations. Identity is commonly referred to as how an individual sees himself. It is created through one's personality, belief systems, personal experiences, and more. Identity is made up your personal "I am's". For example, I am Black, I am a woman, I am an athlete, I am a mother... It would follow that one's racial identity is how a person identifies him/herself in racial terms. Helms (1990) states that "racial identity actually

refers to a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular group" (p.3). Black racial identity is identifying oneself as Black, sharing racial heritage, culture, and physical attributes as African Americans. Pioneered by Cross in the 1970s and based on his theory of nigrescence, "the process of becoming Black" (Cross, 1991, p. 157), Black identity development models derived out of psychology and counseling from the research of Erik Erikson (Cross, 1991 and Jackson, 2001).

Modified Nigrescence Recycling

During a reading group at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Cross (2009) argued that identity can be viewed "as a guide of your awakened state". People develop an identity so that they know how to behave in specific situations. Their identity guides their interactions, actions, and reactions when they are awake and conscious. The theory of nigrescence was developed in the 1960s, and allowed for some of the first qualitative studies of Black identity development aimed at explaining nigrescence over an adult lifetime, nigrescence recycling "depict(s) future or continued growth of Black identity beyond the formative or conversion process" (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001, p. 263). The catalyst for nigrescence recycling is a racial event, positive or negative, which causes a Black person to question his formed racial identity. Cross & Fhagen-Smith's (2001) modified nigrescence recycling model has five stages: foundational Black identity, lifespan encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization of enhancement, and enhanced foundational Black identity. Stage 1, the foundational Black identity, refers to the established identity in place after some process of identity development. Cross & Fhagen-Smith (2001) explain that "nigrescence recycling begins with a person who is already

Black-focused and ends when that person's original sense of Blackness is enhanced (p. 265). The second stage, or lifespan encounter, "is the discovery of a new question, issue, or challenge" (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001, p. 265) that causes an individual to seek better understanding or deeper meaning of their Black identity and the world around them. During Stage 3 the individual immerses himself, as in Cross' original theory of nigrescence, in order to find meaning in the lifespan encounter. Once understanding is gained, the enhanced identity is internalized in Stage 4, internalization of the enhancement. The end identity is Stage 5, enhanced foundational Black identity, which later may revert to Stage 1 if the individual is faced with another lifespan encounter. The Cross & Fhagen-Smith (2001) model considers racial identity in a cyclical way, and can be applied at any point in an adult's life or subsequent to any life change.

While Dr. Cross originally developed nigrescence to be used in the field of counseling, my personal experience developing a professional Black identity followed the model closely. When I was initially hired by an elite, predominantly White, private school I believed I was solely there to teach. Within a month I realized that I was "the Black teacher". During a meet-and-greet session with the school's board of directors and significant financial contributors a woman eagerly approached me. As she shook my hand she stated that she "remembered the last Negro" the school hired. I do not remember anything else from that afternoon as I was focusing on the fact that I was the "new Negro". From that point on I began to seek out other Black teachers in private schools. My first step was to join an AmeriCorps program called the MultiCultural Alliance (MCA). The MCA supported, tracked, and developed minority teachers employed by predominantly White private schools. I later began to attend as many diversity workshops

as I could, sat on diversity counsels and boards, and even became a diversity coordinator and worked with the school's administration to improve diversity, both in number and in climate. This study confirmed that my coping strategies were typical; and, therefore, the Cross & Fhagen-Smith (2001) model is utilized in the final discussion to understand the identity development of African American teachers employed by predominantly White independent schools.

Black Teachers' Experiences as Racial Tokens

Current studies focused on the experiences of Black teachers in predominantly White private schools are limited. There is a more extensive body of work on Black teachers working in predominantly White suburban schools; however, this literature is limited also. Most notably, Madsen & Mabokela (2000, 2003a, 2003b) have conducted several studies on African American teachers in predominantly White suburban schools. In 2000 Madsen & Mabokela employed Kanter's (1993) theory of tokenism as well as embedded group theory to "provide a descriptive analysis of how the organizational culture of predominantly European American schools and the cultural values that African American teachers bring into these schools affect their professional experiences where they are in the minority" (Madsen & Mabokela, 2000, p. 850). Brosnan (2001, 2001b, 2004, 2009) writes specifically on diversity in private schools focusing on the recruitment and retention of teachers of color. However, his work is not all research-based. Kane and Orsini have conducted research specifically on Black private school teachers; however, their research focuses on the school environment and not the experiences and identity development of the teachers. This study, focusing specifically on Black private school teachers, furthers the work of Brosnan (2001, 2001b, 2004, 2009), Kane & Orsini (2003),

Madsen & Mabokela (2000, 2003a, 2003b), and others by focusing not only on the group dynamic and effects of tokenism but also on the coping strategies and professional Black identity development of the Black teachers. This research will inform private school teachers, administrators, and associations on how best to foster and support these coping strategies that lead to a positive professional Black identity and teacher retention.

Shifting

Shifting is a coping strategy used to help people fit into the culture that is dominant in any given environment. However, shifting is most commonly associated with the tendency for minoritized people to “shift” their behavior and thinking to reflect that of the majority White upper class. When people shift they

change the way they think of things or the expectation they have for themselves.

Or they alter their outer appearance. They modify their speech. They shift in one direction at work each morning, then in another at home each night. They adjust the way they act in one context after another (Jones and Shorter-Gooden, 2003, p. 61).

Shifting is a common theme in this study and will be explored further in chapters 4 and 5.

Brief Review of Case Study Method

This qualitative study employed a case study model. The case study considers the phenomenon (Merriam, 1988), which in this case was the racial token experience of the Black teacher, in context, the context being the predominantly White private school. In addition, this study used a cross-case design. In the cross-case design cases are examined by theme in order to give a deeper look into the issue (Stake, 2006). Thus each individual case, or Black teacher’s experience, was examined in comparison to similar themes found

among the other cases. This macro level view of the cases allows the study to have a greater impact as the subjects come from a variety of schools in a variety of geographical locations with varying experiences, thus making the data more relatable to the reader.

Scope and Significance

Assumptions

There are many assumptions surrounding the issue of diversity. It is assumed that students who are educated in a diverse environment are better equipped for success in a global society. It is also assumed that children learn better in environments in which they see teachers and administrators that hail from the same racial background as them. This study is based on these assumptions and aims to address these areas of diversity by developing strategies to counter the negative effects of racial tokenism and thus increase the retention of minority teachers in private schools.

Limitations

This study is limited in sample size. Using case studies limits the sample size and thus may weaken the validity of the sample. Case studies, however, provide greater depth and understanding of the experiences of the participants. The potential weaknesses of this study will be further addressed in Chapter 3.

Scope

The scope of this study is limited to private schools across the continental United States. It is limited to Black private school teachers working in predominantly White and affluent schools.

Significance

This study has great potential to affect private school education. It has been discussed that one of the main goals of independent schools is to increase diversity. This study aims to provide research-based strategies for predominantly White schools in order to increase the retention of diverse candidates working in racial token situations. This increased retention will presumably lead to increased diverse enrollment. Educating greater numbers of minority students with independent school education and privilege can potentially change the economic health of future generations of minority families. In short, this study has the potential to improve the earning potential and academic achievement of minorities, and therefore, promote the dignity and development of the individual, community, and, eventually, society. It is my long term plan that this research on Black teachers in private schools be expanded to include Black independent school students and private schools' financial aid and scholarship practices. Ultimately, I plan to use my collective research to draft a research-based reparations-style bill that will give incentives, like tax breaks, to private schools that follow preferred practices in recruiting and retaining faculty and families of color (culturally relevant pedagogical practices and culturally supportive environments) and offer free space at their table to low-income minority students. Through these widespread independent school opportunities I hope to change the generational financial status and educational achievement of minority families with a low socioeconomic status.

Chapter Summary

The experiences of racial tokenism seem to be universal among Black teachers working in predominantly White schools, private or public. The degree by which they

experience racial tokenism, however, may vary. In addition, the strategies used to cope with and/or overcome these experiences vary also and have not previously been studied in depth. This chapter introduced Kanter's (1993) theory of tokenism and the purpose of this research to focus, not only on the experiences of racial tokenism, but also on the coping strategies used by the Black private school teacher to overcome barriers of difference. In addition, chapter 1 explained why diversity is vital to private schools, and how the token experience can negatively affect recruitment and retention of faculty and families of diverse backgrounds. The chapter concluded with a brief discussion of identity development and explained how the Black teacher can use Cross & Fhagen-Smith's (2001) model to help form a professional Black identity, and with a working definition of shifting.

Chapter 2 uses current and relative literature to summarize and discuss the experiences of Black teachers at predominantly White institutions, private, public school, as well as higher education. Chapter 2 also examines literature pertaining to private school education, including the benefits of private school education for all children, but specifically for African American children. It also explores the characteristics and demographics of elite private schools, and recruitment and retention programs aimed at Black teachers and students.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter 1 discussed Kanter's (1993) theory of tokenism and how tokenism can be experienced by Black private school teachers. The idea that coping strategies are used to combat the negative experiences of the token was introduced. In addition, Chapter 1 discussed the current trend, or push, for diversity in private schools. This increased focus on diversity leads to a discussion on the possible identity crisis and identity development of Black private school teachers. Chapter 2 continues this discussion by focusing on current literature regarding the experiences of racial tokenism of Black teachers in private schools, suburban public schools, and higher education.

“In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity – it is a pre-requisite” (Obama, 2009). Following this idea, a great education creates a pathway of opportunity for generations. Additionally, recruiting and retaining teachers of color, not only leads to greater recruitment of students of color (Brosnan 2001), but also creates a diverse learning environment for all students. The motivation for this research is to increase minority faculty recruitment and retention; however, to do so, private schools must address the experiences of tokenism. This chapter serves as a review of the literature available on the experiences of racial tokenism, introduced in Chapter 1. Finally, studies focusing on possible coping strategies are addressed to pinpoint the limitations of the current research in addressing the coping strategies needed to combat the negative effects of racial tokenism which were also introduced in Chapter 1 in the form of racial identity development and shifting.

As discussed in Chapter 1, retaining teachers of color in predominantly White schools has been a challenge due to the effects of their token status. This study aims to address this challenge of retention by focusing on the experiences of racial tokenism and providing research-based data and solutions to combat the negative effects of racial tokenism. The following sections discuss the current research on the Black teachers working in predominantly White institutions, specifically focusing on issues of recruitment and retention of minority teachers and the experiences and effects of racial tokenism.

Private School Teachers

Recent research focuses on the experiences of African American teachers in elite, predominantly White independent schools (Alexander & Moore 2008, Bisgaard 2003, and Hall & Stevenson 2007). Lewis (2011), program analyst for online services for the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) reported via email correspondence that its member schools employ 60,638 faculty members. Of those 60,638 teachers 2,139 are Black (Lewis, 2011). That translates to only 3.5% of all faculty members of NAIS schools being African American (Lewis, 2011). NAIS' Principles of Good Practices includes many practices relating to cultural respect, awareness, and representation. In addition, it addresses the importance of having a diverse staff, suggesting that schools "seek a diversity of cultural, national, and ethnic backgrounds in the recruitment of teachers and administrators" (NAIS, 2006). While the numbers remain low, most independent schools recognize the need for diversity and several have included diversity initiatives into their hiring and admissions practices. The diversity statement below from St. Mark's School is typical of independent schools.

St. Mark's School seeks to reflect the increasingly diverse world in which our students presently live and will live in the future. We intend to provide our students with a superior education in a caring community of students, parents, faculty, and staff that represents a variety of racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. We strive to ensure respect for all students regardless of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or economic background. In support of our objective, St. Mark's School: will continue to give special importance to the inclusion within our student body, our faculty, and our staff of persons from all groups within our society – particularly those that have experienced prejudice and disadvantage. (St. Mark's School Diversity Statement, 2003)

Diversity statements like the one above often are part of the school's overall mission. The purpose is to make diversity, an increase in diverse candidates both faculty and student, a priority for schools with historically few minority students and faculty. With low diversity numbers and a possible lack of support, why would a Black teacher want to work in an independent school?

Why Teach in an Independent School?

The reasons to teach at a private school can be summarized into three categories: seemingly unlimited resources, a teaching and learning environment free of distractions and serious discipline issues, and support and autonomy in the classroom. The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), considered “the national voice of independent schools and the center for collective action on their behalf” (NAIS, 2010, p.1), offers conferences and workshops throughout the country. These experiences offer

member schools and their faculty and administration opportunities to collaborate and continue to develop their education and skills. There are leadership institutes, the People of Color Conference, the diversity summer institute, the annual NAIS conference and more. In addition, NAIS publishes *Independent School* magazine and the ejournal, *Independent Teacher*, as well as many articles and books focusing on issues and concerns of private schools. NAIS also collects vital statistics on its member schools and nonmember schools. NAIS has 1,174 member schools (day and boarding) with a total enrollment of 568,628 students nationally. NAIS schools have an average 9 to 1 student to faculty ratio with an average class size (preschool to 12th grade) of 15 students. This low ratio means that teachers know each student's needs and abilities, which leads to differentiated learning environments. Low ratios also lead to a less stressed teacher who can design greater quality learning experiences with more meaningful outcomes. In addition to NAIS, there are regional and state-wide associations. These associations also offer training, mentoring, workshops, conferences, and publications for member schools and their faculty.

Many private schools either have a laptop fee or the cost is included in the tuition. This means each child, usually starting in middle school, has access to his or her own computer. There are often enough books for students to have one in class, one at home, and one for their tutors. In addition, high admission standards lead to a high caliber of student with very few, minor, discipline problems. Private schools are not accountable to standardized testing; therefore, teachers often have complete control over, and a budget for, curriculum and materials. Finally, because they are paying tuition for education,

private school parents are often much more involved and supportive of their children, the teacher, and the school.

Recruitment and Retention

As discussed previously, increased interest in creating diverse private schools fuels the flames of this research. Brosnan (2001) points out private schools have both a financial desire and moral obligation to increase their diversity. “This is a fundamental change in thinking for independent schools. Most are no longer content to merely serve the wealthy and upper-middle class. Increasingly, they find themselves considering their own role in broader social questions of equity and justice” (Brosnan, 2001, p. 470). Programs like the Phillips Academy Institute for Recruitment of Teachers (IRT) recruit potential teachers of color and guide them through the process of obtaining graduate degrees aimed at education careers (Brosnan, 2001). Private schools’ diversity initiatives are evidence that these schools understand the changing racial climate of the world and are concerned with their own future and the future of their students who will be working in a global community, and that these schools are aware that the current system of education in America does not offer a level playing field (Brosnan, 2001). However, the commitment to recruit teachers and administrators of color has not been equally matched by a commitment to retain them. While diversity initiatives are becoming the norm for independent schools, most schools have not created environments that are culturally supportive of faculty of color. “Individuals no longer need to be White, male, straight, Protestant, and able-bodied; they need only to act White, male, straight, Protestant, and able-bodied” (Brosnan, 2009, p.7). In addition, the low numbers of teachers of color at individual schools create a racial token experience for faculty of color. School

administrators have failed to create environments that support and develop minoritized teachers in these elite institutions. This study addresses this limitation and, using the experiences and strategies of Black private school teachers, suggests research-based practices that schools and associations can adopt in order to retain teachers of color and combat the negative effects of racial tokenism. Current literature aimed at private school minority recruitment and retention issues lacks empirical evidence and is often based upon assumptions and/or authors' experiences. This study extends these assumptions and encourages further research-based studies on diversity within private schools.

Black Teachers' Experiences of Racial Tokenism

Current literature regarding the Black teacher in predominantly White schools emphasizes the experiences of racial tokenism. However, few studies discuss the strategies Black teachers develop in order to combat the negative effects of racial tokenism. Empirical research focusing on the Black private school teacher's experiences of racial tokenism, coping strategies used to deal with racial tokenism and the development of a healthy professional Black identity is near impossible to find. The following sections represent the current literature on Black teachers facing racial tokenism in their schools.

Predominantly White Private Schools

Research on the experiences of Black private school teachers is limited at best. Faculty researchers tend to focus on public school education and private school associations lack truly empirical studies. However, a few researchers have utilized the characteristics of racial tokenism to examine the experiences of Black private school teachers. McDonald, Harvey, & Brown's (2005) qualitative study indicated that the

minority faculty members felt highly visible. The study examined the experiences of minority teachers in independent schools using the theory of marginalization, which is very similar to tokenism in that it involves minority members' feelings of isolation and displacement in situations in which they are expected to assimilate. The researchers recruited minority teachers and heads of schools from the Associations of Independent Maryland Schools (AIMS); and conducted five focus-group interviews, one composed of only the school heads. One participant discussed how being the only one with different physical characteristics makes her visible: "Being the only ethnic person at the school, you know when you're the only one you sort of stick out when you're walking down the hallway" (McDonald et al, p. 8). The authors discuss how this increased visibility creates performance pressures and a need to prove the teacher's worth and ability. One participant even stated that she has had parents inquire about her credentials. This performance pressure may cause the token teacher to develop a highly polished, over-performing professional persona (McDonald et al, p. 12).

Feeling highly visible was an experience of not only teachers, but also Black diversity administrators. Hall & Stevenson (2007) discuss the "twoness" that results from being highly visible: having to be conscious of the fact that you are not just an employee of the school, but you are also the Black employee (p. 11). They studied the experiences of five African American diversity practitioners, an administrative role, in independent schools with 5-26% percent Black student enrollment and 4-10% Black faculty. The Northeast-situated schools were all located in a large urban area. A series of interviews were conducted, and the interviewer and interviewees had a two to three year researcher/researchee relationship on a related study. The authors used Kanter's (1993)

tokenism theory and marginalization theory as a framework. One participant referred to the experience of isolation as being a “visitor”, “not full club members, you know, with all the privileges” (Hall & Stevenson, 2007, p. 11). The *privileges* referred to by the participant include being accepted as competent teacher hired for your ability, being an individual with strengths and weaknesses, and likes and dislikes.

The experiences resulting from being highly visible are often the first reported by respondents in the studies. It is the blatant nature of being the “only one”, and the resulting performance pressures which seem to be most noticeable and understood by members of the dominant group. However, Kanter’s (1993) last two characteristics, assimilation and contrast, are not as mainstream as they are rooted less in the situation, but more in the actions taken by members of the dominant group.

McDonald, Harvey, & Brown (2005) found that minority teachers in independent schools not only felt the sense of heightened visibility discussed earlier, but simultaneously felt a contrasting sense of invisibility. Their individuality was overlooked; they were instead given the role of “expert ethnic” (McDonald et al, 2005, p. 9). They reported being viewed as the go-to person for diversity work and issues and for both minority students and parents. Being pushed into this role is not necessarily seen negatively by minority teachers; however, it is “an extra burden and can lead to burn out” (McDonald et al, 2005, p. 10).

Kane & Orsini (2003) discovered an experience similar to mine. They surveyed 691 teachers of color employed by independent schools in order “to determine which factors in the environment of independent schools and within schools themselves correlate most strongly with the presence of teachers of color” (Kane & Orsini, 2003, p.

56). While participants of this survey identified that role entrapment and being highly visible resulted in higher demands being placed on them, the experience of boundary heightening was specifically discussed. “Sometimes, sitting in the lounge they continued their closely knit conversations as if I wasn’t there. Finally, I stopped going to the teachers’ lounge. I felt it’s okay to be part of the group as long as I stay on the periphery... They don’t know that the extra effort I’ve made to get to know the children I teach is exactly the same effort I wish someone would extend to me” (Kane & Orsini, 2003, p. 61).

Supporting the examples above of visibility, assimilation, and contrast, Knopp et al (2003) asked the following question: “Are the school’s expectations different for you as a faculty member of color than for other faculty members? In what ways?” (p. 89). The researchers interviewed a total of 43 heads of schools, diversity coordinators, and teachers of color who were employed by eleven independent schools in New York City, identified because of different achievements in the area of diversity. Four employees from each school were interviewed in order to compile *Best Practices* for hiring and retaining teachers of color in independent schools. This review focuses on the responses of the twenty teachers of color to the question stated above that exposed token experiences of role entrapment, visibility, and boundary heightening. The majority (twelve) responded affirmatively. Eight cited that they were expected to be the Black expert (role entrapment) by their colleagues, students, and parents. In addition, five participants felt that there was pressure to outperform (visibility) their White colleagues. “You’ve got to be good, really good, because they expect that you won’t be” (Knopp et al, 2003, p. 89). Finally, one commented on her need to fit in due to boundary

heightening. “I’m a different person when I walk into this school. I have to change the way I walk and the way I act. I am from the West Indies and Brooklyn, and I have to leave those parts at the door. They don’t want me for all that” (Kopp, et al, 2003, p. 90).

The current research is limited and needs expansion. This study begins to fill the gap in research on minority teachers and students in private schools. This research area may be vital to increasing the diversity of private schools, and thus creating greater access to exceptional education and opportunity for minority students.

Predominantly White Suburban Schools

More extensive research has been conducted on racial tokenism in suburban public schools. As introduced in Chapter 1, Madsen and Mabokela (2000, 2003a, and 2003b) studied Black teachers in predominantly White public schools. Mabokela & Madsen’s (2003a) qualitative study combined multiple theories (including Kanter’s (1993) theory of tokenism and embedded intergroup theory) used to research minorities (including women) in “predominantly majority organizations” (Mabokela & Madsen, 2003a p.90). The participants were seven male and seven female Black teachers from predominantly White, desegregated, suburban schools in the Midwest, and the findings were grouped by gender. Participants were interviewed using “intense open-ended interviews” (Mabokela & Madsen, 2003a, p. 93), and follow-ups reported that they were victims of role entrapment. An overall belief by the participants was that the school district had hired them to fill a quota created by school desegregation because they were seen as African Americans who were less aggressive and more able to conform to majority norms. They felt that because they collectively were viewed as “one monolithic group” (Mabokela & Madsen, 2003a, p. 105), they were not treated as individuals and

were expected to fill the role of race expert at their individual schools. This resulted in the participants believing that their primary role was to be a representative of the Black experience and perspective. One participant reported that “these teachers here think I know everything about Black children, but I never grew up in the city and have never experienced the difficulties these students have had. I have to gain the trust of these students because sometimes they think I am not an advocate for them. I have to go out of my way with some students to identify with them. Yet, the teachers expect me to have success with every Black student, and I find that really troubling” (Mabokela & Madsen, 2003a, p. 104). Assuming a stereotypical cultural identity of all Black faculty and students causes the Black teachers to be trapped in the role of mentor and expert of all things Black.

Mabokela & Madsen’s (2003a) study also uncovered the experience of boundary heightening; however, it manifested itself in differences in teaching styles. The authors stated that the participants’ perceptions were that their school cultures were not supportive of their culturally relevant teaching. Therefore, boundary heightening occurred due to perceived differences in pedagogical practices, specifically instruction and management, between White and Black faculty. Their study also indicated that because of the boundaries that kept them from fully interacting with their White colleagues and the fear that speaking out would intensify the boundaries, Black teachers stayed silent even when they recognized that teaching practices of Whites either did not work with Black students or were detrimental to Black students. “Because of the boundary heightening that occurred at the school, many of the participants were often

silent on how students of color were taught at the school” (Mabokela & Madsen, 2003a, p. 101).

Madsen & Mabokela (2000) studied seven African American teachers from four small, predominantly White, Midwestern public school districts. The schools (elementary, middle and high school level) all had less than 25% Black student enrollment, and less than 5% of their teachers were African American. Looking at the experiences of Black teachers, this study found tokenism, resulting from the organizational culture of the schools, manifested in performance pressures due to exaggerated visibility, boundary heightening, and role entrapment. In addition, the authors examined the coping mechanisms of the teachers. As in studies reviewed previously, African American teachers in Madsen & Mabokela’s (2000) study reported that boundary heightening occurred due to “pedagogical mismatch” (p. 867). Pedagogical mismatch refers to the differences in the pedagogical practices between Black and White teachers. Aligned with reports from previous studies, participants stated that differences were seen in instruction, discipline and management styles, and the expectations of Black students.

Next, issues of role entrapment were identified by participants. The schools studied by Madsen & Mabokela (2000) had experienced desegregation. African American teachers were hired by the district to “attain racial balance” (Madsen & Mabokela, 2000, p. 872) within their schools. The black teachers believed they were hired because administrators saw them as less threatening and more prone to assimilating to the school norms. Assimilation was reported to be expected by the schools. One African American teacher stated, “There’s a very small percentage of Blacks here who

are outspoken. There is this hidden pressure to conform or they make life so difficult you have to leave to save your sense of purpose” (Madsen & Mabokela, 2000, p. 873).

Madsen & Mabokela (2000) identified four subthemes within the theme of visibility leading to performance pressures: “coping with automatic notice, symbolic consequences and isolation, discrepant characteristics, and cultural switching” (p. 859). First, teachers reported that, because they were the only one and physically looked different, they had to deal with the fact that all of their actions were highly visible. They stated that they “could not remain anonymous” (Madsen & Mabokela, 2000, p. 859) and felt as if they were denied privacy. In order to cope with the constant scrutiny teachers reported that they relied on their “strong sense of purpose” ((Madsen & Mabokela, 2000, p. 859) for working at their schools. In addition they relied on their cultural identity to counter the effects of their token status. “You have to be secure enough about yourself and that the standards you are setting are standards that not only are appropriate for your kids, but for all kids” ((Madsen & Mabokela, 2000, p. 860).

Symbolic consequences and isolation refers to the idea that African American teachers in predominantly White schools feel responsible for being a representative of their entire race. Although their colleagues seemed to see them as the *exception* to the Black stereotype, participants reported that they still were called upon to answer questions about racial stereotypes. They were seen by their colleagues as *different* from other Black people, but African American teachers felt loyal to their race causing social isolation. However, this social isolation was reported to be used as a coping strategy. “They often ate lunch in their rooms rather than spending their energies listening to racial slurs about minority children by their colleagues” (Madsen & Mabokela, 2000, p. 862).

The study stated that participants felt straddled between discrepant characteristics. Colleagues and parents implied that they were hired because they were Black, so participants felt pressured to prove that they were worthy of respect. The authors stated that the teachers' "physical presence often overshadowed their competence as teachers" (Madsen & Mabokela, 2000, p. 865).

Finally, the study addressed cultural switching as a coping strategy employed by the participants. Cultural switching is commonly known as code switching, and refers to an individual's ability to switch between different languages, dialects, and/or cultural norms depending on the situation or people the individual encounters. Most often cultural switching is identified with the ability of individuals from minoritized groups to interact within the dominant culture. For example, African Americans will often speak to each other using Ebonics, but will code switch to Standard English when Whites are around. In this case, the Black teachers studied their environments and learned to either use more "diplomatic processes" (Madsen & Mabokela, 2000, p. 865) in order to fit in, or a direct assertive approach to challenge injustices. The diplomatic approach yielded better working relationships, while the direct approach created more confident teachers.

Kelly (2007) studied the work experiences of six Black teachers working in schools with at least 80% of the student enrollment being White, and 5% or lower Black student enrollment. In addition, the schools had no more than two Black faculty members. Kelly (2007) interviewed each teacher and observed three of the teachers, one at each school level- elementary, middle, and high. The interviews were coded using themes from tokenism: performance pressure (visibility), role entrapment, and boundary heightening; and for references to the civil rights ideology. While participants in Kelly's

(2007) study discuss token experiences, they have found a higher purpose that has allowed them to feel successful and an important part of their schools. One participant recognized that, although his heightened visibility often made him stick out like a “pink poodle” (Kelly, 2007, p. 237), the few Black students at the school “very tangibly and in ways they don’t know” (Kelly, 2007, p. 237) needed his presence at the school. Another Black teacher stated that although she felt performance pressures, when she is successful at proving herself to the school and community, it is “another way to eliminate racism” (Kelly, 2007, p. 235).

Experiences with boundary heightening were also found. A participant reported that she confronted White teachers about their lack of effort to educate themselves about multicultural education. The teachers repeatedly came to her for multicultural lessons. The Black teacher was not put off by the boundaries between her and her White colleagues. She felt secure about her own abilities because she reported that her principal told her that he did not hire her because of her color, but because she was good (Kelly, 2007, p. 239).

Two male participants in Kelly’s (2007) study recognized the threat of role entrapment by their colleagues; however, they choose to not feel trapped by defining their role “as broadening the images and dismantling stereotypes of the Black male- from hostile to pleasant, from uneducated to intelligent, and from immoral to moral” (p. 248). Following this idea, one Black male teacher sees his role as the token Black male as a way to change his students’ perceptions of the Black males that they only see on television by making “a Black man human” (Kelly, 2007, p. 246).

The current research on racial tokenism in public schools illustrates that the experiences of Black teachers transcends school type. The following section addresses the literature on the racial token experiences of Black faculty at predominantly White colleges and universities.

Predominantly White Institutions of Higher Education

This section focuses on the experiences of African American faculty in predominantly White, higher education institutions (PWIs). These studies are included to illustrate that experiences of teachers of color transcend grade level. According to the US Department of Education (2009), Black faculty made up only 7% of all higher education faculty in 2007, and only 4% of tenured faculty

Relying on Critical Race Theory as a conceptual framework, Patton & Catching (2009) used counter story as a basis for their research. Thirteen African American student affairs faculty members, male and female, of PWIs across the country agreed to write narratives for the study. They were given the following questions as optional prompts for their narratives: “How would you describe your research agenda? How would you describe your teaching experience?; and In what ways do your identities (race, gender, sexuality, etc.) shape your experiences as a faculty member?” (Patton & Catching, 2009, p. 717).

The most prevalent issue for the participants of the Patton & Catching (2009) study was one of visibility. “There’s so few African American men that perhaps they just had to get ‘one’. For example, when prospective students visit the program, it’s essential that they meet me. If I’m not around during prospective visit days it is *absolutely* noticed” (Patton & Catching, 2009, p. 721). The number of African American faculty

members in higher education is even less than in K-12 schools. In addition the participants reported that their students were 85%-90% White (Patton & Catching, 2009, p. 718).

In addition to feeling highly visible, respondents reported being given the diversity courses based solely on the fact that they were African American. However, they embraced this role, and felt that “one good thing is that my race brings a certain level of credibility in the classroom when it comes to discussing racial issues” (Patton & Catching, 2009, p. 721). Being pigeon-holed as the diversity expert seemed to create a little resentment; however, the participants seemed to enjoy teaching their diversity courses.

The participants discussed boundary heightening in the form of tenure assignments. While they knew the written policies of their schools for awarding tenure, they were all aware of unwritten rules, based on race. They discuss going above and beyond the requirements for tenure only to see White colleagues receive it for doing less (Patton & Catching, 2009, p. 718). “As an African American scholar, I never feel as if I can afford to have less of anything. So I’m in this system of hidden and coded language that I’m learning to understand but feel less comfortable about every day” (Patton & Catching, 2009, p. 718).

In addition to the Patton & Catching (2009) study, Alexander & Moore (2007) used narratives to address the experiences and coping strategies of Black faculty at predominantly White institutions of higher education. Based on the theories of marginalization and tokenism, the authors detail their personal narratives and the narrative of a Black colleague. Only one narrative from this study was included in this

review. The author's personal narrative was not included as it was grounded more in perception and feelings about the actions of his Dean.

The African American female professor taught at an institution with fewer than 75 Black students out of the 2000 students enrolled. She was the only full-time Black faculty member. She reported experiencing effects of heightened visibility in "the pressure to *represent* when asked to attend functions where she knew in all likelihood that she would be the only African American or one of few" (Alexander & Moore, 2007, p.10). Her sensitivity to her visibility made her "vigilant about what she said to whom, whether they were faculty, staff, students, or administrators" (Alexander & Moore, 2007, pp. 9-10). Boundary heightening was evidenced between the Black professor and her White students. She stated that a White student had inquired if she had been hired because of Affirmative Action. She also reported that students had commented on their evaluations of her that "she *always talks and gives too many assignments about Black people and shows her true colors*" (Alexander & Moore, 2007, p. 10). Finally, the experience of role entrapment was evident. She was assigned Black jobs which included serving on both the Affirmative Action and the Martin Luther King celebration committees, advising Black and African students formally and informally, and serving as the advisor for the African American student organization.

Experiences of racial tokenism are openly expressed by Black faculty of PWIs. The two studies above found experiences of visibility, boundary heightening, and role entrapment. If the experiences of African American teachers of color transcend grade level, then a study focusing on the coping strategies and identity development of Black teachers offers solutions that, too, transcend grade level. This study begins to fill that gap

by offering research-based theories on coping strategies of faculty who experience racial tokenism. This study extends the present literature and can be considered as a foundation for future studies focused on racial tokenism within higher education.

Filling the Gap

The majority of current research details the Black teacher's experiences as a racial token. Some research may expand to report how the Black teacher has dealt with those experiences. Both Kelly's (2007) Madsen & Mabokela's (2000) studies take the experiences of racial tokenism a step further than the others. They examined not only the experiences of African American teachers, but also a few strategies used to counter the negative experiences. They did not, however, discuss how their participants developed a professional Black identity to help guide them through their encounters with the effects of being a racial token.

Black Identity Development and Documented Coping Strategies

This research study focuses on the development of the Black private school teacher's professional racial identity and coping strategies. Many of the participants discussed experiences that closely followed the Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2001) modified nigrescence recycling model. This model, introduced in Chapter 1, represents the identity development of Black adults by beginning with their fundamental Black identity. This fundamental Black identity is the Black teacher's identity as an African American. It does not assume thorough identity work on the part of the teacher, but merely that as a Black American the teacher has a sense of his/herself as a Black person living in a racially charged society, and that the Black teacher possesses skills that guide his/her interactions and reactions as a minoritized citizen. Employment at a

predominantly White private school will be associated with stage 2 of the Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) model. Stage 2 is the point where the Black teacher is challenged by the question “What is my role as a racial token?”, and begins to develop his/her own professional Black identity to address this issue. This research focuses on how the Black private school teacher progresses to develop a new professional Black identity that guides him/her through the negative effects of being a racial token and allows him/her to develop coping strategies.

Section Summary

In summary, this study, documenting the experiences of tokenized teachers in independent schools across the country includes teachers’ coping strategies, specifically the strategy of developing a professional racial identity. This research may aid in the creation of practices and programs aimed at the retention of teachers of color and institutional change. This study can then be expanded to research the experiences of other skewed groups, including foreign teachers, teachers from other racial and ethnic groups, and openly homosexual teachers.

Review of the Methodological Research

In the above studies, and in most studies identifying teachers’ experiences and perceptions, qualitative methods, specifically case studies, are the most preferred research method. Kelly (2007) conducted six case study interviews and school observations and then looked for themes of tokenism. Hall & Stevenson (2007) conducted interviews during an eight month time frame. Mabokela & Madsen (2000 & 2003) conducted case studies for their research using open-ended interviews and follow-up interviews. McDonald, Harvey & Brown (2005) conducted group interviews for their study. This

study extends the methodology of the above mentioned studies by employing a similar qualitative approach, using case studies that are examined across the cases. Each case is compiled using individual interviews and group interviews; however, the cases also include data collected through journal entries and surveys.

Chapter Summary

Access to the best education available is the key to reducing the achievement gap between Blacks and Whites in the United States. Private schools find themselves centrally located in this solution and have the desire to increase their minority enrollment and employment, achieving their diversity goals. The literature in Chapter 2 addressed the issues of Black teacher recruitment and retention, and the effects of the racial token experience on the Black teacher. In addition, Chapter 2 identified the lack of empirical research and research-based solutions in the field. This study is presented as a means to begin to address this lack of research and research-based strategies.

Chapter 3 details the approach and methodology behind this study. It will discuss how a qualitative cross-case design was used to research the Black private school teacher's experiences as a racial token. Chapter 3 lays out the design of the study by looking at the parameters for participants and the setting. Finally, Chapter 3 details the data collection, analyses and interpretations that were utilized for this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter 2 set the stage for this study by discussing barriers to increasing diversity in private schools. The current demographic makeup of private schools was discussed as it pertains to racial tokenism and the recruitment and retention of minority faculty. The current literature on the experiences of Black private school teachers was reviewed, and the limitations in the current research were revealed.

This chapter will detail the approach and methodology of the study which is aimed at extending and filling the gaps in the current literature on the racial token experience and strategies and identity development of the Black teacher working in predominantly White private schools.

Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this emergent qualitative multiple case study is to contribute to and extend the current literature on Black teacher experiences by examining the experiences of Black teachers working in predominantly White private schools. This study identifies their coping strategies, support systems, and professional Black identity development. The experiences are examined under the lens of Kanter's (1993) theory of tokenism, which was developed to describe the experiences of members of the minority in a skewed group (Kanter, 1993). This study employs the specific theory of Black racial tokenism, which refers to the experiences of African Americans working in a historically White institution or organization in which they are the numerical minority (at least a 3:17 ratio, but in most cases a much greater ratio). Using this definition, any Black teacher working in a predominantly White organization (17:3) is considered as having a token

experience. In addition, this study examines the ways that Black racial identity, as it is theorized by Cross (2009), guides the actions, reactions and interactions (Cross, 2009) of these teachers as a result of, or coping strategy for, their experiences of tokenism. Finally, this study may influence the ways that administration, independent school associations, and faculty, specifically senior minority faculty, can create a teaching environment that will increase the support of Black teachers.

Research Questions

This study is based on one main and three ancillary research questions aimed at providing greater understanding of the experiences of racial tokenism by Black private school teachers. This includes their coping strategies and programs and experiences provided by colleagues, schools and associations. In addition, the research addresses the development of a professional Black identity and issues pertaining to the retention of Black private school teachers.

Main Research Question:

How do Black independent school teachers describe their experiences?

Three Ancillary Questions:

1. What coping strategies do Black teachers develop and/or use to navigate the independent school environment?
2. What roles, if any, do/can colleagues, administrators, and associations play in building a support network for Black independent school teachers?
3. How do Black teachers develop a professional Black identity as token employees?

These research questions guide this study and are expanded upon in the findings and discussions that follow in chapter 4 and 5. The main goal of this study is to provide

research-based solutions to issues of racial tokenism, minority faculty support, and minority teacher identity development.

Approach to the Study

The current research in the field, discussed in Chapter 2, has been conducted primarily using qualitative studies. Qualitative studies allow the researcher insight into an individual case or a phenomenon. The qualitative study offers a human understanding of experiences and thinking of participants in a study. This insight is necessary in studies like this one that aim to understand the experiences, coping strategies and identity development of individuals. Ethnological research was briefly considered because of the researchers background in sociology. Ethnography, while providing broad understanding of a cultural phenomenon (the cultural phenomenon would be the experience of racial tokenism), does not provide a deep enough look in to the individual participant that this study requires. It is for these reasons that qualitative methods were chosen for this study exploring the experiences of Black teachers working in predominantly White schools.

More specifically, the case study design allowed the study of individual participant cases independently and evaluates them against each other to identify themes. Case studies consider the phenomenon (Black teachers' experiences) in context (teaching in predominantly White private schools) (Merriam, 1988). Stake (2006) refers to a cross-case design in which cases (Black teachers) are related by theme (teaching in a predominantly White private schools), and are thus interpreted "across the cases" (p. 39) to give a more robust understanding of the issue. The case study design allowed for deep understanding of each participant's experiences and strategies, while allowing for analysis across the cases to identify themes.

According to Hancock & Algozzine (2006) my research could also be considered a sociological case study, as it explores the private school as an institution while focusing on the interactions of the Black teachers with their White counterparts, the administration, the students, and the families. In order to accurately reflect the experiences of Black teachers in predominantly White independent schools, this study utilizes a multiple, cross-case design, based in sociological case study research. In conducting such a case study, the individual cases are each constructed through analysis of the data, and then compared across the cases to find similarities and differences in the experiences.

Role of the Researcher

I was the only researcher on this study. I created all surveys, prompts, and interview questions. In addition, I collected all data to include conducting all interviews and recruiting all participants. My role was to conduct research and I did not participate as a faculty or community member at any of the schools. I collected, stored, and analyzed all data. In order to create a safe environment for my participants, I contacted each potential participant by phone and spoke for approximately thirty minutes about my background and my research interests. I established rapport prior to asking for consent and prior to any data collection. During this initial call I went over the consent form, which they had received a few days prior via email, with each participant in depth. When they decided that they were interested in participating, my study subjects then efaxed or emailed their signed consent forms to me. I secured a private, password encrypted, wireless internet hotspot for use outside of my secure home network, and never used public internet providers.

Methodology

The following section provides the parameters for the methodology. This includes detailing the setting, participants, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, and research timeline.

Setting

All of the research was conducted within the continental United States. The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) offers its member schools diversity workshops, conferences, and other resources. NAIS promotes diversity in its member schools, and requires member schools to report their enrollment and faculty diversity annually. Because of the availability of public statistical data from NAIS and its member schools, and the access that member schools have to diversity support, all of the research was conducted in NAIS member private schools. Schools were chosen from the Northeast, the West Coast, and the South in order to get a variety of experiences across the United States. The Midwest was not included due to the inability to recruit teachers from this area. In addition, schools were chosen from urban and suburban areas only. Rural areas are not included because the isolated nature of the rural school may not lend to full participation in diversity workshops, conferences, mentor programs, etc. offered by independent school associations. A group interview was conducted via video conferencing. Most of the correspondence was done electronically and via telephone contact.

Participants and Rationale for Participant Sample

This study focuses on the experiences of Black teachers in predominantly White independent NAIS member schools; therefore, the participants are composed of a total of

nine Black teachers. Participants were identified using non-probability, purposeful (criterion based) sampling based on quota/comparable case selection (identified above); and were identified using LinkedIn connections in an online snowball manner, and using personal connections in the private school community. Friends, mentors, and former colleagues currently working in private schools and private school associations were contacted for access to participants. None of the participants were people whom the researcher had prior contact with. The participants were identified and contacted during the summer and early fall of 2012, and data collection from participants began at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year. The study was limited to nine cases to make it manageable for cross-case analysis and for the time allotted for a dissertation. Initially, fourteen possible participants were contacted; two of whom consented, but dropped out of the study for personal reasons. An additional potential participant did not consent, and two consented and completed the study but their information is used on a limited basis and identified as such as one identified as minority, but not Black, and the other worked at a predominantly White and affluent, suburban public school. The nine main participants consisted of two males and seven females. Four participants were from schools located in the Northeastern United States, three from the West coast, and two from the South. Participants have varying experience working in private schools. Three participants have one year to three years of experience in private schools (novices), three have four to ten years of experience (mid-level), and three have more than ten years of private school teaching experience (long-term). Participants' backgrounds, to include educational and economic, and level of education were identified during the interview and survey process, and will be discussed in the participant profiles. Background and

level of education were not a determining factor for inclusion in the study, however they are used in the analysis.

Data Collection and Timeline

Data collected included individual and group participant interviews, participant written responses to prompts, an initial background information survey, and a closing survey near the end of the study. A secure Facebook group was established, and as each participant completed the consent form they were added to the Facebook group. Data collection began with an initial survey distributed via participants' email. Once each participant completed the survey the results were reviewed, and contact was made with each participant to set-up a phone/Skype interview. Interviews generally lasted for one hour. As each interview was completed it was transcribed. If questions arose after reviewing the interviews, participants were contacted via email for follow up. Next, the first two prompts were distributed for each participant to respond to via email. Prompts were distributed approximately three weeks apart. Seven of the nine participants responded to the first prompt, and four of the nine responded to the second. The next step was the group interview which was conducted using GoToMeeting, an online teleconferencing/videoconferencing tool. About four of the participants were available for the group interview. The final survey was distributed the day after the group interview. Six of the participants completed the final survey, which included the third written response. As each final survey was received, a closure email was sent to each participant that thanked them for their support, and additionally promised to share the final approved study with them. Survey Monkey was used to administer the surveys and one of the three written responses (using open ended prompts).

Participant interviews were the basis for each case study. One-on-one and group interviews provided invaluable dialogue and bonding; therefore, interviews make up the bulk of the data collected. They provided in-depth information and understanding of the experiences, development, and thinking of each participant. The written responses were included to allow the participants written expression of thoughts and ideas. They were also used to ask general follow-up questions from the interviews. Surveys provide ratable data and will be used throughout this study to scale responses and provide background data. Finally, a private Facebook group page was created and monitored for participants to interact, post questions and successes in a group forum.

Timeline. The following is a basic timeline that was developed to guide the study from beginning to completion. All dates are approximate.

05-01-2012	06-01-2012	Develop interview questions, processes, complete IRB, and prepare for data collection
06-01-2012	09-01-2012	Identify and orient participants
09-01-2012	2-15-2012	Collect data from participants including group interview
1-01-2012	02-15-2013	Analyze data and begin writing
02-15-2013	03-19-2013	Finish writing

Pilot interviews. Prior to interviewing the case study participants pilot interview questions were created and tested with former Black independent school teachers with whom the researcher had known from past employment. These former teachers have either moved on to administration, left independent schools, or have retired from teaching. The purpose of the pilot interviews was to help create questions that would lead to understanding individual experiences. Any hint of the researcher's own biases and

expectations were limited from the interview questions through feedback and experience with the pilot interview questions. In addition, the review of the pilot interview questions developed questions that had not previously been thought of. Overall, the pilot interview questions, as well as the initial survey, helped to create the final interview questions.

(Pilot interview questions can be found in Appendix B.)

Case study interviews. Once the interview questions were formulated, interviews were conducted with each teacher. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. Initial interviews were followed up by email questions for clarity when necessary. Interviews were conducted during the fall of 2012, after the consent form had been signed and after the initial survey had been completed. (Case study interview questions can be found in Appendix C.) Interviews were conducted via phone at the participants' convenience.

Case study written responses. Participants were asked to create written responses to prompts throughout the 2012-2013 school year. Prompts focused on the three main research areas: experiences, coping strategies, and professional identity. The purpose of these written responses was to provide participants the opportunity to, not only respond verbally via case study interviews, but to reflect on their experiences using written language. Written responses were included in the data collection because people are often more comfortable responding in either oral or written form. Written responses asked similar questions as were addressed in the interviews, but provided respondents the opportunity to write their thoughts privately and in their own time. Three prompts were responded to during the course of the study, but after the initial case study interview had been conducted. (Journal prompts can be found in Appendix D.)

Case study surveys. Two surveys were conducted during the study. The first was an initial survey that collected background, work, education, etc. information from each participant. This survey was conducted immediately after the consent form had been signed, and prior to the case study interview. The second survey was given at the conclusion of the study. It was used to collect information based on the 2012-2013 school year regarding job satisfaction, participation in professional development, mentoring, and more. The purpose of this study was to provide me with final information regarding support, job satisfaction and more. (Case study survey 1 can be found in Appendix E, and case study survey 2 can be found in Appendix F.)

School administrator interviews. In order to understand what diversity initiatives are in place and what support may be offered to faculty of color, two independent school administrators were interviewed. Originally, administrators from the case study participants' schools were to be interviewed; however, due to the participants' desire to remain anonymous, none of the participants' schools or administrators were contacted. Neither administrator interviewed worked with any of the participants. This lack of contact allowed the participants the anonymity and freedom to express any feelings, thoughts or experiences during our interviews without fear of reprisal from their administrators. The two administrators whom were contacted were recruited through LinkedIn, one via participant referral. The other is an administrator at the researcher's first school; however, he was not there at the same time. He was chosen because the researcher was familiar with the prior climate of the school and was able to analyze any changes in the school's racial climate and discover how these changes were achieved. (Administrator interview questions can be found in Appendix G.)

Group interview. The group interview was originally planned to take place during the annual People of Color Conference (PoCC). However, only two of the nine main participants attended the conference. Instead, in February, 2013, a group interview was conducted via video conference and GoToMeeting. During the group interview participants who were logged in to their computers were able to see my computer screen and follow a PowerPoint presentation that was the guide for the interview. This interview was recorded and transcribed and used in the research that follows. The purpose of the group interview was to allow participants to share ideas and discuss their concerns and experiences with their fellow participants. In addition, the group interview allowed me to observe the group dynamics and analyze each participant's responses in relation to the others. (Group interview questions taken directly from the PowerPoint outline can be found in Appendix H.)

Technological Impact

A surprising result was the impact technology had on this study. As stated earlier, the study was designed to include participants from many different parts of the continental United States. In order to recruit participants with limited resources, the professional networking site, LinkedIn, was utilized to identify and initially contact most of the potential participants. In addition, independent school web sites were used to identify participants. Teachers who were identified as Black based solely by their profile photos on their school web sites were also contacted via their school email addresses. Technology played a major role in data collection. Participant interviews were conducted using Skype, GoToMeeting, and cellular phones, and were recorded using computer programs and/or digital USB recorders. In addition, participants who had personal

Facebook accounts were linked via the researcher and a private group. Information was shared and connections were made through this Facebook page. Daily access to, and personal interaction with the participants on Facebook allowed for bonds of trust and friendship to form between the researcher and the participants. This allowed for greater disclosure during the data collection phase. Technology allowed the researcher to connect personally with all of the participants without an in-person meeting. Email was also used regularly to communicate with participants. Initially, email was used to initiate communication. Email was also used to send out the links to the online surveys and the first two prompt responses, which were also returned to the researcher via email. As previously stated, both surveys were conducted online using Survey Monkey. In addition, upon completion of either a phone or Skype review of the informed consent form, signed consent forms were returned to the researcher using efax and/or email. Finally, both during the transcription and writing processes, email was used frequently to fill in gaps and clarify participants' responses. Email allowed the researcher to get quick responses from each individual participant as needed. These email responses were copied to word documents and included in the study. Technology allowed the researcher, located in the Southwest, to interact on a daily and personal basis with participants located across the continental United States.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data analysis was conducted using triangulation of the surveys, interviews, and written responses. Triangulation is used to cross examine multiple types of data, in my case surveys, interviews, and written responses, in order to for me to be confident in, and verify, my results through more than one means of data collection. There were two

hypotheses. First, Black teachers working at predominantly White and affluent private schools will experience tokenism, as defined by Kanter (1993). The second hypothesis was that the professional Black identity of these teachers would follow the Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) modified nigrescence recycling model. Data was analyzed by looking for themes, focusing on the teachers' experiences, coping strategies, and identity development. Four themes emerged in the research. The first two themes confirmed the hypotheses. The third theme revealed that the participants had similar coping strategies. The final theme revealed an unexpected trend relating to the participants' educational and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were followed using the guideline of the Research Protocol Proposal Form, which was approved prior to collecting data and recruiting participants. All research was conducted by the sole researcher. In order to protect confidentiality, data was stored on multiple storage devices that were stored in the researcher's home in a lock box when not in use, and on the researcher's personal computer, which is password protected. Participants signed consent forms prior to participating in the study. Participants were given pseudonyms. Schools will only be identified by vague geographical location. (The IRB can be found in Appendix A).

Limitations

This research is personal to me and my life experiences. Because of this personal connection I remained aware of my feelings during the research in order to keep them separate from the study. However, this personal connection also kept me focused on the research and the results as I truly believe that the results will be life-changing for some

Black professionals and for some schools. Following this idea, a future study based on a school that has used this study to retain minority teachers will provide closure and document the implementation of the findings.

Limiting the study to private schools may create the belief that the experiences only translate to private schools. However, I have chosen to focus on private schools because of their general interest in diversity and the recruitment and retention of Black teachers in predominantly White schools, and due to the flexibility that private schools have, as it relates to research participation, as they do not report to a school district. In addition, while having a cross-national study may lead to varied experiences by culture or region, limiting the study to NAIS member private schools in urban and suburban locations offers control. Holding a group interview allowed participants to discuss their experiences together and provided me in depth insight on possible regional differences and similarities. Finally, an additional study conducted in predominantly White public schools will extend this study and make the racial token experience and coping strategies more generalizable.

Discussions of race and race relations are often uncomfortable. In order to make the participants comfortable with responding openly I allowed participants to remain anonymous and to participate with the study without any connection either to their school or to their school administrators. In addition, I found that the personal nature of Facebook, email, and Skype fostered a level of trust and comfort that formed between me and my participants. This allowed open communication and greater disclosure by my participants.

This study was limited to a specific time period and by resources. If I had unlimited time and resources I would incorporate a broader study to include more participants nationwide. In addition, I would visit each participant and his/her school to develop a deeper understanding of each participant and his/her environment.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 addressed the design of the study. Specifically, it discussed the research questions, approach, methodology, role of the researcher, ethical considerations, and limitations. Chapter 4 reports the findings from the research. Findings are first reported by participant and then by four emergent themes.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

Chapter 3 highlighted the methodology for the study. This discussion included the approach, the role of researcher, and the basic design of the study. Chapter 4 details the experiences and coping strategies of token Black teachers working in predominantly White and affluent private school across the United States. The main research question and three ancillary questions, also discussed in Chapter 3, are the framework for this qualitative case study. The main research question is, “How do Black independent school teachers describe their experiences?” The three ancillary questions are, “What coping strategies do Black teachers develop and/or use to navigate the independent school environment?”, “What roles, if any, do/can colleagues, administrators, and associations play in building a support network for Black independent school teachers?” and “How do Black teachers develop a professional Black identity as token employees?”. With these questions as a base, Chapter 4 reports the findings through an introduction of each of the nine main study participants. Each participant profile will address the research questions by (1) providing detailed backgrounds and descriptions of each participant, (2) sharing their interpretations of their experiences within private schools, (3) detailing their coping strategies, and (4) expressing their beliefs about their professional Black identity and how it was formed. Chapter four also details the findings by four emergent themes. All names have been changed to keep the schools and participants anonymous.

Participant Profiles

Nine Black private school teachers, who were numerical tokens, were interviewed. Two participants were men, seven were women. Two of the nine teachers

were certified teachers (Chart 4). Most had experience in multiple grade levels; however, three were primarily elementary school teachers, three were primarily middle school teachers, and three were primarily high school teachers (Chart 5). Their independent school teaching experiences ranged from novice to experienced, with one teacher in the 0-4 years range, two teachers in the 4-6 year range, three teachers in the 6-10 years range, and three teachers in the over 10 years of experience range (Chart 3). The majority of the teachers interviewed described their upbringing as middle class (see Chart 1). Most had earned a graduate degree (see Chart 2). All reported that they worked in affluent, predominantly White, suburban or urban independent schools. Table 1 provides a look at the participants' backgrounds. An in depth description of the data collection process and the findings of each teacher follows.

The teachers were recruited online between August and November of 2012. LinkedIn, Facebook, and school web sites were all used to recruit teachers. The connections of all of the private school teachers in my LinkedIn network were searched to find profiles of Black private school teachers. Each teacher was contacted using LinkedIn's private messaging. In addition, general recruitment announcements were posted on LinkedIn on the researcher's sorority's (Alpha Kappa Alpha Inc.) group page, and personal Facebook page, and on the national Association of Independent School's (NAIS) listserve. In addition, private school web pages across the country were searched for teacher profiles that included pictures. All Black teachers on these web sites were contacted using email (Appendix I). I followed up with every teacher who responded. Teachers who were interested were then contacted by phone. Upon signing the consent form (Appendix J), participants received a link to complete the first survey (Appendix E)

which gave background information. Upon completion of the survey, each participant was scheduled for a one hour recorded interview. These interviews were conducted using non-leading, open-ended questions (Appendix C). Interview questions were used as a guide; however, the interviews were conducted using emergent questions. After each interview, two prompts (Appendix D) requiring written responses were sent via email, about a month apart. After the interviews were transcribed, follow-up questions were asked via email as needed. The recorded group interview was held using GoToMeeting, with a PowerPoint presentation (Appendix H) that logged-in participants could follow. This interview used leading questions that were aimed at clarifying themes found in the individual interviews. Lastly, participants completed a final survey (Appendix F) with written prompts included. All surveys were conducted online using Survey Monkey. During all contacts with each participant and as the interviews were transcribed, notes on emerging themes, further questions, and other ideas were kept in a log on the researcher's cell phone and later emailed to the researcher's private email and added to appropriate computer files.

The next section details the findings from the interviews, surveys, and prompt responses. The data collected is reported by each individual teacher organized in a phenomenological way. The findings answer the research questions by demonstrating that the teachers experience tokenism as defined by Kanter (1993), develop coping skills to combat the negative token experience, and are at differing stages of Black identity development depending on their experiences. In addition, details about each participant's educational background are reported. Similarities between participant responses are also identified. The participant profiles are organized by region (West, South, Northeast, and

the final participant having taught in multiple regions). Next, participant responses are reported by four themes. An interpretation of the findings will follow in Chapter 5. As stated above, all participant names have been changed.

Kathleen

Kathleen is a middle school computer science and technology teacher at a private school on the West Coast. She described her East Coast upbringing as upper middle class, and stated that she attended predominantly White public schools as a child. A computer science major, Kathleen originally planned to work within the computer industry; however, after finishing her own education she found herself drawn to the classroom to teach. Kathleen's teaching career began on the college level; but after teaching middle school students in a summer program, Kathleen found her passion and accepted a teaching position at a private school. Kathleen has taught in private schools for 10 years. She currently works at a school whose primary focus is aimed at college preparation. There are approximately 1,800 students, kindergarten through twelfth grade. Tuition costs approximately \$30,500 annually. There is a 10:1 student to teacher ratio. Kathleen stated that while the staff is predominantly White, there is a large percentage of Asian and Indian staff. Approximately 1% of the students are Black. "I don't know of a Latino staff member. They may exist but the staff is so huge. There are probably two or three Black staff out of a staff of like three hundred."

When asked how she would define her role at her current school, Kathleen responded that her role was to teach computer sciences. She goes on to explain that she is lacking collaboration in her current position. Kathleen's current school does not have an environment of "community, collaboration, or teamwork". She does not feel personally

connected to her school, or to her colleagues; and she does not feel that her assets, beyond the classroom, are being utilized. This is not Kathleen's first experience teaching at a private school. She has been at her current school for a short time. In stark contrast to her current teaching situation, Kathleen felt over-taxed at her previous school. "In that school I was wearing five different hats for one job and it was overwhelming in that way." Prior to both of these schools, Kathleen worked at a small independent school where she felt nurtured as a teacher and a person. "We looked out for each other's mental health, physical health within the workplace but also did a lot of other stuff." Kathleen describes her first private school teaching experience as "inclusive" and as "acknowledging the needs of fellow staff as well as the kids in terms of the community aspects". This "more progressive" school, although less racially diverse than her current school, had a more inclusive school community. Kathleen feels that because her current school is solely focused on college preparation that it neglects community building. This creates a conflict for Kathleen. "Dealing with the whole child is very much neglected, which doesn't align with being what I said before about being community oriented and wanting to build relationships." While she may not see a long term future for herself at her current school, Kathleen is committed to private school education. "It would be ok to be a roaming teacher and spend my time at a school for three or four years and get what I was to get out of that place for that period of time and move on."

Even though she has not felt a sense of community and support at her current school, Kathleen has managed to find other teachers to connect with, specifically a Black woman who teaches high school. She and Kathleen have developed a friendship. "We communicate through text messages during the day and keep in touch that way." In

addition, there is one other minority faculty member on the middle school campus whom Kathleen has connected with. However, she finds that she relies on Facebook to connect with friends at other schools, and to vent. In addition, Kathleen looks to friends who are not teachers for support. Kathleen has felt supported by her administration, and feels that they recognize and appreciate what she does in the classroom.

Kathleen has experienced internal pressure to change the way she thinks and acts while at work. This shifting, or “context switching” as she refers to it, is something she learned as a child in predominantly White schools. As one of only two Black students in her classes, Kathleen felt as if she never fit in.

I kind of jumped from group to group because I never felt like there was any one group that I fit in. That is how my current context of private school feels. There is no one place that I fit in so I put on the context/face that I feel is my protective armor; sort of survival mode.

Kathleen learned to find a sense of her Black identity while working as a token at her first private school. She credits the support of the school’s diversity coordinator.

There was someone on campus who was also Black in a somewhat admin position that I could go to if there was something about a student of color I was concerned about or with my needs as a staff of color. I found that extremely helpful. She organized student of color lunches; which was nice, because it was a place where I could be a role model to students of color at my school. We also had staff of color lunches which I think were even more valuable to me. We could talk about our concerns as staff of color candidly with the other staff of color.

Kathleen believes that attending her first People of Color Conference (PoCC) was “instrumental”. “Going somewhere and seeing all these Black staff of color networked in independent schools was just mind-blowing.” In addition, to lessening the sense of isolation, the PoCC made Kathleen believe that her “presence is needed in independent schools”. She has come to feel that not only does she need to be in independent schools to support the few students of color, but also to combat negative stereotypes of Black people for the White students. While she has made it her mission to represent Black people “beyond the stereotypical messages/images in their heads of people of color in society”, Kathleen feels pressured by this role. She describes this pressure as isolating, sad, and exhausting. “I feel exhausted every day beyond just having everything that I am required to do for my teaching, I feel like I have to do a bunch of stuff beyond that in terms of my context switching.” Kathleen stays because she loves teaching computer science and technology, and because she does not want to teach at a public school because of the “hoops” that public school credentialing requires candidates to go through. In addition, she appreciates the resources and benefits afforded by private schools.

When asked if Kathleen would suggest private school teaching to new teachers of color, Kathleen said she would. However, she believes that each teacher needs to find the school that is a right fit. She is still searching for that school. In addition, although Kathleen would not send her own children to any of the private schools where she has worked, she is not opposed to private school for students of color.

In summary, Kathleen reports feeling isolated and unsupported emotionally at her current school. She feels a pressure to perform and to represent a positive image of Black people. Although her own school experiences were demographically similar to the private

schools in which she has taught, Kathleen does not feel like she is part of the school community. Kathleen uses code shifting, or context switching, to “fit in”, and finds support from other minority faculty teachers and friends who are not teachers. Finally, Kathleen has developed her professional Black identity through opportunities to be a part of immersion experiences within affinity group gatherings at the PoCC that she attends every other year.

Christine

Christine, who works at the same West coast school as Kathleen but on a different campus, describes herself as a light-skinned Black woman. She describes her West Coast upbringing as lower middle class; however, she attended a predominantly White and extremely affluent East Coast boarding school for three years during high school. After dropping out of college, Christine began working at an engineering firm. A devastating life experience resulted in a closer look at what she wanted to do with her life, and motivated Christine to go back to college and completed her degree. Disinterest in going through a credentialing program and her experience with private boarding school, led Christine to teach in independent schools. The first school she taught at was a boarding school.

I had gone to boarding school myself and thought about the ways people hadn't been there for me. I wanted to put some ghost to rest and by going back and being there in ways that people hadn't been there for me it helped me reflect on my past experiences and at least someone else wasn't going to have to go through what I did. So that's how I became a teacher.

Christine has been at her current school, described above in Kathleen's narrative, for one year, teaching high school math. She has not had a positive experience at her school. She has not felt supported and misses the collaboration she had in previous schools. She feels isolated as the only Black teacher at the high school level. She has found a friend in Kathleen, who works at the middle school. "She and I commiserate a lot and talk about what it means to be an African American teacher." Like Kathleen, Christine feels that it is responsibility to represent Black people in a positive manner on campus. "I feel like I have the role as an African American woman" to allow students "who are going to go out and have a lot of influence in the world financially, to have other experiences with African American Blacks than what they see on TV and in the media." She feels this pressure to represent a positive Black image among her colleagues, too.

Christine has developed her own small support network at the school. Along with her friendship with Kathleen, Christine has found a common experience and kinship with the few Latina faculty members at her school and one White male. However, the bulk of Christine's support comes from her friends outside of the school who are also educators. "I have people I can talk to when I need to commiserate and they know what I'm talking about."

Christine does not see a long term future at her current school. She contemplates returning to college level teaching or school administration. Ultimately, she is looking for a place where she feels like she is appreciated. "I'd like to be in a place where my contributions are valued and respected." When asked if she'd recommend private school teaching to new teachers of color, Christine had mixed feelings. She believes that the

diverse nature of private schools makes it a case-by-case situation, but, overall, Christine believes that there is not enough of a “critical mass” at most private schools for teachers of color to be “supported in those environments in ways that they need to be”. Her feelings are echoed when she considers enrolling her own children in an independent school. When considering sending children of color to an independent school, Christine reflects on her own experience at a private boarding school, and the effects on her Black identity development. As a very fair skinned African American, and one of approximately twenty Blacks on a campus of approximately twelve hundred students, Christine was not sure how to identify racially.

For some students I was the first Black person they had met and a lot of students didn't even know I was Black. It was very terrifying and dangerous for me in terms of how I was going to identify and what I thought was valued.

She felt that her experience in boarding school taught her to hate herself and her “Blackness”. She believed that the positives about her were linked to Whiteness. “You try to be as White as possible in school. You try and speak White. You have thin lips and not full lips” She credits her experience as a Ph.D. student as helping her to affirm her Black identity. She took the opportunity to immerse herself in the works of other African Americans. “That’s when I started looking for other people’s words to help me understand what I was experiencing.”

Christine’s experiences with private school mirror Kathleen’s. Christine feels isolated and unsupported emotionally. She feels a pressure to represent a positive image of Black people, and copes by code switching. She has developed a small community of support and a sense of responsibility to her students of color as a coping strategy. This

sense of responsibility originates from her own experience in a predominantly White affluent school as a child, and has translated to her current work experience and the development of Christine's professional Black identity.

Pam

Originally from the Midwest, Pam describes the neighborhood that she was raised in as a predominantly White and affluent, middle class neighborhood. "In my graduating class of 136 students, there were six of us who were Black, so while it was a public school, it very much felt like a private school." She reports having only one Black teacher from kindergarten through high school. Pam immersed herself in Black culture when she attended a historically Black women's college in the South for her undergrad coursework. She came to independent school, by way of nudging from a teacher friend, while Pam was working unhappily on a Ph.D. in the science field. Pam currently works as a high school biology teacher at a southern, affluent independent school serving students in grades seven through twelve. She has worked as a teacher for more than ten years and has been at her current school for eight years. As well as being a teacher, Pam is also the chair of the science department. Her school is religiously affiliated; however, it is run by a board of directors. There are approximately 100 faculty members and 1,100 students with a 12:1 student to teacher ratio. Approximately 20% of the students are considered students of color. The total cost of tuition is approximately \$20,000 annually.

Although she admits to "wearing lots of hats", Pam describes herself as a teacher first. "I feel confident in saying that people would say I'm a good teacher. I'm good at what I do." While she feels confident as a teacher, Pam expresses feeling the pressure of being one of a few Black teachers and describes her day-to-day navigation at her school

as stressful. “I wouldn’t be working quite so hard if I were in a different environment, but out of 122 faculty at my school, there are seven of us who are Black, so that’s a lot of pressure to do well.” Pam is also the first, and only, Black department chair at her school, and feels pressured to do well so that future minority candidates are afforded the same opportunity.

Pam describes her relationships with colleagues and administrators as positive; however, she has developed a small support network at school. She feels close with two of her administrators, and finds the rest of her support from friends outside of her school. “I don’t honestly look to get a whole lot of [support] here at school.” Pam has made a conscious choice to maintain a professional distance between her and most of her colleagues.

Pam recently accepted the director of diversity position at her school. Originally, she was reluctant to take the position because she did not want to be the “voice” for all Black people on her campus, and “didn’t want to be the one they always relied on when they needed a face of color”. She accepted the position only after establishing herself, first, as a respected teacher. Pam’s idea of the role of the director of diversity has changed. She sees herself as an agent of change in all areas of diversity, not just Black and White. She is proud of the school’s recent hiring of Asian teachers. She also credits her new role for making her more aware of issues involving accessibility for those with physical disabilities and those with a lower socioeconomic status.

Pam attributes her Black identity development to the way her parents raised her. As a child in predominantly White schools, Pam was taught that “when you’re Black and you’re working around a lot of White people, you’ve got to work twice as hard to be

considered just as good". Pam recognizes that she has been a recipient of opportunities due to Affirmative Action. While she has never quite been comfortable with that, her father told her "that it doesn't really matter how you get there. What matters is what happens once you're there." As a Black teacher at a predominantly White and affluent private school, Pam came with a mission. She feels she has to prove that she deserves to be there, "Because everybody knows that, and this is going to sound so bad, but White people aren't going to keep you around for very long if you're not good and you're Black."

Pam plans on staying at her current school until retirement. She does not want to experience the "bureaucracy" of public school; and she is proud to work at such a prestigious private school. "Quite honestly, if I ever left it would have to be for a school of the same caliber as this one; and I would need a pay raise." In addition, she would send her own children to a private school, and would recommend private school teaching to new teachers of color.

While Pam is happy at her school, her experiences are similar to both Kathleen and Christine's experiences. She has felt the pressure to perform above and beyond her colleagues in order to prove her worth at the school. She has developed a selective support group within her school but looks outside of her school for most of her support. Like the first respondents, Pam's formal education shared similar demographics as the schools she has chosen to teach in. In addition, her identity development began with an immersion experience in college, and has continued to develop and evolve, specifically in her role as the school's director of diversity.

Maya

Maya is a Black female from the South, who describes her upbringing as upper middle class. Her parents were both doctors and she had a nanny as a child. In addition, she attended a predominantly White and affluent private school for her formal education. She majored in English and African American studies in college, and went on to receive a Master's degree in elementary education. Maya has been a teacher for more than ten years, beginning with three years in public school where she found it difficult to include critical thinking and creativity into a system that pushed standards.

They really just went teaching to the test a long time ago and it really was not the right thing in my eyes for kids so I left public schools. It broke my heart. I sobbed and cried and went back and forth but I just needed to be at a place where I felt like I was making a difference. So that's how I got into independent schools.

Maya spent two years teaching in an independent school in the Northeast, before returning to the South to teach middle school history at the independent school that she graduated from as a child. The school enrolls approximately 960 girls from preschool to twelfth grade, and serves an affluent community. "It's one of those schools that has a fitness and an aquatics center. We have top flight athletes. We've got AP courses out the wazoo and pre-college placements. It's a really good school." In stark comparison to when Maya attended, the school now has approximately 14% students of color. "We've come a long way in terms of working hard to make families see us as inclusive and to be inclusive. But we're not there yet."

Overall, Maya has had a positive experience as a private school teacher and is very happy. She describes herself as a leader of faculty, a faculty coach, and confidante.

She commented that her colleagues look to her for her opinion “from issues of curriculum and instruction to diversity”. In addition to being happy at work, Maya has also been very successful. She has been the youngest person and the first woman of color to become a division chair. “I think they perceive me as pretty highly qualified in teaching and able to build teams and get respect and build trust and that sort of thing and move people along, particularly with curriculum.” Although Maya has been successful and feels comfortable at her school, she does report feeling the pressure to perform and “prove” herself to certain people.

Maya feels highly supported by her administration and colleagues. She reports having “an amazing relationship” with her immediate supervisor, whom Maya has known since she was a child at the school. In addition, she has a very close relationship with another Black teacher at her school. Maya has a strong and fairly widespread support system. “I feel as though when I’m stressed, I can sort of distribute that stress among a wide band of colleagues and friends.” She feels comfortable addressing issues within the proper channels and among her colleagues whom she considers to be her friends.

Maya initially had reservations about returning to the school where she felt isolated as a child. In order to cope with this doubt, Maya developed a sense of purpose, or a reason, for returning to her childhood school as a teacher. She realized that if she did not come back to make changes for future students of color, the changes may never happen. She came back to her school to change the culture and the curriculum. “As a history teacher I had to come and sort of blow some of the Euro-centrism off of the curriculum.” She is very proud about having been able to successfully challenge traditional curriculum and assumptions at her school.

Maya did not come to her confident professional Black identity easily. She stated that her identity has been “a lifelong struggle”. “I had one Black teacher my entire K-12 academic career, and I just never felt good. I never felt good about being an African American.” A one-year experience at a boarding school in the Northeast changed Maya’s perspective. It was the first time that she had a “critical mass” of Black faces around her, and she was able to “feel good” in her own skin. This began her immersion experience that continued into her undergraduate years. Maya says she became “super Black” and “went segregation style. I had all Black friends. I was in African American studies. I double majored, so I read every piece of literature, every play, every movement.” After leaving college Maya had reached “equilibrium”. She continues to work on her identity, but now feels comfortable as a Black woman. Now confident, comfortable, and successful, Maya has impressive goals. She is determined to be the first Black head of a school in her region. Maya is “determined to diversify the Head of School pool from this area... That’s how committed I am to this work... I’m not going to sort of turn my back on leaving a trail for others to do this.”

Maya would recommend private schools, with caution, to new teachers of color. She believes, like the other respondents, that it has to be the right fit. Specifically, Maya believes that the school should have a formal mentorship program for teachers of color and active recruiting and support for students of color. She would send her children to a private school, but states that she would do so with due diligence to ensure that she would find the right fit for her children.

Like Pam, Maya has had an overwhelmingly positive experience; however, her experience still resembles that of Kathleen and Christine. Maya feels a pressure to over-

perform and to represent the Black community. She feels a sense of responsibility to the Black community and to future Black teachers in the South. Although seemingly further along on the continuum, Maya has come through a similar path towards her identity development as the other participants. In addition, not only did Maya's formal schooling resemble her current work environment, Maya has actually returned to the predominantly White and affluent school that she attended as a child. Finally, like all of the other participants, Maya would recommend private schools to teachers and students of color, but advises that they find the school that is right for them.

Charles

Charles is a Black male from the Northeast who describes his upbringing as upper middle class. He attended a predominantly White religious private school as a child, but describes it as less affluent and prestigious than the school he is currently working for. "I went to private schools but I didn't know how really different than my Catholic school independent schools and progressive schools specifically were." After high school Charles immersed himself in Black culture by attending a historically Black college in the South. A philosophy major, Charles had not intended to become a teacher. He had focused his studies on the philosophies of Black leaders, and was committed to working to uplift the Black community. Charles began his teaching career in the public school system as a permanent substitute. However, through his college placement center he was connected with an opportunity to intern at a private school while earning a Master's degree in education. Upon visiting the private school, Charles realized that the private school teaching environment was much different from his experience with the public school system as a substitute teacher. He felt as if he had been learning how to discipline

as a substitute teacher in a public school, and saw the private school position as an opportunity to truly learn how to engage children and teach. “I was learning how to discipline and not really learning something I wanted, how to teach children to learn, to get them where I wanted them to be. That’s what really intrigued me about independent schools.”

Charles completed the internship, earned his Master’s degree, and accepted his first teaching position. The first school was a private school that served predominantly Black and low-income boys in an urban area. While Charles believed in the school’s mission, he was overwhelmed as a first-year kindergarten teacher without a teaching team, and he began to search for mentors. His search for mentors led him to a young Black male who was teaching at an area independent school. Charles was invited to come to observe his mentor’s class.

I was not looking at all for another place to go and teach at the time. I was very steadfast in the fact that I felt like I would be at [his previous school] for the probably the rest of my career because I could see myself there as not only a teacher but also as a leader. I went to the school and I visited and again it was like, *Whoa! This is really progressive. This is what I want to be doing.*

Charles was impressed by the progressive teaching at the school and was offered, and accepted, a prekindergarten teaching position. This school is a prestigious independent school in the Northeast. Located in an urban area, the school enrolls approximately 1,000 students from prekindergarten through twelfth grade, with approximately 10% students of color. It describes itself as progressive with a 7:1 student teacher ratio.

Charles describes his experience with independent schools as empowering. “I have unlimited resources and parents who are engaged.” Even as a new teacher he has been able to find his niche. Charles is leading his team towards using more technology in the classroom through video newsletters and using iPads to teach. Charles, however, is still committed to serving the Black community. “I’m always bringing everyone back to focus on how what we do at [our school] can also impact kids in [our city].” In addition, Charles is reaching out to young Black male public school teachers in an attempt to bridge the achievement gap. “How do public schools not only learn from independent schools but how can we learn from also what’s happening in public schools? It’s something I’m very passionate [about].” Charles is also passionate about honing his teaching craft. His main objective is to learn as much as he can as a young teacher so he can eventually take what he has learned back to the Black urban community and public schools.

While his main mission is to uplift the Black community, Charles believes that his presence at the school is breaking down barriers for the predominantly White and affluent families. “So probably the first experience a lot of my kids are having with a Black male is me.” His experiences have not all been positive. Some parents have embraced him, while others have not.

I have moms in my class right now who really don’t talk to me that much.

Especially not just one-on-one and I think I feel no kind of way about that. I think I’ve also been trained in my upbringing not to feel a [certain] way about that. But I sense it.

Because of his awareness of his difference, Charles is actively alert to how he is representing himself on campus. “Whenever I see anyone, I’m smiling from ear to ear and I’m introducing myself. It’s right away and it’s not something that I hesitate on. As soon as I see somebody I don’t [normally] see.” Charles refers to this heightened awareness to represent Black men in a non-stereotypical way as “pressure”. “I need to look fresh and look excited to be at work every day because their opinion of Black-men-period is kind of on my shoulders.”

To cope with the pressure Charles has built his own support system. He has open communication with his co-teacher, who is a Black woman. He also relies on his mentor who brought him to the school originally, who is a Black male. The school has a “handful” of African Americans on campus, and Charles finds comfort in the numbers. He feels like he has a lot of allies, both Black and White, at the school; however, for most things he turns to his co-teacher.

Charles believes that many Black men would not be comfortable “culturally” working at a school like his. He credits his ability to fit in with his upbringing and Black identity development. Charles was often the only Black child in social and educational settings. He developed a feeling of power and responsibility as a Black male. “You come to closure with certain things like the fact that *Hey, I’m a Black man and that means something*. Going to [a historically Black university] was great because it affirmed that.”

Charles actively seeks out diversity work at his school. He has involved himself with admission work and the mentorship of Black male students. However, he still feels the pull to work with a greater mass of Black students. His long term goal is to use the skills and knowledge he is learning at an inner city public or charter school. Charles

would recommend private schools to other Black male teachers; however, he would ask that they go as an advocate. “I truly believe that education can change Black communities all over the country. So I believe that the vehicle should be, that should be the focus.” Charles would send his own children to a private school. He believes in private school education, and after having first-hand experience as a substitute in public school, he would not want his children to go to the public schools in his city.

Charles has many differences from the first four teachers profiled. He is younger, male, and lives in a different region; however, his experiences are very similar to the other four teachers. Charles has experiences as a child in predominantly White schools, and code shifts to fit in and to counter negative stereotypes. In addition, he has developed a small network of support where he can learn and vent. Although he seems to still be in the immersion phase, Charles’ Black identity development seems to be following a similar pattern as the other participants. Charles has also developed a personal mission that keeps him grounded and focused while he learns to teach at a progressive school. Finally, like the other participants, Charles would recommend private school teaching to other teachers of color with words of advice. Charles only differs from the previous participants on whether or not he would send his own children to a private school. While the other participants, hesitated, Charles did not because the public schools in his area are, in his opinion, so poor that he does not feel there is another option.

Leah

Leah is a Black female from the Northeast who describes her upbringing as “lower class”. She attended predominantly Black public schools in, what she calls, “the ‘hood”. In college, Leah majored in film and originally wanted to teach film education.

Upon graduation Leah was hired as a public school substitute teacher. Eventually she was hired at a public performing arts school; however, after a year, budget cuts eliminated her position. Leah loved teaching, pursued certification, and taught high school English at a public school. During the summers Leah taught English at a program that provided academic enrichment to minority public school students on a private school campus. The private school recruited her to work for them full time. When she was offered the full time job with the private school she was torn, but decided that she could not pass up the chance at working for such a prestigious school. A friend who had attended an independent school encouraged her by saying, “You don’t say no to this. Give it a shot. The worst scenario is you don’t like it and you can leave.” Twenty-three years later, Leah is happily still at the independent school. She attributes her happiness, in part, to feeling appreciated by her school.

Obviously, I have been here a long time, and that has been by choice. When I came, there were a couple of things that really appealed to me. One, there is recognition for merit. When things happened, if I achieved, worked well, things came my way. I did not find that in public school.

Leah’s school is a prestigious school that enrolls more than 1,100 high school students. The student to teacher ratio is 5:1. The school reports approximately 40% students of color, to include biracial, multiracial, and international students. Of the over 200-member faculty, approximately 20% are of color. Tuition at the school is over \$30,000.

Overall Leah has had a positive experience as a private school teacher. She feels respected by the entire school community, and finds the work environment flexible, supportive, and full of opportunity. She says her colleagues “would say that I am

passionate about what I do. People say they are inspired by my passion, the work I do, issues of access.” Leah has had the freedom and support to work with her school community on issues of diversity and equality.

Right now I’m focused on closing achievement gaps socioeconomically, racially. This is stuff that speaks to my heart. I don’t think the faculty has had anybody here in all the time that I’ve been here to talk about issues in that way. There have been other very passionate people about race issues or about class issues, or about fighting for LGBT rights, but I don’t think they’ve seen anyone in a leadership role at the administration table talking about equity and how we have to level the playing field for all of our kids to get them to achieve at their fullest potential...

And as I’ve struggled back and forth with the, *Gee, I should be in the city in a public school working with kids who are more from my background* because of [my school’s] resources there were plenty of kids from backgrounds similar to mine here. So I realized they needed me as well. In the end, that’s what kept me here early on.

Initially Leah had a hard time adjusting to her new school environment. She did not have mentors to help guide her. Coming from such a different background, she did not feel comfortable approaching the seasoned Black teachers who seemed to feel comfortable within the school community. “The older Black folk that were on campus were not the people I chose to go to. They seemed very different and alien to me; like they got it and I didn’t. So I didn’t want to be uncovered.” In order to cope with feeling isolated and as if she did not belong, Leah learned to lean on friends to keep her going. There were periods when she felt isolated and alone at her school and in a foreign

environment. “Back then it was friends, plain and simple, finding people like me. I was blessed that another [Black] woman came... We had a lot of common interests.” Leah also did not feel as if she could completely confide in her family. “My family had no idea of this kind of world, and did not understand it. They always thought I was making excuses when I said I had meetings at night. It was just a far, foreign world.” Early on in her career Leah decided to go back to graduate school, while still teaching, so that she could make herself more marketable and find a new job in a community where she would feel more comfortable. While in graduate school Leah met her husband. Leah credits his support for giving her a sense of security and comfort that allowed her to stay at the school. In the more than twenty years since she came to the school she has developed an extensive support network on campus. Leah has made herself a vital part of the school community, taking on various administrative roles and actively seeking opportunities to mentor young teachers. While she is a role model and mentor to all teachers, Leah holds informal social/mentor gatherings specifically aimed at the teachers of color.

Leah believes that her school has a true commitment to diversity that is in line with her own personal mission to address the closing of the achievement gap between Blacks and Whites. This commitment has made her feel secure in her role within the school community. She called it “a different world” from other independent schools because of the level of the commitment to creating a diverse and supportive environment. Leah believes the school not only talks about diversity, but backs it with administrative support and financial support. “The school has really tried to live up to that. It’s been a combination of leadership being committed and passionate, it’s mission driven, and it’s

also been about resources.” Leah believes that a truly committed administration can be instrumental in building a support system for teachers of color.

Coming from a predominantly Black environment to a predominantly White environment was an adjustment for Leah. She states that she became “blacker” as a result. “I had to develop a voice of a Black woman. That’s one thing that significantly changed for me.” She immersed herself in Black culture through workshops, personal studies and eventually while in graduate school. “It happened for me educating myself, through reading, through conferences, through films, through conversations with my students and just pushing myself; and then in grad school focusing more on that so that was my identity development here.” While Leah credits experience and maturity for a lot of her Black identity development, she credits one specific multicultural workshop for changing her viewpoint.

This workshop changed my life. It helped me understand that a lot of my issues that I thought were tied to race were actually not tied to race. They were tied to class. That was a big epiphany. It helped me understand that I can’t change some institutions unless I can change myself, and I know myself, and I know who I am and what my hot buttons are while trying to do diversity work.

Leah’s experiences, while similar to the other participants, were grounded on a much different foundation. Leah is the only participant who had not had prior experience as a child in predominantly White schools and/or neighborhoods. Because of her lack of experience, Leah found it hard to relate, not only to her White colleagues, but also to her Black colleagues. She described them as “foreign” because they knew how to navigate the predominantly White culture in a way that she did not. Leah believes that she was

successful because her administrator made a commitment to diversity and to an inclusive campus.

Michelle

Michelle is a Black female who has been teaching in the Northeast for more than thirty-five years at the elementary school level. She describes her upbringing as middle class, and attended public schools as a child. Michelle's formal schools were mixed demographically. From kindergarten through sixth grade, she describes her schools as being predominantly minority (45% Black, 45% Hispanic, and 10% White). In contrast, she says her seventh through twelfth grade schools were 90% White. Michelle wanted to be a teacher her entire life, and majored in elementary education in college. Upon graduating from college, she taught in disadvantaged inner-city public schools for more than thirty years. After a short retirement from teaching, Michelle made the decision to return to teaching but at a private school. She decided to look into private schools because she did not like the direction in which high-stakes testing was taking public schools. "I guess the last eight to ten years I became more and more frustrated with the fact that we were being held accountable to a test rather than the needs of the children." She stumbled across an ad for private school teachers in the newspaper and applied.

When I walked into that school it had such a feeling of... you could tell right away that there was a care for the students. The pride that the administrators took in the school in walking me around... You could just tell how proud they were of the children, of the teachers. You could see in the environment how welcoming it was. And I said, *Well, let me try here.* I've been there ever since.

Michele has been at the school for six years. The school enrolls approximately 200 students from preschool through eighth grade. There is a 7:1 student to teacher ratio, with an average tuition of \$15,000 annually.

Overall, Michelle reports feeling respected by her colleagues and administration. However, she also feels that she is often included on discussions and decisions because she is Black. “I often think when decisions are made to include people in a particular group I think that I am included because of color.” There has been a high rate of turnover of Black teachers, which leaves Michelle always wondering if she’s next to be let go. In addition, she does not feel that her voice is always heard in matters of curriculum. “When I’ve suggested certain things it’s been acknowledged but not carried through. But then when other people have suggested almost the same thing it’s worked through in a committee and accepted.” Michelle discusses her frustrations with one faculty member with whom she has become friends. She does not have a personal relationship with anyone else on her campus. Michelle relies on her family and friends outside of school who are also educators for support and commiseration.

Michelle believes that her administration thinks they should be working towards diversity because it is a buzz word, but that they do not have a clear purpose or diversity mission. In order to combat the school’s lack of direction, Michelle has taken it upon herself to begin to educate the faculty and administration on issues of diversity. “I don’t feel supported and what I’ve decided is if I want to be supported or if I want something different to happen I have to go about doing something to make it happen.” When her administration indicated that there were no funds available to create a formal mentor program for new teachers, Michelle took the lead in mentoring new teachers of color. She

has adjusted to and accommodated for the lack of support and direction from her administration. She has also found personal meaning as a Black independent school teacher. She is an advocate for her students of color, and she bridges the gap between the Black and White communities for her White students.

I also think that if Black teachers are not in the independent schools then how are the children who are not of color going to relate to people of a diverse or global situation if they only have access to White teachers? So I see myself as benefiting both.

In addition to finding a personal mission, Michelle has also changed her public school teaching style to fit her new environment and expectations.

I have changed the way I talk to the children... I didn't speak to children the way teachers speak at [my current school]; so I did change the way I respond to children and the way I speak to them as a whole. There were definite changes.

Michelle is still in the second stage, experiencing a lifespan encounter, of developing her professional Black identity. During her more than thirty years of teaching in public schools she had never thought of herself as a Black teacher, just as a teacher. She is learning to navigate the independent school environment. Michelle feels as if there are unwritten rules that she does not have access to. She has seen many teachers of color come and go during her six years, and she has never quite understood why.

While Michelle does feel that more diversity is needed among the staff of private schools, she believes that new teachers of color in independent schools need formal mentoring to be successful. Michelle would also send her own children to private schools if she was working there in order to "check in on them".

Michelle's experiences are similar to the other participants' experiences; however, she seems to be struggling to get to a place where she feels confident and secure in her position. The lack of administrative direction seems to be a large factor in Michelle's insecurities. She has yet to form meaningful connections with anyone on her administrative team, and has not been successful at finding a fulfilling role among her colleagues.

Nikki

Nikki is a Black female from the Northeast who describes her upbringing as middle class. She attended suburban public schools that were predominantly White. "While it's true that they were public schools, the middle and high school we went to looked like a mini college campus. We had an indoor track and lots of lacrosse fields and I played tennis." Nikki did not originally want to be a teacher. She worked as a preschool teacher during college, and loved the experience, so she decided to add an education minor to her program. After completing student teaching at an area public school, Nikki was disenchanted with the public school system and what she referred to as the low expectations that the teachers had for the students. One of her college professors suggested a private school teaching fellows program for future teachers of color. This program motivated Nikki to become a teacher, and to eventually teach at private schools. Nikki has taught in private schools for more than fifteen years; and is in her second year at her current school. She has taught students from fifth grade to adults, but is currently a middle school teacher. Her current school enrolls more than 900 students from preschool to twelfth grade. Approximately 25% of the students are students of color. There is a 9:1

student to teacher ratio; and tuition is approximately \$20,000 a year. Nikki is one of two teachers of color out of a middle school faculty of approximately forty.

Nikki is very happy at her job; however, she feels there are some struggles in the area of diversity. “I absolutely love what I do... while there have certainly been challenges at this school.” Nikki has experienced her own challenges as a new teacher of color at her school. She has felt a lack of administrative support, and has felt left out of the unwritten rules because she has not had a mentor to help her navigate her new school environment.

I know that I’m subjected to a level of scrutiny that no other teachers are. I’m not given the benefit of the doubt; and there were a number of times last year where there was really no recognition or acknowledgement that I was new to the school and that they really didn’t have a mentoring program for new teachers, and also that a lot of the *mistakes* I made were the result of not knowing and not being told until after the fact.

Nikki has experienced a contrast between the progressive and liberal philosophy at her school and the actual day-to-day goings on. In order to cope with this daily contrast, Nikki identifies each issue and addresses it openly. She specifically refers to the treatment of Black boys in comparison to that of White boys. Because of this disparity in treatment, Nikki has taken the role of advocate for students and families of color. “I can’t abide that so it doesn’t matter how much trouble I’ve gotten in the past with these people. It doesn’t matter what will happen in the future. I will always speak up. I will always be an advocate.”

Although Nikki feels that the administration has had issues addressing the concerns of people of color, Nikki has felt support from the Head of School, which has helped her through these challenges. Nikki has also found a great deal of support from the school's diversity director and her colleagues. She also relies on her family and friends for support. "I feel incredibly blessed and fortunate because it's a school where people have come forward and said, *She's not being treated fairly*; and that's never really happened for me."

Nikki would recommend private school employment to new teachers of color as long as the school has an established mentor program and offers support to teachers of color. She believes that without these two key pieces teachers of color are doomed to failure in private schools. Following the idea of support, Nikki would only send her own children to an independent school if it were a school where she was working and could fully advocate for and support her children.

Nikki did not initially talk about her Black identity development, and did not respond to requests for a follow up interview. However, Nikki's overall teaching experiences and background align with the other participants in the study. Nikki was educated in predominantly White and affluent public schools, and chose to teach in independent schools with similar demographics. Her coping strategies include colleagues, administrators, and friends outside of the school environment. In addition, Nikki has developed a personal mission as an advocate for students of color, which helps motivate her on a daily basis. Although details about Nikki's Black identity development were not collected, Nikki seems to be at a place in her development where she is comfortable in

her own skin, in her role as an advocate, and in engaging allies to support her in her mission.

Evan

Evan is a Black male who has worked in private schools for seven years. He has worked in the Northeast, on the West Coast, and most recently, in the Midwest; and taught briefly at a public charter school. He has taught history and English for students in seventh through twelfth grade. Although he describes his upbringing as lower middle class, Evan was placed in the public school's gifted and talented track beginning in elementary school, and attended a performing arts high school. He said his own schooling mirrors that of the schools he has taught for. "The only time I saw large numbers of kids of color, even just kids of color, in general was when I took sports." This social-educational trend continued into college as Evan attended a small liberal arts college with a "fairly affluent, fairly influential" crowd.

An economics major in college, Evan began working in private schools directly out of college. Actively seeking a teaching position with a private school, Evan recently moved to fulfill familial obligations, and is actively seeking a private school teaching position. Evan's most recent private school serves students in grades six through twelve, and is located in the Southwest. It boasts a 9:1 student to teacher ratio. The student enrollment is approximately 300, and approximately 20% are reported to be students of color (1% reported as African American). Evan has not worked at a private school where there were more than one or two Black teachers; however, he states that there were always Black support staff. "Often I was one of the few Black people who weren't staff that they could say, *Oh, look there's a Black person teaching*".

Because he was either the only Black teacher, or one of two, Evan made it his role to connect with the students of color at the school. “I would work with the kids of color a little more intimately so I think that definitely brought some value to the school and the community.” He stated that his school said they supported his efforts with students of color; however, they did not support him in other ways. Evan felt that the students of color were “pretty split up” between the classes with no more than two in a classroom at a time. Evan made it his mission to connect the students of color by establishing an organization for the students of color. The school initially supported Evan’s work; however, they failed to commit financially to the students of color organization.

They verbally gave support but in terms of material support and allowing me and other teachers time in our schedule or finances to do that sort of stuff, that wasn’t there. So it was an interesting dynamic where they would say one thing but then wouldn’t pay for it or actually support it fiscally.

After that failed attempt to involve the school in his mission, Evan now keeps his work with Black students private. He feels limited in what he can do without full administrative support. He also recognizes that discussions of race are uncomfortable, and he does not want to be seen as racist or excluding other students of color. He hosted his Black students in his home to discuss whatever issues they were facing. However, he was careful about not making it too public.

It wasn’t something I would put in the newsletter that went home. I was basically trying to keep it low key and casual and it was cool. The only part I regretted is that I couldn’t really open it up because I would have needed more institutional support.

When asked to describe his day-to-day experiences as a Black teacher, Evan talked about standing out. He feels that although he has been “accepted” as part of the school community he still does not fit in. “Even though you’re in the school, you’re not necessarily really a part of the school in the same way as I would say a White teacher who has been there for an equal amount of time.” He feels pressure to be twice as good as his counterparts while receiving half of the recognition. He explains his frustrations further by stating, “You know, being the Black person on campus it seems that sometimes no matter what you do it may or may not make a difference... Which is like extra baggage to carry but you get used to it.” Evan also describes his experience as one of isolation. “Particularly for a teacher of color there is definitely going to be a type of isolation because you’re not around anybody else and at a private school.” However, Evan does recognize that teaching at a private school is a conscious choice and that he makes that choice knowing the negative consequences.

Evan found solidarity with the few other Black teachers at the school. In one of his schools Evan was the only full-time Black teacher, however, there were two part-time Black teachers that he found a connection with. “I would go check in with them.” However, Evan believes his greatest support comes from people outside of the school. “I can say that to the greater extent I’ve had people to interact with outside of the school the better I fit in the school.” In addition to finding support, Evan acknowledges that he uses code switching as a strategy to cope with the differences he faces at independent schools.

I never thought of it actually as part of a survival technique before but I guess to some extent it has been for me... My voice may change, depending on who I’m around, or if I’m with you guys individually or whatever.

Evan sees his Black identity as the opposite of being White. “When I think of myself as a Black male it’s almost as like an oppositional identity to Whiteness. So, it’s almost, *I’m whatever you aren’t.*” Evan developed his identity as a young school-age child. At an early age he recognized that acknowledging the fact that he was Black made Whites uncomfortable. “I didn’t want to bring up the difference because, particularly for White folk, it would make them uncomfortable.” His Black identity has developed around two truths. The first, the fact that he is not White and that that has some negative connotations; and, the second, he feels a responsibility to his students of color. “When I think of myself as a Black male usually it’s to the extent of I need to support these particular people that are having an issue that other kids aren’t having.”

Evan would neither recommend nor advise against teaching at a predominantly White private school. Instead, he would advise new teachers of color of all the benefits and drawbacks of teaching at independent schools and allow them to make the choice. He would send his own children to a private school provided that the school has established a support system for students of color.

Evan’s experiences with private schools across the continental United States closely mirror the other eight participants’ experiences. He has experienced feelings of isolation and the pressure to perform. In addition, he has developed a personal commitment to the students of color at his schools. Evan has also developed a small support network at school and relies on his personal connections beyond the school to keep him grounded. Like all but one of the other participants, Evan was educated in predominantly White classrooms.

Section Summary

Definite themes have emerged from the profiles of all nine of the main participants. Like Mabokela & Maadsen's (2003a) work with Black suburban school teachers, the participants' experiences match the characteristics of tokenism, including heightened visibility, role entrapment, and boundary heightening. Second, the participants combat the negative effects of tokenism by employing similar coping strategies that include over-performing at work to combat negative stereotypes and to fit in with the dominant, White culture; engaging a support network of allies, mentors, and friends; and creating personal missions that help motivate them in a stressful token role. The third theme illustrated that although the participants were at different stages, their Black identity development followed the modified nigrescence recycling model. Lastly, all but one of the nine participants attended schools and/or lived in neighborhoods that were predominantly White and affluent like the private schools in which they currently teach. This final theme uncovers the similar backgrounds of the participants that led them to private school teaching. In the next sections these themes are discussed further as they relate to tokenism, code shifting, and modified nigrescence recycling. In addition, the similarities in the participant backgrounds are further discussed as a theme.

Theme 1: Black Independent School Teachers and Tokenism

Kanter's (1993) theory of tokenism, discussed in Chapter 2, is based on the experiences of skewed groups. In this case, the skewed group are Black teachers working at predominantly White and affluent independent schools. Tokenism is used as a theoretical framework when examining the experiences of these teachers "because it describes all individuals who find themselves in an under-represented, marginal subgroup

within any organization” (Yoder et al, 1985, p. 129). Kanter (1993) defined three specific token experiences: visibility, assimilation/entrapment, and contrast/boundary heightening. Similar to the study Black teachers in predominantly White and suburban public schools (Mabokela & Madsen, 2003a) in which the Black public school teachers experienced tokenism in the form of boundary heightening and role entrapment, this study confirmed that the Black teachers at private schools have a typical token experience (See Table 3). Kathleen summed up her experience as a token in the following manner.

The worst part about being Black and working in independent schools is the isolation and lack of acknowledgment that you are different and feel different expectations than your colleagues. No one can understand your experience as a Black teacher and the added responsibilities you have for yourself and your community. When I come to work, I don't feel like I can be my full self or the real me. I feel like I am the model for the Black community and that I am under a microscope. People are waiting for me to mess up or cave into their stereotypes of Black people. I also feel that I need to be a great role model for the Black students attending my school. Who else do they have to look up to? That is a lot of additional pressures in addition to the high demands independent schools have for their teachers.

The following sections will address Black private school teachers’ experiences of tokenism.

Visibility

Visibility refers to the over-exposure of being a token. When there is only one Black teacher at a school and he/she is absent from a meeting it is immediately recognizable. McDonald, Harvey & Brown (2005) discussed the heightened visibility that token Black independent school teachers experience. "Being visible meant a variety of things, but most often it meant they tend to be visibly different in physical ways from most of their colleagues" (McDonald et al, 2005, p. 8). Confirming their report, all of the participants in this study initially reported feeling heightened visibility based on the fact that they were either the only Black, or one of a few, on their campuses. Many participants were even able to articulate the exact number of Black teachers on the faculty, even when the other Black teachers worked in different grade levels and/or divisions, and on different campuses. This emphasizes the exaggerated, or visible, presence of individual Black faces on a predominantly White campus. Pam describes being highly visible as stressful.

I feel like I can never have an off-day. And when I say off I feel like I have to be on and I have to be good every day and if something happens and I'm not as good as I want to be that day, then I feel really badly about it... Because if I'm a bad teacher, I'm not just a bad teacher. I'm the bad Black teacher. So the fact that I'm Black is probably not a big deal as long as I'm good. But if I suck, do I suck because I suck or do I suck because I'm Black?

Pam is expressing the overall feeling of being seen as THE Black teacher and the pressure from being the only, or one of few, on the faculty, and feeling as if everyone is watching you and waiting for you to mess up.

At a private school, visibility is not only an experience among colleagues, but one Black teachers feel from the parents. Charles, a kindergarten teacher, spoke about feeling highly visible to the parents of his students.

It might be me putting myself under the microscope, but I feel the microscope and it's probably not what my father or my grandfather dealt with at their jobs but it's still there and I totally feel it; especially from grandparents or more conservative people who might feel a certain kind of way [about the fact] that I'm educating their kids.

Heightened visibility was expressed throughout the interviews by all of the participants. The experience of visibility was most often connected with the coping strategy of over-performing. As a result of feeling highly visible, the participants all reported feeling the need to be better and always aware of their image while on campus. This pressure to over-perform will be discussed further in Theme 2.

Assimilation/Entrapment

In contrast to visibility, assimilation is often referred to as invisibility (McDonald et al, 2005), as it refers to the expectation by the dominant group for tokens to “fit pre-existing generalizations about their category as a group” (Kanter, 1993, p. 230). In other words, individual traits are overlooked and the token takes on a “caricatured role” (Kanter, 1993). Kanter (1993) states that “assimilation results in role encapsulation” (p. 212). The Black independent school teacher experiences assimilation as the diversity hire or expert ethnic. When asked *Do you feel like a representative of the Black race at your school?* Five of the six participants responded affirmatively. Often, Black teachers are expected to handle discipline problems with Black children not in their classes. It is

assumed that they have a formula for working with Black children regardless of background differences. Michelle noticed this role entrapment when her school recently enrolled a greater number of Black students.

They accepted more Black males. But with that came things that people perceived as problems, or behavior wasn't as it had been with the other students, so of course, very subtly, people would say... We'd be on the playground and someone would ask me or talk about a situation and ask how I would handle it. So after that happens several times I thought, *Hmm, ok, we're having difficulty knowing how to talk with or what to accept or not to accept with Black males.*

Michelle took on the issue with her administration. She had not planned to be the representative of her race, but fell into the role as it was thrust upon her.

When on the playground, I guess, there were several boys that were more aggressive than the White students, so they were their [the White teachers'] students, and we all talk to any of the students on the playground and not just our own. So when different things happened both of them [the White teachers] would kind of look at me. I didn't say anything at first. I just kind of watched. But a couple of guys I talked to because their parents are drawn to Black staff just because they are, and then the kids are, too. So I started going over to them and talking to them about how to handle, or is there a better way you could do this, or just in conversation saying something to them, or why don't you take a time out for a minute. I'd make comments to the children and when I'd come back together with the teachers they would look at me and ask me what I said to them or ask me questions related to those particular children. Until one day I just said... I brought

it up because they were afraid to, I guess. So I said something about Black males and I think I even referred to a book that I had read or something and said, *You might want to read this*. I brought race into it. It was already there but I brought the vocabulary, the words, the actual identification of *Black* and there being a difference.

While feeling pushed into the role, Michelle seized the opportunity to start a dialogue about diversity and educate her colleagues. She then began to change not only the minds of her colleagues, but the minds of the students through changes in the curriculum.

As a history teacher I had to come and sort of blow some of the Euro-centrism off of the curriculum. That's what I did and I opened it up to more cultures and that sort of thing and continued to do that along with faculty. It has been better every year that I have not held back but done so in a way, speaking up about issues as they come in a way that is respectful, that doesn't leave people feeling sort assaulted or abused but I do say, *You know, this is not where we need to be. This is why we need to do it differently*. I found great success in being a change agent.

Often the diversity coordinator position is added to the job description of the Black private school teacher. This is a form of role entrapment as the White school administrators and school community at large tend "to define race as something salient only to people of color" (Hall & Stevenson, 2007, p. 11). Viewing race and diversity as issues affecting people of color often leads to assigning the role of diversity coordinator to the Black teacher. Maya assumed the diversity role after being prodded by her administration. "I formally got on the committee for diversity and inclusion because they

kept asking.” Although Maya initially resisted the role, she eventually accepted it under her own terms. “This year I just thought I really just wanted to get involved formally because I was already doing so many things [related to diversity]. I might as well attend all the planning meetings and things.” Maya has embraced her role on the school’s diversity committee and is hoping to affect change.

Embracing the diversity role can have other positive results. Leah has taken on a multicultural administrative role. She works with minority students and on issues of diversity within her school. She finds it empowering to not only support students of color, but to help them become part of the school community. She directed a play that was made up of all minority female students. “It was just really exciting to watch the whole campus be impacted by this play with nine Black and Latino women who were stars for that weekend.”

While assimilation may be part of the token experience, Michelle, Maya, and Leah demonstrated that the token can use the role to advocate for change in perceptions, curriculum, and even policy. However, often this assimilation allows for individuality to be lost. Evan’s high school students often relate him to famous Black stars thus negating his own identity.

I get compared to whoever the famous Black guy is doing something. They’ll say I look like him. If it’s *Daddy Day Care*, they’ll say, *Oh, my gosh! You look like Eddie Murphy!* Or it will be, *You look like Samuel Jackson!*

The experience of feeling trapped in a stereotypical or race-related role was expressed by most of the participants. The most common coping strategy for the assimilation experience was to incorporate race advocacy into a personal mission that acted as

motivation for the participants. Creating a personal mission will be discussed further in Theme 2.

Contrast/Boundary Heightening

I know that the reality is that in some regards I'm the direction that that school is going in and that's hard for some people. But there is nothing that can be done and there will be more teachers of difference coming to the school and they're just going to have to deal with it. (Nikki)

Kanter (1993) refers to contrast as a reaction by the dominant group to the perceived threat of the introduction of an outsider to their work environment. McFarlane (2009) implied contrast in the experiences of the Black middle class and their exclusion to access and privileges historically reserved for Whites. At a private school the token teacher can be seen as a threat to the elitist, mono-cultural environment and the privileges gained from belonging. Contrast is manifested through boundary heightening, in which the dominant group "exaggerate[s] both their commonality and the token's difference. They move to heighten boundaries... They erect new boundaries that at some times exclude the token or at others let her in only if she proves her loyalty" (Kanter, 1993, p.222). Boundary heightening overwhelmingly results in isolating the token, and in an educational setting is often exaggerated by differences in teaching and discipline styles and the perception of unwritten rules. McDonald, Harvey & Brown (2005) observed contrast "manifest[ing] in questions and comments from other faculty and staff that cast the minority faculty's racial identity and/or particular cultural practices as something strange, different, and outside of the norm" (p. 12). In the final survey, half of the six respondents reported feeling isolated by their colleagues, while four of the six reported

self-isolating as a result of their experiences. While only half reported being isolated, the theme of feeling isolation was found in all of the interviews.

Maya reports that her school recently hired their first Black male. She took the initiative to talk to him about what he may encounter. “Everything that I predicted and told him might be an issue has been an issue. He’s being isolated down there. They sort of put him on an island in his words.” Charles reports that some of his students’ parents will not speak to him.

I have moms in my class right now who really don’t talk to me that much.

Especially not just one-on-one, and I think I feel no kind of way about that. I think

I’ve also been trained in my upbringing not to feel a [certain] way about that. But

I sense it. I have moms... You know, I’ve been in this school for two months

now... who won’t look me in the eye.

Although Charles reports not *feeling any kind of way* about his experience, he recalls a conversation he had with his Black co-teacher.

She doesn’t talk to you does she?

No, she doesn’t!

I’ve noticed that, too.

I’m like, *yeah...* And we’re not like it’s a big deal and we need to talk to her about

it, whoever the mom is, but we’re not going to act like it isn’t the case. You

know? We’re not going to act like it’s not an issue.

Charles recognizes the boundary heightening from some of the parents in his classroom, but tries to ignore it and focus on his students.

While some teachers feel a forced isolation from their colleagues, others choose to self-isolate. Evan explained why he often chooses to self-isolate.

Usually within the first year of being at an institution, I do the self-isolation because I've had experiences in the past where I've trusted the wrong people, be it good or bad. So I tend to keep to myself more until I find that person.

Self-isolation is used to avoid boundary heightening and rejection by colleagues.

Michelle self-isolates when issues of race come up that she feels she cannot address with her colleagues.

I guess I'm separating myself from them when it has to do with diversity, when it has to do with color. With curriculum I can say what I want. I can keep going, but when it has something to do with diversity, that's when I say, *Ok, that's enough. I don't think they can take any more.*

While some of the boundary heightening is perceived to be based on race, it may also be based on class and experience with private schools. During the group interview, Maya and Leah discussed that some of the issues with *unwritten rules* were more about whether or not a teacher, White or Black, had prior experience within the independent school network. Maya, who was a product of independent schools began, "I also see it with White teachers coming in new as well, depending on their background... So, unwritten rules I do see for people of color at my school but I see it across the board." Leah, whose first experience with private schools was as a teacher at her present school responded.

I would say that I have heard from many young faculty here, faculty of color or not. In fact a straight, White male was in my office yesterday looking for support

and guidance and mentorship because he wants to enter into an administrative position. So overall I would say the culture in the schools... I think there are always those that you see and say, *Oh, they're a favorite child*, whether they're an alum. You know alums are seemingly favored. They know the place as you said. It's probably part of it. It's not so much that they're favored but they have relationships and they know those unwritten codes. But others of us who are not from that world look at it as, *No one is looking out for us. We're not being mentored*. So it was kind of powerful for me to hear that from White colleagues. Boundary heightening, in the form of unwritten rules, seems to be a universal experience among teachers who are new to independent schools. In order to combat the contrast experience all of the participants expressed the importance of finding mentors and allies on the campus. In addition, they all expressed that they feel responsible for becoming mentors to other teachers of color and their students of color. This coping strategy will be discussed further in Theme 2.

Being a token teacher is stressful and demanding. Black teachers report feeling left out of the school culture while feeling “simultaneously visible and invisible on the independent school campus” (McDonald et al, 2005). How do Black teachers justify continuing to teach in this environment, and what strategies and skills do they develop to combat the stressors? The next section discusses the coping strategies used by token Black teachers working in predominantly White and affluent private schools.

Theme 2: Creating a Personal Mission, Over-Performing, and Developing a Support Network as Coping Strategies

Black teachers experience the negative effects of being token employees in a predominantly White institution. Why, then, do they stay at their schools when public schools are more diverse and often pay better? Most respondents credit the teaching environment of low student to teacher ratios, few discipline problems, seemingly unlimited resources, and autonomy. Leah stated that, “The best part about working in independent schools is the autonomy and the commitment to excellence with the resources to support great teaching and innovation.” Kathleen echoed this sentiment.

The best part about working in independent schools is having autonomy. I love being able to develop curriculum and run my classroom without having anyone looking over my shoulder. I enjoy my freedom not to have to teach to standards, but know that if I would like to use them, I can as well. Working in independent schools has also given me the opportunity to experience the world in ways I would never have done so on my own. Whether that is stretching my capacity for being in the outdoors or traveling to a place I have never been before.

Since they have chosen the perks of working at independent schools, Black private school teachers must develop coping strategies to counter the negative experiences of tokenism. Current literature does not fully address these coping strategies, but seems to focus more on what the institution should do to make the environment more inclusive (McDonald et al, 2005). While, institutional change is important, for those teachers currently working in private schools it is imperative to focus on what the teachers can do to cope with the negative effects of tokenism. Theme 2 addresses the lack of empirical research on

documented coping strategies of Black private school teachers, by finding that Black teachers cope with their negative token experiences by creating a personal mission statement, over-performing, and developing a support system (See Table 5).

Creating a Personal Mission Statement

In order to overcome the negative effects of the token experience and specifically the experience of assimilation, the Black private school teachers in this study developed a personal motivation for staying at their schools. Whether it be a desire to touch the lives of the few minority students at the school, to be a positive Black representative to the elite White families at the school, to act as an agent of change within multicultural education and private schools, or to learn the best teaching strategies and eventually incorporate them in a program aimed at minority students; the Black teachers in this study all have found some internal sense of purpose in order to counter the external and internal pressures of being a token.

Of the nine teachers studied, all but two reported that they planned to continue teaching at an independent school for the rest of their careers. They recognize that part of their role within the independent school community is to represent diversity and change. The very fact that they are there, at these historically elite White institutions, is a statement of difference and change. Charles verbalized this awareness,

I think my presence at the school is breaking down so many barriers not just for my kids [that I teach] but also for the parents. So probably the first experience a lot of my kids are having with a Black male is me.

The passion to make independent schools more inclusive was reiterated in the interviews; and all of the participants recognize that change takes time. Leah stated,

I realized it was all about me and what I needed to do in order to help move this institution. Obviously, changing any institution takes years and years and years, and I learned acceptance of that. I learned that if I can stay true to myself I can stay true to the work, and stay passionate and committed about it, and learn to be more patient and waiting, and know that I'm not going to change minority test results in a term. I'm not going to change the number of Black and Latino boys admitted in two years.

Maya, who returned to her alma mater, wants to not only change her school's community, but to change the racial climate in her area.

I'm pretty determined to be the first African American head of a prep school in this region. I'm going to make that happen because I am determined to diversify the head of school pool from this area and I'm going to do that. That's how committed I am to this work... I'm not going to sort of turn my back on leaving a trail for others to do this.

Changing minds takes years, but these teachers are determined.

While a few teachers are looking to make organizational changes, many simply want to be advocates for both students and teachers of color within their schools. When it comes to issues of race and diversity within her school, Nikki said, "I will always speak up. I will always be an advocate." A former public school teacher, Michelle still wrestles with her decision to teach at a private school. She rationalizes,

If Black teachers are not in the independent schools, then how are the children who are not of color going to relate to people of a diverse or global situation if they only have access to White teachers? So I see myself as benefiting both.

Both Michelle and Charles still feel a strong pull to serve a greater mass of Black children. Charles has a clear picture of what he hopes to accomplish during his time in private school.

So my vision is to take a lot of what I learned and to apply it to a public or charter school as a teacher or as an administrator. I'm interested in policy as well but I think I do see myself teaching at least another four years in independent schools because of what I'm learning. I feel like a lot of these skills do transfer over... [Teaching at an independent school] as a career, I don't see it; but I also don't know. It would have to be a position at a school where I have direct impact on not only kids at an independent school but also in urban communities that wouldn't normally have an opportunity to be connected to it because that's why I got into education in the first place, for the love of kids; but, also, as I said earlier, I also have a passion to work and create change in Black communities.

Whether it is to be an advocate for students of color, a mentor to teachers of color, or an agent of change, each of these teachers has developed a personal mission that helps guide them through the uncertain and often unfriendly environments in which they have chosen to work.

Over-Performing

Heightened visibility most commonly leads to a pressure to perform (Kanter, 1993) above and beyond. McDonald, Harvey & Brown (2005) referred to over-performance as a Black teachers creating a "carefully nuanced self-presentation". All of the respondents confirmed feeling pressure to perform above and beyond specifically because of the heightened visibility that comes from being a token Black teacher. Evan,

who has taught in various independent schools across the country, expressed the pressure to be your best all of the time.

No matter how many papers you write, no matter how well you articulate what happened, at the end of the day you're just some random Negro that probably got in here because of some Affirmative Action case or something. That's what keeps you on your toes.

Evan is expressing the nature of the token experience as a reaction to how others perceive you. Performance pressure, as a result of being highly visible, is a way to counter negative stereotypes held by the dominant group. Evan also stated that, "The worst part about being Black and working in independent schools is being twice as good to be seen as half as good as your peers." The token Black teacher feels as if he/she is always working at a deficit. Whether it is a belief that he/she was hired solely because of the color of his/her skin, and not because of intelligence or skill, or a belief in commonly held stereotypes about African Americans being lazy or uneducated, the feeling of heightened visibility and the resulting pressure to perform shapes the token experience. This pressure to perform is felt even when the token teacher feels valued and comfortable within the school environment. Maya expressed feeling completely comfortable at her school; but she, too, felt pressure to perform. "I have not felt isolated but I have felt that I had to prove myself to certain people." Even after years of teaching in independent schools, Pam echoes Maya's sentiment. "I do still feel a considerable amount of pressure... I feel like I've got to be on and be good, and I've got to bring it daily."

Code shifting, discussed in chapter 2, refers to changing one's speech, appearance, and/or thought processes in order to fit into the dominant culture (Jones &

Shorter-Gooden, 2003). The most familiar aspect of code shifting is switching from some type of slang to Standard English in professional or academic settings. Code shifting, a form of over-performing, can be viewed as a coping strategy because it is used to lessen the appearance of difference between the token and the dominant group. The teachers in this study have all learned to navigate their personal and work environments by code shifting. While some respondents did not verbalize this coping strategy, all reported actively code shifting, either, in the way they speak or by being constantly aware of their reactions and interactions in order to overcome stereotypes and low expectations. While most of the participants admitted to shifting their speech at some point during their career, none believed he or she shifted in appearance. Additionally, although none of the participants believed that they shifted their behavior, it can be argued that over-performing, discussed in the last section is a form of code shifting. In addition, many of the respondents reported that they always appear pleasant and happy at work so as to not foster stereotypes of being aggressive. This, too, can be seen as a form of code shifting. Kathleen stated, "I put on the face that I feel like other people want to see from me, my work face. That is how I go about my work day, and when I leave, that is when I let my hair down and I am my other, other personality." Code shifting is a strategy that has been used for most participants since grade school. It has been so immersed in their day-to-day life that often they do not even recognize it. Evan commented on this lack of recognition during the group interview. "I say straight up when you hear me talk, you can tell I've been around a lot of White people." Maya echoes Evan's sentiment.

I know that I code-shift. And I know that I don't... that the way that I speak to the faculty of color that I trust is not the way that I speak in my classroom. I'm aware of that, and I'm aware that my students do it as well.

Leah admitted that for years she did code shift. However, after years of being at the same school, she no longer felt the need. She attributes the change to maturity.

I came to really learn about myself and what my issues were; my own self-repressions, etc. That moved me beyond. I realized the amounts of stress that it was creating to cover, to mask, to shift constantly. And so essentially I stopped. I started bringing my whole authentic self to the job and it's been a very different experience.

The stress code shifting may, or may not present pales in comparison to the stress of adjusting inner thoughts and outward actions. This strategy of believing that you are seen as inferior and that you must constantly overcome that belief takes a toll. "I guess it's sort of shocking when you're dealing with people who have such low expectations for you" (Nikki). Pam explained the pressure she puts on herself.

I am still, even eight years later, very conscious of the fact that I am Black and how everyone sees me; and so it does make me nervous when I go in meetings; making sure I use the right words, and I'm speaking correctly. Do I sound intelligent? Do I sound like I know what I'm talking about? That is some degree of pressure.

Michelle also alters her behavior based on a belief that there is some cultural line that she may cross over and offend someone enough to lose her job.

Where is that line? There is a line, I know. But, where is it? What is that line exactly? I guess I haven't crossed it yet. I always think there is probably somewhere... When I'm having a conversation with the administration I think, *Okay, I've gone far enough. I'm not going to say anything more than this.* I guess I say what I think needs to be heard, up to a certain point, and then I stop.

Pam also expressed her thought process and behavior shift when dealing with conflict. "I do try to be conscious of *angry black woman* syndrome and not coming across in that way. When people come to me with issues I do try very hard to not show a lot of emotion." When "Black women alter their behavior in order to disprove and transcend society's misconceptions about them" (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003, p.66) it is an aspect of code shifting which Jones & Shorter-Gooden (2003) referred to as Battling the Myth. While Michelle and Pam battle the myth, Maya will occasionally use the myth to her advantage.

I feel empowered because I feel that I make people comfortable when I represent who I am. So I think there is something about being authentic in every aspect from language, how I speak. You know breaking from standards sometimes to get my point across in African American vernacular and then coming back into Standard English. You know, all of that. It's part of who I am and how I do my work.

While most of the participants used all of the coping strategies of developing a personal mission, over-performing, and code shifting; they often used these strategies in different ways with different results. In addition to their coping strategies, respondents discussed the roles their colleagues and administrators played in creating a support

network that helped them navigate their day-to-day experiences of tokenism. The next section discusses the importance of allies and mentors to the token teacher.

Developing a Support Network

“Nothing is more persuasive than when you have people advocating for you on your behalf and you’re sort of removed from it” (Nikki). Due to the experience of isolation that results from the token experience of boundary heightening and the range of cultures from school to school, finding support was reported as necessary by all of the participants. This support ranged from friends and family members outside of the school, to other teachers of color at their schools and at other schools, to White colleagues, to division heads, and even to the head of school. It became apparent during the interviews that colleagues, administrators, and associations have the opportunity to play a supportive role in the careers of Black independent school teachers.

Allies. Every participant in the study discussed the importance of having allies. What all of these allies had in common is the ability to listen, relate, and/or advocate. Kathleen describes her allies as “one Black teacher on the high school campus and teachers of color from previous schools I have worked at.” She has not found any other allies at her school with whom she feels comfortable confiding. In contrast, Nikki’s strongest ally is a White male teacher. She recalls how in one of their earliest talks, he confided in her that he grew up poor. Nikki quickly understood,

The reason he was telling me that and sharing that part of his personal history was because he wanted me to understand that he had this experiential connection and understanding of oppression... He shared that with me because, I believe he wanted me to know that I could trust him.

Maya has a much wider range of allies. “I have a very small group of friends who I can confide in, but I find comfort in this mixed group of White and Black teachers and administrators. I have mentorship from my head of school and division head.” The teachers who have found a wider range of support expressed greater levels of comfort and satisfaction at their schools than those who have a very limited network of support on their campuses. Additionally, while having a few allies on campus was important, all of the participants relied heavily on their friends and families not affiliated with their schools.

Mentors. In addition to finding allies, participants discussed the importance of finding mentors, teachers who are established at the school and can provide guidance and direction. While allies were there to listen, support, and advocate; the mentor’s role is to observe, critique, instruct, and advise. In the initial survey, four of the nine of the participants reported having a formal mentor. Two reported having an informal mentor, and three reported having no mentor at all (Chart 6). In addition, five of the nine reported having mentored someone else (Chart 7). However, in their individual interviews of all the respondents discussed the importance of having an established mentor at the school to support and guide new teachers. Michelle, who did not have mentor, reported difficulties adjusting to her school’s culture during her first years. “I think if I had a mentor it would have gone a lot smoother.” Although she has spoken with her school administrators about the need for a formal mentorship program, one has not been established. Michelle has taken it upon herself to mentor new teachers at her school; however, she feels limited in what she can do. “I can help her at the end of the day. I can help her with suggestions and say come on down and watch me teach this but she needs someone in there watching her

teach and giving her feedback.” Although Charles, a young teacher, has not had a formal mentor, he has not struggled the way Michelle did because he actively sought out mentors from the start of his career.

You know you’re always learning as a teacher; but [I’m at] that point in your career where you could kind of learn from people and bring stuff to the table and it’s alright because you’re young and your profession is like, *Yeah, you totally don’t know this yet. Let me teach you.*

Pam’s school has a formal mentorship program. This program compensates the mentors for their two-year commitment to one mentee. In addition, the school provides funds for the mentor to take the mentee out, away from campus “to kind of just you know help the new people get acclimated and the administrators talk to them and take them to dinner”. Pam has found this program helpful as both a former mentee and current mentor. Leah initially found herself struggling at her school as a young teacher new to independent schools.

I asked the woman who is my supervisor now to be a mentor. It hasn’t been “Let’s go out for coffee and let’s go get some sweet potato pie, and all of that”, but in our meetings I can be very honest and say “Hey, can you help me read this? Look, the president of trustees is seeing this, but I’m seeing this. What do you think I should do?” It’s been that. That’s been helpful just to know that I can go to her, that I can call her.

Years later, Leah now actively seeks out new teachers at her school, and offers to mentor them.

I am very big on mentorship. I try to mentor younger folks who come in. Even if they don't want it I'll reach out. Many of them will grab a hand. There are several of us now who have been here for years, so we kind of spread that work with our younger colleagues of color who just want and need that mentorship.

Whether formal or informal, mentorship is vital in easing the transition to independent schools.

Associations. In addition to offering formal mentoring programs, independent schools often pay to send their teachers to workshops, training, and conferences offered by either NAIS or state independent school associations. These professional development opportunities often offer new independent school teachers the guidance they need to begin to navigate their school's culture. Although Michelle was not provided a mentor as a new teacher, she was given multiple training opportunities.

What did help was that I was sent to the responsive classroom training for a week and then I was sent to math training for a week and then I was sent to research-the-project approach training so all of that helped. It helped me know what I was doing.

In addition to pedagogical training and workshops, these associations offer diversity training and affinity group meetings and conferences. Discussed earlier, Leah credits a multicultural workshop for changing the trajectory of her teaching career. The majority of the participants have attended the annual People of Color Conference (PoCC) at least once. This conference offers workshops, panels, and fellowship opportunities to independent school teachers of color across the country whom are often isolated within their schools. While the training and workshops offer support for new teachers, veteran

teachers like Leah still benefit from attending the annual conference. “When I go to PoCC now, I go for some affirmation.” Creating a network of support has been instrumental for all of the participant teachers.

Theme 3: Professional Black Identity Development

When interpreting the professional Black identity development of each participant through the lens of Cross and Fhagen-Smiths’ (2001) modified nigrescence recycling model, it is apparent that these teachers are all in some stage of development (See Table 6). This model involves having a pre-established foundational Black identity, a lifespan encounter which causes the foundational identity to be questioned, and immersion- immersion experience rooted in the Black identity, an acceptance of, or internalization of the new environment and the person’s role in it, which leads to an enhanced, or new, foundational Black identity. As stated in chapter 2, this model is employed because of the recycling, or ability to apply the model repeatedly throughout one’s life and at the onset of an identity challenging encounter.

All participants came to independent schools with at least a foundational professional Black identity. Charles, who recently graduated from a historically Black college and is the least experienced of the participants, had his lifespan encounter when he accepted his current position. While he taught previously at a private school, his former school targeted inner-city Black male youth. Charles is currently in stage three, and is surrounding himself with Black mentors who help him navigate his school community. “I have two other African American teachers who are right there by my side who understand what I might be thinking and going through.” Immersing himself in as

much Black culture as possible, Charles turned down an opportunity to head an academic focused club, and instead is heading a Black male leadership discussion at his school.

In the fourth stage of the modified nigrescence recycling model, Leah has been at her current institution for many years, and she is still accepting her new identity. However, this identity involves the intersection of race and class. As a first generation college graduate, and having achieved economic status that her family does not relate to, Leah's learning to internalize her role in the White affluent world she is now a part of. Her mission involves, not only access to private school education for people of color, but also for people of lower socioeconomic statuses, regardless of race. "I feel a loneliness and isolation in that identity here much more so than I do in a racialized one; and we have tried to create support spaces around class at the institution."

Maya finds herself in the fifth, and final, stage. She is clear that her mission is to affect change in the area of diversity at her school and within her community. Maya feels confident as a mentor to teachers of color and White teachers alike, and says she wants "to move my institution along from the inside out." While a more in-depth study focusing exclusively on the identity development of Black private school teachers should follow this study, the data collected in this study serves as evidence that the professional Black identity development of the participants closely mirrors the Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2001) modified nigrescence recycling model.

Most of the participants had experienced being a token as a student throughout their own educational experiences. Therefore, many came to their current positions having had immersion experiences in college or graduate school. However, this new encounter as a token faculty member resulted in expressions of their Black identity

through immersion experiences like advocacy, seeking out Black mentors and/or mentees, and in joining association affinity groups and/or attending the PoCC. These experiences are often repeated, or recycled, as the teacher experiences negative encounters due to their token status. Identifying the role that the teacher's past experiences and background as a token play in the titration of the effects of tokenism is worthy of a future study and will be discussed further in Chapter 5. Participant background is discussed in Theme 4 as it relates to this question and the formation of the foundational identity prior to the token experiences of the Black private school teacher.

Theme 4: Participants' Backgrounds

An unexpected theme emerged during the interviews. All but one of the participants had either educational or social experiences (or both) that were similar to the affluent and White schools in which they chose to teach. Table 2 highlights that all but one respondent indicated that they attended predominantly White (PW) schools. Three of the participants attended PW private schools, three attended PW and affluent suburban public schools, and two were tracked out of their neighborhood public schools and attended PW gifted and talented programs. In cultural contrast, Horsford (2010) studied the impact of attending segregated schools on the future leadership of Black superintendents of desegregated school districts. It was found that these leaders' "unique perspectives on the complex legacy of school desegregation revealed and reflected *mixed feelings* about mixed schools". What feelings would Black teachers from predominantly White and affluent schools have about new teachers of color seeking employment in private schools and about their own children attending private schools? All eight of these respondents reported that their childhood schooling was isolative and that they had

adjustment and identity issues, yet they all chose to work in schools that mirrored their own school experiences. When asked why they chose to teach at schools that were familiar, yet uncomfortable, the respondents all discussed the autonomy, the resources, and a strong belief in the education of private schools. While all of the respondents would recommend private schools to new teachers of color, they caution that new teachers should talk to current teachers of color at the schools prior to accepting a position. They would also send their own children to an independent school, but ONLY if it is a school where they themselves are working so that they can be an effective advocate for their children. Although they had polar educational experiences from the Black leaders in Horsford's (2010) study, the Black private school teachers similarly reported having mixed feelings, or reservations, about mixed schools. However, although they have mixed feelings, the Black teachers all still deeply believe in private school education. These mixed feelings reveal that teaching is not just about having resources and active and engaged students and families. The social context (Horsford, 2009) of education is an equal consideration when looking at the whole school experience. Does the social context of an independent school education help to develop a private school cultural fluency, the ability to understand and navigate through a different cultural group that allows Black teachers who are products of independent schools to develop coping strategies that better equip them when dealing with token work experiences as adults?

The participants' upbringing and socioeconomic backgrounds were a factor in their ability to develop coping skills to deal with being a token. Leah, the only teacher who had no prior experience with predominantly White education, believes that class is more of a factor at private schools than race. She refers to having a "lower" class

background as “a big dark secret in a place like this. Coming from my background it’s something you should be proud of, but in a place like this it’s something you should be ashamed of.” Of the nine participants studied only three came from working class backgrounds; and of those three, one attended an elite prep school as a boarding student, and one tested into gifted and talented and was placed in predominantly White advantaged schools and school programs. Only one, Leah, truly came from a working class educational and social environment. Socioeconomic status was not a factor in choosing the participants; however, the findings leads one to believe that those who have experiences with environments where they are a token tend to feel more comfortable in the predominantly White and affluent environment. This idea of cultural fluency will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 detailed the findings of the study. It examined the experiences of the Black teacher working at a predominantly White and affluent independent school by providing detailed backgrounds and descriptions of each participant, sharing their interpretations of their experiences within private schools, and detailing their coping strategies and their beliefs about their professional Black identity and how it was formed. Additionally, four emergent themes were discussed in relationship to theory. Chapter 5 discusses the findings in Chapter 4 as they relate to the four research questions, and offers advice from the study participants to other Black private school teachers. Next, recommendations for the recruitment and retention of Black teachers are made. Additionally, Chapter 5 discusses the limitations of the study and the implications on

future research. Chapter 5 concludes with reflections from the researcher and final thoughts.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

Chapter 4 reported the study findings. It introduced each participant, shared their experiences, and discussed their coping strategies and identity development. Through a qualitative case study design, and in response to the main research question and three ancillary questions, phenomenological descriptions of each participant were provided. When answering the main research question and three ancillary questions, four key themes emerged. Theme 1 addresses the main research question. It was discovered that on a daily basis Black independent school teachers experience tokenism, as Kanter (1993) defined it, through isolation, heightened visibility, and role entrapment. Theme 2 revealed that the participants employ similar coping strategies to counter the negative effects of tokenism. These coping strategies include over-performing, developing a support network, and creating a personal mission. The third theme emerged around the Black identity development of the participants. Their Black identity development follows the modified nigrescence recycling model as defined by Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001). The final theme uncovered similarities between the background demographics of the participants and the demographics of private schools. Chapter 5 begins with a review of the research questions and goes on to discuss the findings reported in chapter 4 as they relate to the research questions. Additionally, Chapter 5 gives a summary of suggestions to new teachers of color that came directly from the participants of this study. Discussions of implications for the recruitment and retention of token Black teachers and independent schools' diversity initiatives, and recommendations for future research on

token teachers follow the participant suggestions. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes with reflections from the researcher on the research process.

Review of the Research Questions

- Main research question: How do Black independent school teachers describe their experiences?
- First ancillary question: What coping strategies do Black teachers develop and/or use to navigate the independent school environment?
- Second ancillary question: What roles, if any, do/can colleagues, administrators, and associations play in building a support network for Black school teachers?
- Third ancillary question: How do Black teachers develop a professional Black identity as token employees?

Discussion

Extending the literature on Black public school teachers working in predominantly White school districts (Madsen & Mabokela, 2000, 2003a & b), the participants in this study all reported similar experiences, coping strategies, and Black identity development as token Black teachers at predominantly White and affluent private schools. Specifically, all of the participants reported experiences that mirrored the token experience as theorized by Kanter's (1993) theory on tokenism. The token experience resulted in similar coping strategies for all of the respondents. Additionally, the Black identity development of the participants followed Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2001) modified nigrescence recycling cycle. Finally, all but one of the teachers attended schools and/or lived in neighborhoods as children that had similar demographics and token experiences as the private schools where they now choose to teach. This past experience

as tokens within a predominantly White and affluent school lead to cultural fluency. This section discusses these findings.

The Black teachers all reported feeling highly visible among the administration, their colleagues, their students, and the parents. They were all aware of the fact that they were either the only Black teacher, or one of a very few at their schools. They also noted that their presence represented difference and was part of each school's diversity initiative. This visibility resulted in stress and pressure on the teachers. In order to combat the feeling of heightened visibility and the resulting pressure, the participants reported code shifting their language, speech tone, and even demeanor. All but one of the nine participants reported changing the way that they spoke at some point during their careers (See Table 4). Referred to as "speaking White", this code shifting involved dropping any traces of Black vernacular while on campus and even in off campus school-related functions. Being constantly aware of your speech and language choices was exhausting for the Black teachers and was described as part of their duties at work. In addition to code shifting language and speech, code shifting behavior is a large part of being Black and working at a private school. Reported across the board, code shifting their behavior was seen as an internal pressure to over-perform. This coping strategy was learned as a child and often instilled in them by their parents. Over-performance is a result of a desire to overcome negative stereotypes and lowered expectations based on negative stereotypes, and manifests in Black teachers who work harder and are constantly aware of their image. It is also a result of feeling proud of being chosen to integrate historically White and affluent institutions, and wanting to prove that they are as good as their White counterparts.

Role entrapment was a common experience of the Black private school teachers. This role entrapment was experienced either as being seen as a representative of the Black race and issues of diversity, or as being seen as a stereotype and not as an individual. The first form of role entrapment resulted in teachers taking on race-related roles at their schools. These roles were often formal part-time diversity director positions in which the teachers were responsible for pushing the school's diversity initiative. This push was achieved by arranging workshops and trainings, being involved in recruiting minority candidates and potential students, creating an inclusive curriculum, and assessing and addressing the multicultural health of the campus. Informally, Black teachers become mentors for new teachers of color, advocates for students and families of color, and multicultural resources, or expert ethnics, for their colleagues. Role entrapment also seems to lead the Black teachers to develop personal mission statements that help to motivate their daily work at the schools. These personal mission statements were race-based and included being an advocate for students or teachers of color, diversifying the school curriculum, becoming the first Black person on the school administrative teams, taking the educational practices learned to schools with disadvantaged populations, and even closing the wealth and achievement gaps through increasing the minority enrollment at private schools. Developing a personal race-based mission statement is part of the Black identity development of the token teacher.

As discussed in the section on heightened visibility, the second experience of role entrapment results in code shifting, specifically over-performing in order to break out of the box of Black stereotypes that teachers feel trapped in by their colleagues, administrators, and the White parents of their students. Often Black private school

teachers are one of the few Black people that their colleagues and student's families have actual day-to-day experiences with beyond the stereotypical representations that have formed over their lifetimes. Over-performance, therefore, is not only a coping strategy that results from heightened visibility, but is also a result of role entrapment. Like heightened visibility, role entrapment results in pressure because of increased responsibilities of diversity work and because of working longer hours and feeling responsible to over-perform and combat negative perceptions.

Boundary heightening was experienced in relation to both colleagues and parents of students. This token experience manifested itself in isolation and a feeling that the schools have unwritten rules that the teachers were not privy to. All of the respondents spoke of being isolated from the majority of their colleagues. This isolation included experiences as blatant as passing colleagues in the hallway who do not verbally acknowledge, or even look at, the Black teachers. Some teachers found comfort in self-isolating, eating alone in the classroom and not socializing on any level with their colleagues. The level and length of time of the isolation varied, but all of the teachers felt isolated at some point in their private school teaching career. Additionally, the Black teachers believed that there were unwritten rules about teaching methods and how to advance that they felt left out of. During the group interview it was discovered that the unwritten rules may be a private school cultural misunderstanding, rather than a result of token status. This discrepancy was found as seasoned Black teachers discussed the fact that they have seen this experience in new teachers of ALL races, not just minorities. More research needs to be conducted on this issue to determine if this an experience specifically of tokenism, or if it is an experience that results from being new to a school.

To counter the effects of boundary heightening, teachers develop a network of support on their campuses to include colleagues and administrators. This support lessens the isolation and gives the teachers guidance as they learn to navigate through their new school cultures. In addition to finding support on campus, all of the Black teacher respondents have strong support systems off campus. Family and friends play a huge role in helping Black teachers cope with their daily experiences as tokens by providing a sounding board and by offering them a space where they do not have to feel the pressures of being the token.

Formal mentorship programs, workshops, and affinity group conferences offered by the schools and independent school associations offer further support for Black private school teachers. Formal mentorship programs are essential in enculturating new teachers into a school. Mentors offer advocacy, support, and guidance. Having a formal mentorship program gives the teacher someone to officially go to for guidance, curricular support, and helps ease the feeling of isolation. Formal mentors are the beginning step to finding allies. Forming allies also allows the Black teacher resources they can rely on to help them fulfill their personal missions on their campuses.

In addition to formal mentorship programs, attendance at independent school workshops and trainings offers curricular support and an opportunity to make further independent school connections outside of the individual campus. Additionally, when these workshops and/or conferences are affinity group based, like the People of Color Conference, the token teacher is allowed immersion experiences which help them develop their professional racial identity. After having the encounter experience of being one of a few Black teachers on a new campus, the next developmental step in the

modified nigrescence recycling model is immersion. Offering the Black private school teacher immersion experiences aids the Black professional identity development process. In addition, these immersion experiences allow connections with other Black private school teachers who may be having similar token experiences, thus building a greater support network for the teacher. Affinity group meetings afford the token teacher a safe and supportive place to talk about and work through their experiences as token teachers in predominantly White and affluent private schools. Finally, as they developed their personal missions, the teachers began to find allies, from varying racial groups, who supported them in their mission and their teaching. The teachers in this study developed their professional Black identities as they processed their token status and developed strategies to overcome the negative effects of tokenism.

An unexpected theme that emerged from the research involved the similar educational backgrounds of all but one of the respondents. The Black private school teacher may have experiences as a token in their own educational background. This experience varies. It may be seen as tracking within public schools that takes the student out of the mainstream classroom in to a gifted and talented program with predominantly White students. The educational experience may be a result of living in a predominantly White and affluent community and attending the neighborhood public school with mostly White students. Additionally, having a private school education is also a familiar theme among many Black teachers. However they experience it, all but one of the Black teachers in this study had experienced tokenism during their own formal schooling as children. This theme of one's educational demographics impacting future choices is eye opening and leads to questions of the social impact of education on future choices and

identity development. In addition, it leads to the idea that part of being comfortable within the private school community is possessing cultural fluency. Cultural fluency is “the ability to identify, understand, and apply cultural variables that influence the communicative behaviors” (Scott, 1999, p. 140). In a predominantly White and affluent private school there are cultural norms that are similar from school to school because “part of the institution’s identity is related to race... White is defined as the norm” (Hall & Stevenson, 2007). This norm forms a school culture based on White culture. Private school teachers of color must learn to understand and be able to interact within the culture of the school, or become culturally fluent. Cultural fluency does not only include gaining insight to unwritten rules, expectations, and norms, but also, understanding the tokens role within the culture. As a Black student at a private school the Black teacher learned to understand and accept the token experience. This leads to the aforementioned coping strategies that combat the negative aspects of the token experience. Developing cultural fluency does not change the experiences of tokenism, because tokenism is experienced as a result of the treatment by and expectations of the dominant group. It merely allows the Black teacher to communicate and navigate within the dominant culture- White, affluent, and often elitist- of the private school. In this study, Black private school teachers with prior experiences as tokens often return to predominantly White and affluent schools to become the role model that they did not have as children and/or to affect change in the area of diversity. The implications of this recycling of the new Black elite will be discussed further in this chapter.

In summary, this study demonstrates that Black private school teachers experience tokenism and develop similar types of coping strategies to combat the

negative experiences of tokenism. In addition, they benefit from having formal mentorship programs and from attending workshops, trainings, and conferences. Their identity development follows the modified nigrescence recycling model; and this process can be encouraged by the schools. Finally, knowing the educational background of a Black teacher will help determine their level of comfort, or cultural fluency, within their teaching environment. The next section summarizes the advice that the respondents offered in the final written survey. The advice to new teachers of color coming to predominantly White and affluent schools corresponds with the teachers' experiences and coping strategies as reported in the interviews.

Participant Suggestions for New Teachers of Color

When asked, in the final written survey, to give tips for navigating a predominantly White and affluent school as a teacher of color, respondents' answers fell into three categories that corresponded with the findings from the interviews. The participants reiterated that teachers of color working in independent schools should develop a personal mission, be their best at all times (over-perform and code shift), and find colleagues and mentors who will support them. Their suggestions are similar to the suggestions made by respondents to Brosnan's (2010) survey: find support, know the school culture, go to trainings and workshops, and develop survival skills. The following quotes come directly from the participants and are intended for other teachers of color.

Have a Personal Mission

- “Change occurs slowly and from within; position yourself correctly in order to be a change agent.”
- “Always reflect back on why you wanted to become an educator.”

- “Make your aspirations and dreams known loudly and frequently to leadership.”

Be Your Best

- “Make sure your lessons are well-planned and on point; you must earn the respect of your students and colleagues.”
- “Maintain knowledge of your craft by continuing your education.”
- “Take advantage of faculty development opportunities.”

Find Support

- “Have a mentor teacher of color to you can talk with truthfully.”
- “Have someone with similar demographics - Age, Class... you can talk with honestly.”
- “Find an ally -- if not at the school, then somewhere.”
- “Find at least one ally to keep you sane.”

Implications for Recruitment and Retention

The general purpose of research studies is to affect change and/or extend a body of knowledge. This study, while filling a gap in the lack of empirical research on Black private school teachers, has the opportunity to do both. The aim of this research was to not only understand the experiences and coping strategies of Black teachers in private schools, but to turn this knowledge into recruitment and retention solutions for private school administrators and faculty. During the course of this study, Christopher, a White head of school at a predominantly White and affluent, elite school was interviewed to discuss the actions he has taken towards a commitment to diversity at his school. This particular school had a history of under-enrolling students of color and students from

lower socioeconomic status. In his commitment to a more diverse school community, Christopher has established what he refers to as, a “robust” new teacher orientation and a formal mentoring program to help all teachers adjust to their new environment. In addition, whole school diversity, multicultural, and service projects aim at creating a collective school community involvement in the diversity initiatives. Christopher offers this piece advice to schools beginning to work on their diversity initiatives.

One of the things a school needs to think about is, what is the appropriate pace for your school? You don’t want it to be too slow or too fast. I guess the expression is, *don’t get too far out in front of your troops or you’ll look like the enemy.*

Affecting change in any organization can have its challenges. However, Christopher has proven that it can be done.

What should schools consider when increasing the diversity among their faculty? When addressing a school’s diversity initiative through an increase in faculty of color, schools should take into consideration the school’s commitment to change, current and potential minority teachers’ experiences with similar environments, and the school’s formal mentorship program. The following recommendations extend Brosnan’s (2001, 2001b, 2004, 2009) work on diversity in private schools by offering practical solutions backed by empirical data.

School Mission and Commitment

All of the participants in the study noted that it is imperative that the school not only have a mission statement that details its commitment to diversity, but also, the school must be willing to use its resources, both money and time, to fulfill the diversity mission. “Any effort to hire teachers of color, to be successful, must coincide with steps

to become a multicultural organization” (Brosnan, 2001, p. 479). Leah repeatedly discussed her school’s commitment to diversity and the resources that were allotted to back their commitment. In contrast, Evan was discouraged by the lack of commitment to diversity at his school, and referred to their diversity mission as “lip service”. After developing a diversity statement, schools must begin to commit resources to the mission. “Schools should encourage and support affinity groups of all kinds” (Hall & Stevenson, 2007). This can include allowing teachers space and time to meet with students, families, and/or faculty of color; funding teachers who wish to develop multicultural curriculum for their departments; sending teachers of color to diversity workshops and the annual People of Color Conference; focusing on issues of access as it pertains to socioeconomic diversity, as well as race and ethnic diversity; and addressing issues of race in open and honest discussions with faculty, students, and families. Finally, this commitment can also be communicated by affording candidates of color the opportunity to meet privately with current teachers of color. This commitment will help to lessen the token feeling of isolation experienced by the Black teachers in this study. “Those in charge of hiring teachers of color need to start establishing networks that will connect them to more people of color” (Brosnan, 2001, pg. 483-483).

Candidate/Teacher Background

While it is not the case that only teachers of color who have experience in similar school environments can be successful as a private school teacher, the study shows that these teachers have developed cultural fluency and coping strategies that help them overcome negative effects of being tokenized employees. In line with the findings discussed earlier on the similarities of the participants’ backgrounds, it should be

suggested that private school administrators consider the background of candidates and current employees; and offer adequate support, and understanding, as well as mentorship, to those teachers who may be new to independent schools and/or to predominantly White and affluent schools. “Schools should understand that the culture of the school may feel foreign to incoming educators of color—especially if they did not attend an independent school” (Brosnan, 2010, p. 8). Having no prior experiences with and knowledge of independent schools, Leah felt lost and alone even among other Black teachers who she felt spoke the language of independent schools in a way that she did not. Likewise, Charles, who attended private schools, felt a sort of culture shock when he was first exposed to the culture of the progressive independent school. Understanding the educational and cultural backgrounds of teachers of color will help the school administration support teachers of color. School administrators should also understand that Black teachers come with a foundational Black identity and culture (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001). Private school administrators should encourage teachers of color to immerse themselves in diversity workshops and affinity groups often offered by independent school associations. In addition, formal mentorship by experienced teachers of color should also be encouraged and will be discussed further in the section below.

Formal Mentorship Programs

The importance of a formal mentorship program for new teachers was expressed by most of the teachers and administrators interviewed during this research. One form of mentorship that was instrumental for many of the participants was having a diversity coordinator. Diversity coordinators focus on both students and faculty of color. In order to get a better understanding of the role of the diversity coordinator, Jonathan, the

diversity coordinator for a northeast independent school was interviewed. Jonathan describes his role as a faculty mentor as one in which he works with current faculty on professional development to include diversity initiatives and training. In addition, he works with new faculty and recruitment by attending recruitment fairs.

...seeing people when they come on campus to ensure that we aspire to faculty diversity that mirrors the diversity of our student body; but, then, also making sure all of our faculty, as they enter the school, have had some experiences in working with a diverse population and in diverse areas.

In addition, Jonathan has begun to talk to teachers of color about their experiences. His goal is “to provide a venue for those folks and an outlet for those folks to be able to tell their stories.” Jonathan meets with the faculty of color at his school as a group to offer support.

As a leader and respected member of her school community, Leah mentors the teachers of color at her school. She facilitates informal group meetings for younger teachers of color at her school. In addition, she has organized more formal meetings that have included administrators of color and teachers of color, in order to open lines of communication on issues like understanding how to “get ahead” at the school. Leah discovered the importance of mentorship after years of struggling without a mentor. While in attendance at a workshop where she discussed the troubles she was having, Leah was told to seek out mentors. She believes that having mentors changed the direction of her career.

Mentors do not have to be teachers of color. However, they do have to be people whom the teacher feels comfortable opening up to. Often teachers express the value in

having mentors of color who help them navigate the issues of diversity, and other mentors who help them with issues of curriculum and teaching strategies. Either way, schools must consider developing formal mentorship programs and/or supporting the work of informal mentoring relationships.

Participant Recognition of the Need to Bridge the Gap

In his book, *Our Kind of People*, Graham (2000) introduces one type of Black upper middle class. Born from the segregated South, this Black elite functions as a separatist society hailing from predominantly Black private schools and colleges (Graham, 2000). Graham (2000) describes the Black elite as not only wanting to separate from the White community, but also from the working class Black community. This Black elite is creating a gap between themselves and those who have not achieved the same educational and financial status. In contrast, while also hailing from affluent schools and communities, it was discovered that today's Black private school teachers generally have childhood experience as tokens in predominantly White and affluent schools, as opposed to predominantly Black. In addition, these teachers overwhelmingly support sending their children to predominantly White and affluent private schools. This recycling creates an educated Black elite who, according to their own personal missions, feel a sense of responsibility to further uplift the Black community through education thus attempting to reduce the wealth and achievement gaps that currently exists in America. In contrast to the Black upper-class chronicled by Graham (2000) who have separated themselves from their poor Black roots, the predominantly White private school educated Black teachers look to use their positions to create more space at the table for Black students in public and private schools. All of the Black teacher

respondents strive to be role models and mentors for their students of color and younger teachers of color; however, Charles goes further and discussed wanting to also affect change in the education of disadvantaged Black students in public schools. The Black private school teachers in this study see private school education and teaching practices as a means to reduce the achievement gap, and eventually the wealth gap, between White and Black students.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research on token teachers in schools will expand the empirical research and corroborate the findings and recommendations of this study. Further research should be done on the professional Black identity development of private school teachers, teacher background and success rate at private schools (a comparative study), teachers of color (beyond African American) working at predominantly White private schools, a private school that can be looked at as a model for diversity and inclusion, and Black teachers and/or teachers of color who are tokens in predominantly White and affluent *public* suburban schools. These future studies will help teachers of colors, administrators and their colleagues create school environments that are inclusive and equipped to serve all people.

Professional Black Identity Development Study

While Black identity development was touched upon in this study as it related to the experiences of Black private school teachers, a future study solely devoted to the identity development of Black private school teachers should follow this research. Based on Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2001) modified nigrescence recycling model, this

longitudinal study should follow the identity development of Black teachers in all stages of their careers and from multiple socioeconomic and school demographic backgrounds.

Teacher Background Analysis

Inspired by Leah's revelation that many of her initial insecurities as a teacher new to private school education were a result of class differences and not of race; a comparative study on teachers' backgrounds and their success at private schools would address the question of how well private schools are doing at addressing issues of class diversity. This study should include private school teachers from all grade levels, ages, races, experience, ethnicities, and both males and females. Their experiences, coping strategies, and job satisfaction should be analyzed based on their reported educational and social background. Social and educational background should include whether or not the teacher went to a school with a high percentage of low income families or affluent families; and how racially diverse their schools were. This study, compared to a study on race, could also address whether or not the class divide has more of an effect than the race divide in private schools.

The Experiences of Teachers of Color

This research should be extended to include teachers of color who identify racially or ethnically, as other than African American. It is hypothesized that this future study would present similar results, thus allowing the recommendations from this current research to be generalized for most teachers of color who work at predominantly White and affluent private schools.

“Model” School Study

Further research on private schools that have been “successful” at increasing their diversity within a supportive and inclusive environment should follow this study. A school like Leah’s, described as supportive of diversity initiatives, could be studied as a model for independent schools with similar diversity missions. Leah explained that her school was truly committed to diversity. “It’s been a combination of leadership being committed and passionate, it’s mission driven, and it’s also been about resources. I’m very real when I talk with folks about knowing that difference. We have resources.” Schools that have proven successful in their commitment to diversity with staff, students, and family should be studied through a comparative case study to determine working formulas for effective change. Brosnan (2009) mentions private school diversity programs that have proven successful in their commitments to diversity. Taking his program suggestions and conducting an extensive study on the components of their diversity initiatives and practices and school culture will provide insight and serve as models for other independent schools.

Public School Comparative Study

Further research should be conducted that documents and analyzes the experiences of Black teachers, and/or teachers of color, in predominantly White and affluent suburban **public** schools; and compares it to the findings of Black teachers, and or teachers of color, in private schools. Specifically, this study should focus on the differences in the coping strategies that may occur as a result of school diversity initiatives which afford Black private school teachers support. Diversity/race-related support may not be offered to public school teachers where diversity is not a school goal because public school neighborhood demographics determine the student body.

Reflections

As stated in chapter 1, having had my own experiences as a Black private school teacher, this research was personal in nature. However, the only expectations that I had were that the teachers in the study would report token experiences; and that their identity development may loosely follow the Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) model. I did not assume anything about their coping strategies, backgrounds, and what stages of identity development would be reported. Thus, any personal connection to the study did not affect the results. In addition, the initial interview questions were not leading. Experiences of tokenism were only discussed in an emergent way as participants revealed personal experiences that were characteristically token experiences. In addition, the informal and personal nature of contacting participants using email, Skype, and especially Facebook, where family photos and daily personal posts and interactions are made, allowed the participants to trust me and feel bonded to me, and I to them, more so than traditional research methods of the past. This contact and comfort level allowed for much more personal information to be shared during the data collection process. The data were filled with rich information and stories of painful personal experiences that may have not been shared using less personal forms of contact. Overall, the research experience was rewarding and deepened my commitment to providing the best possible work environment for all teachers.

Conclusion

Black teachers who work in predominantly White and affluent private schools overwhelmingly report having a typical token experience of heightened visibility, role entrapment, and boundary heightening. In order to combat the negative aspects of the

token experience, Black private school teachers develop a personal mission, over-perform, and code shift as coping strategies. In order to create school environments that are inclusive for all teachers, student, and families, private school administrators must understand the experiences of, and coping strategies employed by, their teachers of color. In addition, it is imperative that the schools possess a deep commitment to diversity and offer support that will not only provide guidance navigating the independent school culture, but will also foster the development of the professional racial identity of their teachers of color. This study extended the current literature on Black private school teachers by not only discussing their experiences, but by also detailing their coping strategies and considering their professional Black identity development. By focusing on how current Black private school teachers are successful, this study offers suggestions and coping strategies that can be employed immediately by Black private school teachers who may be struggling. In addition, by uncovering the common background of these successful Black private school teachers, this study offer private school administrators perspective into better mentorship and support of teachers who may not come with similar backgrounds and who may need enculturation into the private school community. While this study offers a look into the experiences, coping strategies and professional Black identity development of Black private school teachers, it is meant to be merely the beginning of the empirical research and necessary dialogue on how to better serve all teachers of color at predominantly White and affluent schools. Further studies are necessary to broaden the research on diversity in private schools.

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

**Social/Behavioral IRB – Expedited Review
Approval Notice**

NOTICE TO ALL RESEARCHERS:

Please be aware that a protocol violation (e.g., failure to submit a modification for any change) of an IRB approved protocol may result in mandatory remedial education, additional audits, re-consenting subjects, researcher probation, suspension of any research protocol at issue, suspension of additional existing research protocols, invalidation of all research conducted under the research protocol at issue, and further appropriate consequences as determined by the IRB and the Institutional Officer.

DATE: July 27, 2012

TO: **Dr. Christine Clark**, Teaching & Learning

FROM: Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects

RE: Notification of IRB Action
Protocol Title: **Black Teachers, White Schools: A Qualitative Multiple Case Study on the Experiences of Racial Tokenism and the Development of a Professional Black Identity**
Protocol #: 1206-4190
Expiration Date: July 26, 2013

This memorandum is notification that the project referenced above has been reviewed and approved by the UNLV Social/Behavioral Institutional Review Board (IRB) as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45 CFR 46 and UNLV Human Research Policies and Procedures.

The protocol is approved for a period of one year and expires July 26, 2013. If the above-referenced project has not been completed by this date you must request renewal by submitting a Continuing Review Request form 30 days before the expiration date.

PLEASE NOTE:

Upon approval, the research team is responsible for conducting the research as stated in the protocol most recently reviewed and approved by the IRB, which shall include using the most recently submitted Informed Consent/Assent forms and recruitment materials. The official versions of these forms are indicated by footer which contains approval and expiration dates.

Should there be *any* change to the protocol, it will be necessary to submit a **Modification Form** through ORI - Human Subjects. No changes may be made to the existing protocol until

modifications have been approved by the IRB. Modified versions of protocol materials must be used upon review and approval. Unanticipated problems, deviations to protocols, and adverse events must be reported to the ORI – HS within 10 days of occurrence.

If you have questions or require any assistance, please contact the Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects at IRB@unlv.edu or call 895-2794.

APPENDIX B: PILOT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Pilot questions are a first draft of the case study interview questions that will be given to friends who have worked in independent schools. They are test questions to insure that the final interviews questions effectively elicit participant responses related to my three key research areas: experiences, coping strategies, and professional identity.

1. How would you describe yourself professionally?
2. How would you like to be described by others professionally?
3. How would colleagues at your school describe you professionally?
4. How would your administrators describe you?
5. If there is any discrepancy: Address any discrepancy between how others describe you, how you describe yourself, and how you would like to be described. If there is no discrepancy: How do you think you were able to achieve a harmonious professional identity?
6. How would you describe your role on the faculty team?
7. Have you had any work related stress? Specific examples.
8. Where do you go for emotional support for work related stress?
9. What types of work related conflicts and concerns have you had?
10. Where do you go for professional support for work related conflicts or concerns?
11. What has been your experience as a Black teacher at a predominantly White private school?

12. Do you think your experiences are related to race, experience, SES, or other factors? Explain.
13. Do you discuss issues of race with anyone on your faculty? If yes, with whom? What is his/her racial identity? How did topics of race become part of your conversation? If no, why do you think you haven't? Would you like to? Do you feel like you have any allies on your staff? How would you begin talking about race with a colleague?
14. How have you been supported as a Black teacher at an independent school, and by whom?
15. How could you be better supported as a Black teacher working in the private school environment? By whom or what organizations? How would this support benefit you?
16. Have you attended any (People of Color) PoC or diversity events aimed at independent school teachers? Which ones and in what year of teaching? Why did you, or why did you not, choose to attend PoC or diversity events?
17. Do you plan to, or would you like to attend any PoC or diversity events in the future?
18. Have you, or do you now, have any PoC or diversity related obligations at your school? If yes, what are they? Did you volunteer or were you asked to participate? If no, were you asked? Do you want to be involved with PoC or diversity related events? Why or why not?
19. Would you suggest a predominantly White private school teaching position to other teachers of color? Why, or why not?

20. Has your view of yourself as a Black person changed since working at a predominantly White private school? How has it changed? or, Why do you think it has not changed?

APPENDIX C: CASE STUDY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These questions were the skeleton of the individual participant interviews I conducted.

Interviews were conducted as more of a conversation so not all questions were asked in any particular order. They include follow-up questions derived from the Case Study Survey 1 from Appendix E.

1. How did you become a teacher, and how did you come to independent schools?
2. How would you describe your school?
3. How would you describe your role on the faculty team?
4. Is there a discrepancy between what your role is and what you'd like it to be? Why?
5. Where do you go for emotional support for work related stress at school and outside of school?
6. What types of work related conflicts and concerns have you had?
7. What has been your experience as a Black teacher at a predominantly White private school?
8. Do you think your experiences are related to race, experience, SES, or other factors? Explain.
9. Is the independent school environment akin to the school environment you experienced? (ES? HS? MS? College?)
10. Do you discuss issues of race with anyone on your faculty? If yes, with whom? What is his/her racial identity? How did topics of race become part of your conversation? If no, why do you think you haven't? Would you like to?

Do you feel like you have any allies on your staff? How would you begin talking about race with a colleague?

11. How have you been supported as a Black teacher at an independent school, and by whom?
12. How could you be better supported as a Black teacher working in the private school environment?
13. Have you attended any People of Color (PoC) or diversity events aimed at independent school teachers? Which ones and in what year of teaching? Why did you, or why did you not, choose to attend PoC or diversity events?
14. Have you, or do you now, have any PoC or diversity related obligations at your school? If yes, what are they? Did you volunteer or were you asked to participate? If no, were you asked? Do you want to be involved with PoC or diversity related events? Why or why not?
15. Would you suggest a predominantly White private school teaching position to other teachers of color? Why, or why not?
16. Has your view of yourself as a Black person changed since working at a predominantly White private school? How has it changed? or, Why do you think it has not changed?
17. Describe a perfect administrator.

APPENDIX D: JOURNAL PROMPTS

The journal prompts were questions and/or scenarios that the participants were asked to respond to in writing, online, and on their own time. The purpose of the prompts was to allow participants to express themselves in writing while gaining more insight on their experiences.

1. Finish the following sentences.

The best part about working in independent schools is...

The worst part about working in independent schools is...

The best part about being Black and working in independent schools is...

The worst part about being Black and working in independent schools is...

2. Finish the following sentences.

My colleagues see me as...

My administrators see me as... When my colleagues see me they see...

When my administrators see me they see...

My students see me as...

My students' parents see me as...

My students of color see me as...

The parents of color see me as...

I see myself as...

APPENDIX E: CASE STUDY SURVEY 1

This survey was used to collect background information and baseline data on each participant. It was formatted in Survey Monkey and administered online to all participants. It was also be used to create follow up questions that were asked during the initial interview (see Appendix C).

1. What is your gender?
2. How would you describe yourself in racial/ethnic terms?
3. What languages, other than English, do you speak fluently? Please write "none" if not applicable.
4. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
5. What was your college major(s)?
6. How would you describe your socioeconomic status (SES) growing up? (lower class, upper lower class, lower middle class, middle class, upper middle class, upper class)
7. What is the highest level of school your father completed or the highest degree he received?
8. What is the highest level of school your mother completed or the highest degree she received?
9. Approximately how long have you been in your current position?
10. Are you a state certified teacher?
11. How long have you been a certified teacher? Skip question if not certified.
12. In what geographical location is your current school?

13. How would you describe your current school's demographics? Check all that apply. (coed, boarding, day, predominantly White, very diverse racially/ethnically, upper class, middle class, lower class, urban, suburban, rural)
14. In what state or U.S. territory do you work?
15. Approximately how many students attend your school?
16. What grade level do you primarily teach?
17. Please list any teams (academic, service-related, athletic) that you coach/advise?
If none, please respond "none".
18. Do you serve on any school or association committees? If yes, which ones? If no, have you been asked to (include which ones)?
19. Please list all grade levels taught in the past.
20. What other grade levels/subjects have you taught in the past?
21. How many years of teaching experience do you have (PUBLIC, PRIVATE, or OTHER)?
22. What subject(s) do you currently teach?
23. Do you have, or did you ever have, a mentor within the independent school systems? If yes, how was this mentorship established (formal, informal)?
24. Are you a mentor to any private school teachers?
25. Are you able and willing to commit to the following in order to participate in this study:
1. spend approximately 20 minutes completing an initial biographical survey online;
 2. spend approximately 30 minutes completing a final survey on overall job satisfaction online;
 3. participate in no more than 3 one hour individual interviews during the 10 month study (interviews will take place at a time and place that is convenient to each participant);

4. spend less than one hour each completing no more than 5 journal entries during the 10 month study online;

5. spend less than 30 minutes per month during the 10 month study interacting with other participants and me via a private Facebook group online.

26. Are you on Facebook? What is your Facebook user name?

APPENDIX F: CASE STUDY SURVEY 2

This survey was an exit survey and summarized participants' experiences with the study and gauged their job satisfaction and chance of retention. It is a wrap-up survey that was administered following the group interview, and at the end of the data collection period. This survey was formatted in Survey Monkey and administered online at the completion of data collection.

1. "Shifting" involves changing the way one normally speaks, acts, walks, dresses, etc. depending on the environment one is in. When you are at work at a predominantly White independent school (PWIS), do you shift the way you act?
2. When you are at work at a PWIS do you shift the way you speak?
3. When you are at work at a PWIS do you shift your dress or appearance?
4. Was the majority of your schooling, K-12, at schools that had demographics that were predominantly White, private, and/or affluent?
5. Do you feel pressure to perform better because you are the one of a few Black teachers at your school?
6. Do you feel as if you are on display, or highly visible, because you are one of a few Black teachers at your school?
7. Do you feel isolated from the majority of the other teachers at your school?
8. Do you purposefully self-isolate when you are working (ex. stay away from the teacher lounge, avoid social interactions)?
9. Do you feel as if you are excluded socially by other faculty members?
10. Do you feel as if you are excluded professionally by other faculty members?

11. Do you feel as if your colleagues validate you as a contributing member of the faculty?
12. Do you feel as if your administrators validate you as a contributing member of the faculty?
13. Do you initiate social interactions with your White colleagues?
14. Do you feel included in faculty collaboration?
15. Do you feel as if you understand your school's culture?
16. Do you feel as if you understand the "rules" to succeed at your school?
17. Do you feel like the voice for Black families at your school?
18. Do you feel like the link between White faculty and Black students at your school?
19. Do you feel like a representative of the Black race at your school?
20. Do you feel the same connection to White students that you do toward students of color?
21. Do you feel as if you are respected as a unique individual by faculty and administrators at your school?
22. Do you plan to continue teaching for the next 5-10 years?
23. Do you plan to continue teaching in independent schools for the next 5-10 years?
24. Do you plan to continue teaching at your present school for the next 5-10 years?
25. Would you send a relative (son, cousin, etc.) to a predominantly White private school?
26. Would you recommend PWIS to a teacher of color?

27. Do you feel as if networking with other teachers of color from other predominantly White private schools would be beneficial to your professional growth and development?
28. Think back to your first years as a Black teacher in a predominantly White school. Who were your original allies? Where did you find comfort? Who did you discuss your work experiences with? Who were your informal mentors? What workshops did you attend? What was your professional identity?
- Your professional identity is how you see yourself at work. You can easily rank the parts of your professional identity by what is most important to you. It is your "I-ams". (For example my **personal** identity begins like this: I am a mom, a wife, a Black woman, a PhD candidate, a runner...)
29. For those of you who have been teaching in private schools for four or more years:
- Now answer those same questions as they apply to your professional life today. Who are your allies? Where do you find comfort? Whom do you discuss your work experiences with? Who are your informal mentors? What workshops do you attend?
- What is your professional identity?
30. Has your support group grown or gotten smaller? Has the cultural look of your support group stayed the same or changed? Do you identify yourself professionally the same ways, with emphasis on the same aspects of your identity or has that changed?

31. What are your top five tips for navigating a predominantly White independent school as a teacher of color?

APPENDIX G: ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These interviews were used to collect background demographics and information, as well as gauge the overall diversity climate of independent schools. The questions were a guide only for the administrator interviews.

1. How would you describe your school's location (urban, rural, etc.)?
2. In what city and state is your school located?
3. Is the school coed? If single sex, which gender do you serve?
4. Is the school boarding, day, or a combination?
5. What is the average income level of the families at your school?
6. What is the percentage of students of color?
7. What is the percentage of Black students?
8. What is the percentage of faculty of color?
9. What is the percentage of Black teachers?
10. What is the percentage of administrators of color, and what positions do they hold?
11. Do you have a diversity initiative for students and/or faculty? (Get hard copy)
12. Does the school provide opportunity (time and finances) for professional development outside of the school?
13. What kind of professional development do faculty members currently attend (leadership, admissions, diversity, new teacher, etc.)? What have they attended in the past?
14. What committees does your school have?

15. What outside committees, if any, do your faculty participate with in representation of the school? In the past?
16. What clubs does your school offer for students?
17. What support do you offer new teachers?
18. What support do you offer teachers of color?
19. How would you rate the overall racial climate among your faculty? (1-10, 10 being highest)
20. How would you rate the overall racial climate among your students? (1-10)

APPENDIX H: GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The group interview, conducted via video conference, was done to allow participants to share ideas and discuss their concerns and experience in a group setting. It allowed me to observe dynamics and analyze each participant in relation to the others. The group interview questions emerged from the first survey (Appendix E), the interview questions (Appendix C) and the writing prompts (Appendix D), and were based in the three main research areas: experiences, coping strategies, and professional identity. The group interview encouraged group talk and an exchange of ideas among the participants. In addition, the group interview allowed me, the researcher, to focus on differences and similarities of participants' experiences based on age, experience level, location, student grade level, teacher background socioeconomic status, and more.

Black Teachers in independent Schools Group Interview Outline

- I. Introductions
 - A. Your name
 - B. Type of school, enrollment, state
 - C. Your position
 - D. Years of teaching experience
 - E. Why you agreed to be a participant
- II. Experiences
 - A. Isolation
 - B. Heightened Visibility
 - C. Exclusion from Unwritten Rules
 - D. Representative of Diversity (students and families, curriculum, programs, committees)
 - E. Other?
- III. Coping Strategies
 - A. Self-Isolation
 - B. Immersion in Black Community
 - C. Shifting
 - D. Finding Allies
- IV. Professional Black Identity Development
 - A. Foundational Black Identity- the identity you had prior to this experience
 - B. Life Span Encounter- introduction into the new environment
 - C. Immersion/Emersion- diving into the community which you identify

- D. Internalization of Enhancement- finding a purpose within new environment
- E. Enhanced Foundational Black Identity- the balanced and productive identity
- V. Wrap Up
 - A. Follow Up Questions
 - B. Questions for Abby
 - C. Conclude

APPENDIX I: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear Colleagues:

My name is **Abigail Hasberry** and I am a Ph.D. candidate working under the supervision of **Dr. Christine Clark** in the Department of Teaching and Learning Department at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). I am interested in connecting with African American teachers working at National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) member schools to inquire about their interest in voluntarily participating in my doctoral dissertation research study exploring the experiences of African American teachers in these schools.

More specifically, the purpose of my study is to document and analyze the experiences of African American teachers in predominantly White, independent schools in order to help these schools develop better and, ultimately, good practices for recruiting and retaining African American and other racial/ethnic minority faculty.

Participants in this study would be asked to take part in individual and group interviews, complete online surveys, and record online journal entries. I estimate that each participant would spend no more than a total of 3 hours per month over no more than a 10 month period during the 2012-2013 school year.

More specifically, participants will be asked to:

1. spend approximately 20 minutes completing an initial biographical survey online;
2. spend approximately 30 minutes completing a final survey on overall job satisfaction online;

3. participate in no more than 3 one hour individual interviews during the 10 month study (interviews will take place at a time and place that is convenient to each participant);
4. spend less than one hour each completing no more than 5 journal entries during the 10 month study online;
5. spend less than 30 minutes per month during the 10 month study interacting with other participants and me via a private Facebook group online;
6. spend no more than 2 hours in a group interview during the NAIS 2012 People of Color Conference (PoCC) (to be held in Houston, Texas) in December 2012, if in attendance.

My study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the UNLV Office of Research Integrity.

If you know anyone who might be interested in participating in my study, please forward this email to them and/or have them contact me, Abigail Hasberry, at has1908@cs.com. I will respond to each contact I receive and, if appropriate, arrange for a telephone, Skype, or in-person follow up contact to discuss the study in greater detail, answer additional questions about participation, and, if indicated, complete the participant consenting process.

I appreciate your time and assistance in helping me to identify potential participants for this important study.

APPENDIX J: INFORMED CONSENT

Department of Teaching & Learning

TITLE OF STUDY: Black Teachers, White Schools: A Qualitative Multiple Case Study on the Experiences of Racial Tokenism and the Development of a Professional Black Identity

INVESTIGATOR(S): Dr. Christine Clark, Abigail K. Hasberry

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: Abigail Hasberry, 443-812-2108

Purpose of the Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to document and analyze the experiences and coping strategies of African American teachers in predominantly White, independent schools in order to develop better and, ultimately, good practices for recruiting and retaining African American and other racial/ethnic minority faculty in these academic settings.

Participants

You are being asked to participate in the study because you fit the following criteria: Independent school administrator.

Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: answer interview questions designed to gather demographic and other background information about your school. This interview will take one hour or less.

The researcher may take notes and/or record this interview. The researcher's notes will be transcribed for research purposes only.

Participation in the research project means that all of your contributions (oral and, if necessary, written or otherwise constructed) may be included as data in the study. This data will be de-identified and reported under a pseudonym to protect your identity.

Benefits of Participation

While you may not see direct benefits as a participant in this study, your contributions may help improve African American teacher employment access to and workplace affirmation in independent schools. Your participation will enable the researcher to identify ways that independent school administrators, associations, and faculty (including existing minority faculty), can create and sustain school and classroom environments that will lead to improved recruitment and increased retention of African American teachers and other teachers of color.

Risks of Participation

There are risks involved in all research studies. This study involves only minimal risks; you may feel uncomfortable while being interviewed about your school's historical racial make-up.

Cost /Compensation

There will not be financial cost to you to participate in this study. You will not be compensated for your time.

Contact Information

If you have any general questions or concerns about this study, please contact the researcher,

Abby Hasberry at

ahasberry@me.com or the faculty advisor, **Dr. Christine Clark** at chris.clark.unlv@me.com. If you have concerns about the rights of research subjects or regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted, please contact the

UNLV Office of Research Integrity–Human Subjects at 702-895-2794 or toll free at 877-895-2794 or via email at

IRB@unlv.edu.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study.

You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with the university. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

Confidentiality

All information gathered in this study will be kept as confidential as possible beyond the researcher. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All data from this study will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for 3 years after completion of the study; at the conclusion of this three-year period, the study data will be destroyed.

Participant Consent:

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

Signature of Participant Date

Participant Name (Please Print)

Consent to Audio Record:

I have read the above information and allow the investigator to audio record my interviews for this study.

Signature of Participant Date

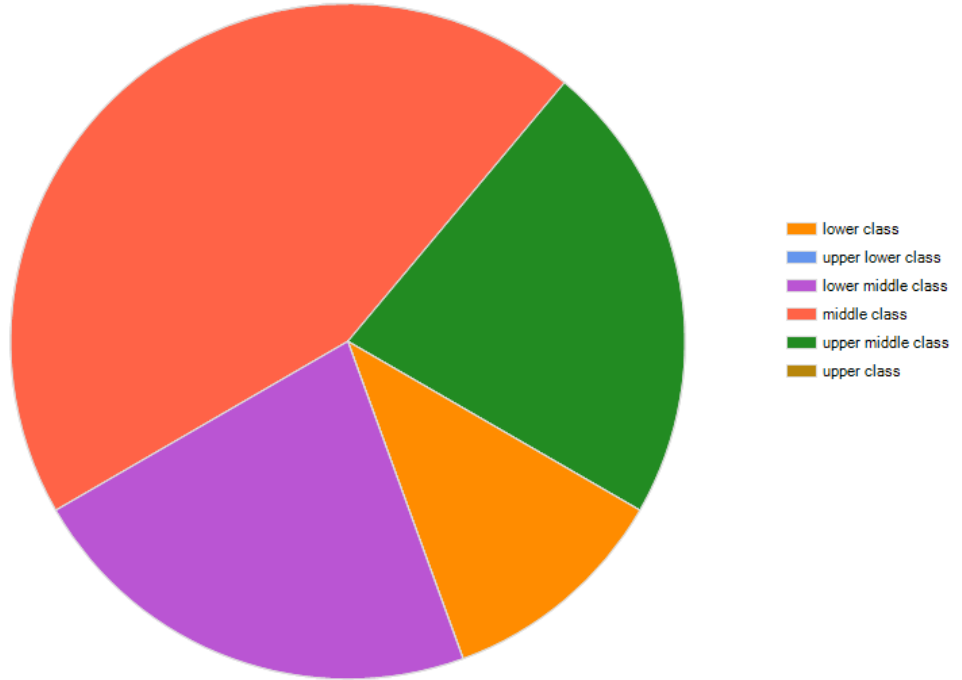
Participant Name (Please Print)

Approved by the UNLV IRB. Protocol #1206-4190

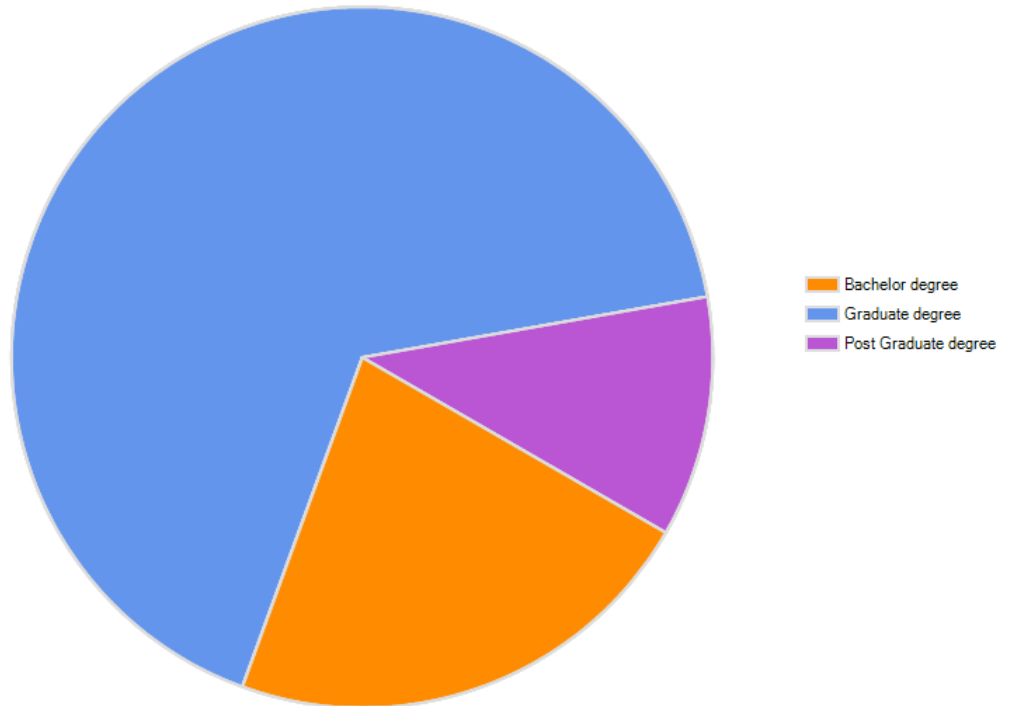
Received: 07-17-12 Approved: 07-27-12 Expiration:07-26-13

APPENDIX K: CHARTS

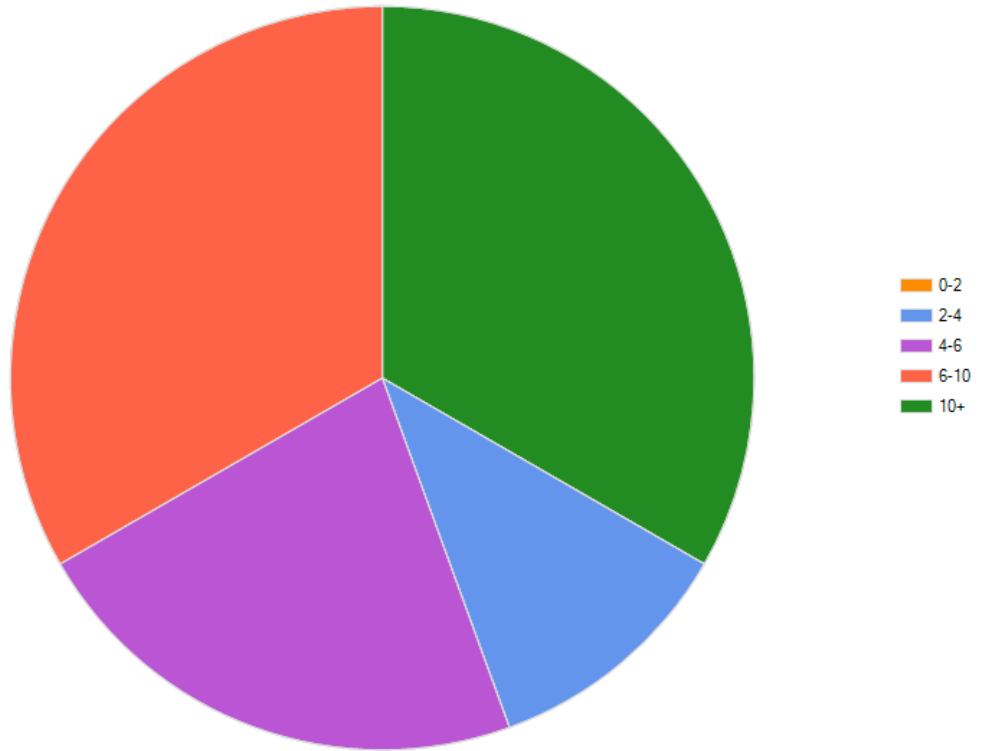
17.How would you describe your socioeconomic status (SES) growing up?



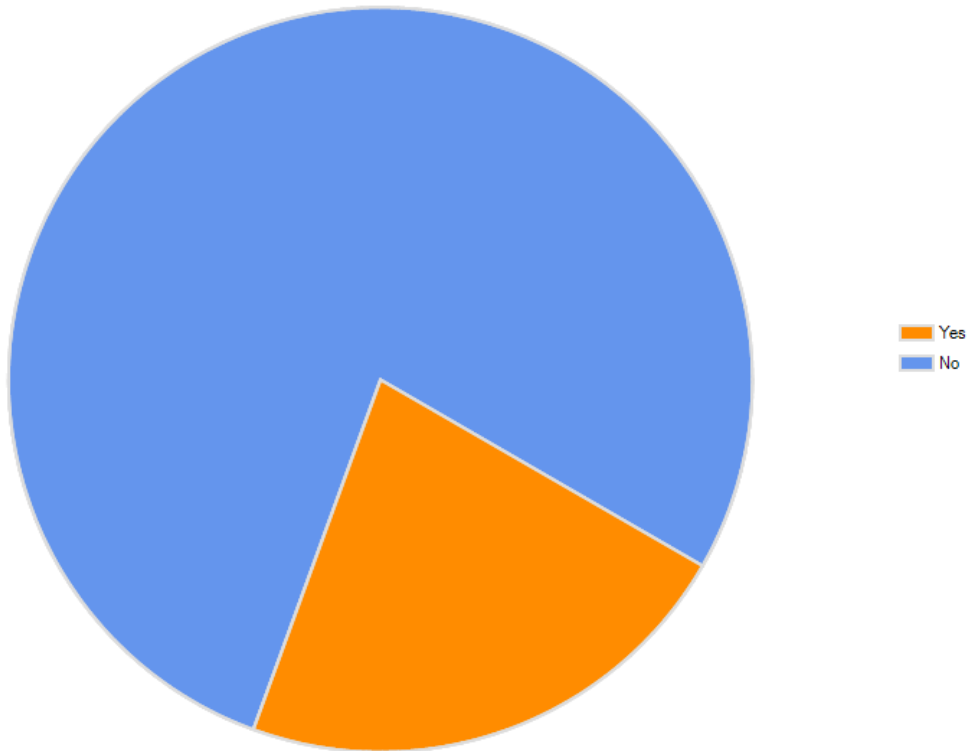
What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?



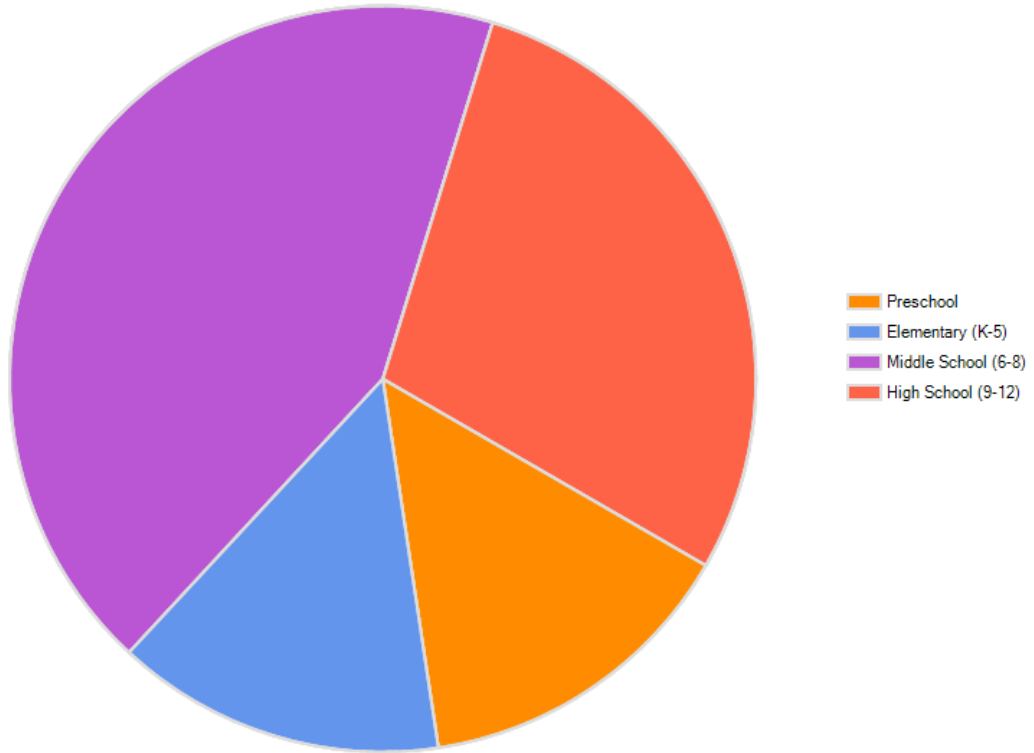
How many years of PRIVATE SCHOOL teaching experience do you have?



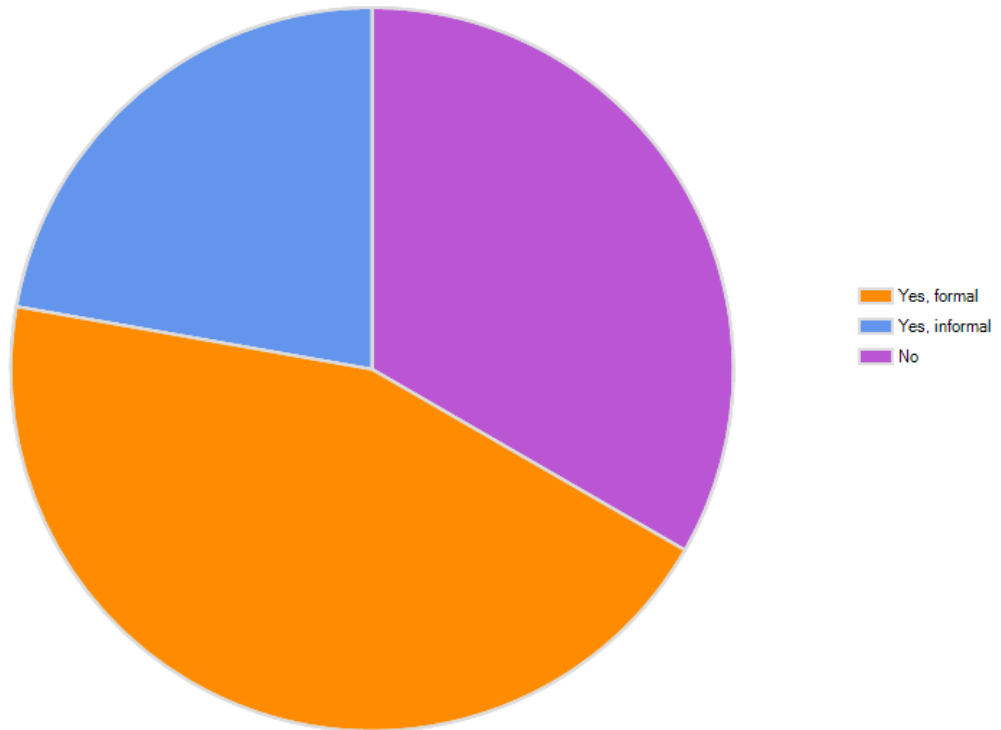
Are you a state certified teacher?



What grade level do you primarily teach?



Do you have, or did you ever have, a mentor within the independent school systems? If yes, how was this mentorship established (formal, informal)?



Are you a mentor to any private school teachers?

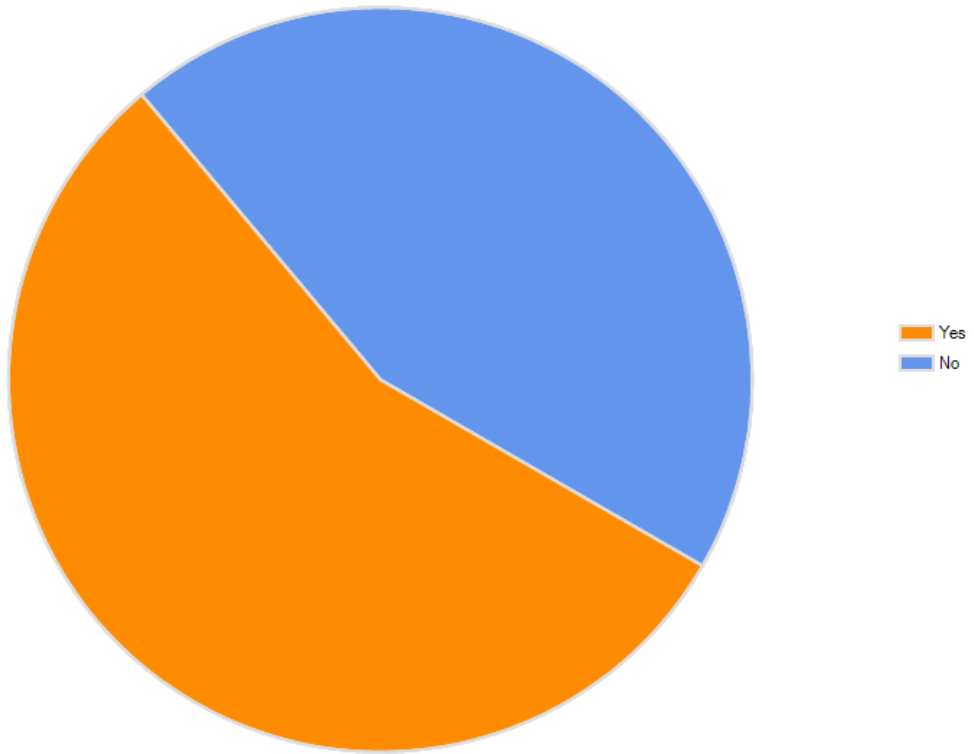


Table 1: Overview of Participants

Participant	Upbringing Class & Region	Schooling Demographic *PW=Predominantly White	Current Region	Years Teaching	Current Grade Level
Charles	Upper Middle, Northeast	*PW, Religious Private	Northeast	2	ES
Evan	Lower Middle, West	PW Public	West	7	MS/HS
Maya	Upper Middle, South	PW Private	South	10+	MS
Leah	Lower, Northeast	PB Public	Northeast	20+	HS
Kathleen	Middle, East Coast	PW Public	West	10	MS
Christine	Lower Middle, West Coast	PW Boarding (East Coast)	West	2	HS
Pam	Middle, Midwest	PW Public	South	10+	HS
Michelle	Middle, Northeast	K-6 PB Public, 7-12 PW Public	Northeast	6	ES
Nikki	Middle, Northeast	PW Public	Northeast	15	MS

Table 2: Participant Background Snapshot

Participant	Upbringing SES & Region	Schooling Demographic
Charles	Upper middle, Northeast	PW, Religious Private
Evan	Lower Middle, West	PW Public
Maya	Upper middle, South	PW Private
Leah	Lower, Northeast	PB Public
Kathleen	Middle, East Coast	PW Public
Christine	Lower Middle, West Coast	PW Private Boarding (East Coast)
Pam	Middle, Midwest	PW Public
Michelle	Middle, Northeast	K-6 PB Public, 7-12 PW Public
Nikki	Middle, Northeast	PW Public

Table 3: Theme 1 Quotes

Participant	Visibility	Assimilation	Contrast
Kathleen	I am under a microscope. People are waiting for me to mess up or cave into their stereotypes of Black people.	I feel like I am the model for the black community.	The worst part about being Black and working in independent schools is the isolation and lack of acknowledgment that you are different and feel different expectations than your colleagues.
Christine	I am always "the only one" or one of very few African-Americans or Blacks; and positions of power at the school are inevitably held by white (male) administrators.		One consequence is that I never feel as though those higher level positions are accessible to me, a Black female
Pam	But at the same time particularly with my colleagues I am still even eight years later very conscious of the fact that I am black and how everyone sees me and so it does make me nervous when I go in meetings.	I kind of shied away from diversity issues while I was watching because I didn't want to be the "voice" of black people on campus if that makes sense. And I didn't want to be the one they always relied on when they needed a face of color.	The chair of the counseling department says well what about awareness of other cultures or something to that effect. Like multicultural awareness and diversity and in her response, she says "well that's included under global awareness." And then she said something about "yeah, this multicultural business, blah, blah, blah." And that just kind of struck me like "Why are you calling it "this business"?"
Maya		Until this year when I formally got on the committee for diversity and inclusion because they kept asking. My response was "I'm always working with the girls in the classroom and with faculty and with curriculum	As an aspiring administrator it is hard to look around and see few African American administrators in the independent schools in my state. There have never been any at my school. There are none at the K-12 schools that surround me. It is frustrating, lonely and intimidating to think about
Charles	You get comments from people like... "We heard about you." Right, so the white girl gets the kindergarten job at an independent school. Did you have to "hear" about her a year in advance or about the year before? I don't know. Or is it not even that you have to hear about her. Is it out of the	Like, at my last school because they were all black boys I was the best expert because I'm a black male and in some ways I feel that because these kids aren't... All of them aren't black males, it's like well "Do you know how to identify?"	I have moms... You know I've been in this school for two months now... who won't look me in the eye... It's a fear of the unknown. A lot of families especially in these situations, they don't have to... They don't have to deal or talk to or be around black men.

	norm? So is the reason that you're talking about me, because I'm out of the norm?		
Leah		Someone asked me if I'd join the community and multicultural development office as an advisor to Black and Latino students.	The worst part about being Black and working in independent schools is...the isolation and loneliness I have felt on many occasions
Michelle	The first year there was one other black teacher. The next year that person was let go and there was another black teacher and that person was let go. Then there were two black males. They were let go in the middle of the year so the following year I was the only black teacher. This year there are two additional, no three additional black teachers.	I often think when decisions are made to include people in a particular group I think that I am included because of color not so much because... Well I guess I feel it's because of color and my years of experience. But a lot of times that I'm included in a certain discussion group or something because of color.	The worst part of being black and working in independent schools is: Assumptions of people that you don't know as much as they do... when I've suggested certain things it's been acknowledged but not carried through. But then when other people have suggested almost the same thing it's worked through in a committee and accepted.
Nikki	I'm one of two teachers of color. In our faculty meetings there are anywhere from 35 to 40 people.		There have certainly been challenges at this school, specifically with some of my administrators, who it's very clear are not accustomed to dealing with people of different... speaking to different... It's a bit unnerving because I don't think they realized I would be as strong of a teacher as I am. That's created some issues
Evan	often I was one of the few black people who weren't staff that they could say "oh, look there's a black person" teaching	I get compared to whoever the "famous black guy" is doing something. They'll say I look like him. If it's <u>Daddy Day Care</u> , they'll say "Oh my gosh, you look like Eddie Murphy!" Or it will be "You look like Samuel Jackson!"	Even though you're in the school, you're not necessarily really a part of the school in the same way as I would say a white teacher who has been there for an equal amount of time.

Table 4: Shifting Quotes

Participant	Shifting
Kathleen	It constantly feels like work... double work... context switching. I put on the face that I feel like other people want to see from me... my work face... That is how I go about my work day and when I leave that is when I let my hair down and I am my other, other personality.
Christine	You try to be as white as possible in school. You try and speak white.
Pam	Making sure I use the right words and I'm speaking correctly. Do I sound intelligent? Do I sound like I know what I'm talking about? That is some degree of pressure. I do try to be conscious of "angry black woman" syndrome and not coming across in that way. When people come to me with issues I do try very hard to not show a lot of emotion.
Maya	I have a level of comfort where I will shift in the classroom. I will shift in front of whoever because that's just what I do... I do shift at home for sure but I have reached sort of a point where it sets people at ease when I am more myself linguistically so I do shift in the classroom.
Charles	Understanding what people's view of you is and understanding that whenever I see anyone I'm smiling from ear to ear and I'm introducing myself. It's right away and it's not something that I hesitate on. As soon as I see somebody I don't [normally] see, it's "Hey, I'm [Charles], etc. etc." And I'm not saying it like I'm talking to one of my fraternity brothers. I'm saying it like I'm talking to somebody whose opinion really matters.
Leah	I would say the same here in terms of code-shifting. I think I stopped when I turned 45. And that was a long time right? Because I went to a workshop actually and when I was entering into the Multicultural Dean position I thought I needed to deal with my own biases and I needed to really get a grasp of things. And the best thing that happened in the workshop is that I came to really learn about myself and what my issues were. My own self-repressions... etc. etc. That moved me beyond. I realized the amounts of stress that it was creating to cover, to mask, to shift constantly. And so essentially I stopped. I started bringing my whole authentic self to the job and it's been a very different experience.
Michelle	I did change the way I respond to children and the way I speak to them as a whole. [In comparison to teaching at public school]
Nikki	
Evan	My voice may change depending on who I'm around or if I'm with you guys individually or whatever. It's funny. I guess you could call that code-switching in a sense.

Table 5: Theme 2 Quotes

Participant	Personal Mission	Over-Performing	Support Network
Kathleen	I believe my presence is needed by the handful of Black or Latino students that exist on my middle school campus out of five hundred students just so they know that someone is there and also I think to show other students of the student body a picture of diversity... of the real world.	No one can understand your experience as a black teacher and the added responsibilities you have for yourself and your community	I go to her [Black colleague on HS campus] and then I have another colleague on my campus... on the middle school campus that I talk to and then I use Facebook a lot. I would say and then other friends that are not teachers
Christine	I feel like I have the role as an African American woman... One of very few that these students see who are some of the wealthiest people and in some of the wealthier families my role includes kind of saying “here is what black looks like” or “here is another version of what black looks like.”		On the middle school campus there is another African American teacher. She and I commiserate a lot and talk about what it means to be an African American teacher.
Pam	I felt like there were some contributions that I could make in a different kind of way [in the area of diversity]. I felt like it would help me grow personally and professionally which is something that’s important to me so, you know while it’s great that I’m a great biology teacher, and I’m a college board consultant and those are wonderful, I don’t really want to be one dimensional.	The worst part about being Black and working in independent schools is...the pressure to perform well and always be on top of everything. It is stressful. Because I feel like I can never have an off day. But I feel like I’ve got to be on and be good and I’ve got to bring it daily.	I talk to my assistant principal from time to time about some things but quite honestly... While I want to have good relationships with my colleagues at work, I don’t come to work to make friends. So, I would think the only person that I’m friends with would be my assistant principal and my academic dean.
Maya	I’m pretty determined to be the first African American Head of a prep school in this region. I’m going to make that happen because I am determined to diversify the Head of School pool from this area and I’m going to do that. That’s how committed I am to this work.	I have felt that I had to prove myself to certain people, particularly when I was going through the process of becoming the department chair for the History department.	I feel as though when I’m stressed, I can sort of distribute that stress among a wide band of colleagues and friends. I have a very small group of colleagues who I would call friends
Charles	So my vision is to take a lot of what I learned and to apply it to a public or charter school as a teacher or as an administrator. I’m interested in policy as	But in this environment I am a lot more cognizant of how am I looking? You know? Am I looking defeated? Am I looking stressed? I need to look	I was really looking for mentors. I was asking anybody. If I would meet somebody at the supermarket I would be like “Please be my mentor

	well but I think I do see myself teaching at least another four years in independent schools because of what I'm learning.	fresh and look excited to be at work every day because their opinion of black men period is kind of on my shoulders. I feel that pressure because you know the pressure is on and you feel people who are uncomfortable.	and teach me what I'm doing." I have two other African American teachers who are right there by my side who understand what I might be thinking and going through.
Leah	The best part about being Black and working in independent schools is...the connections that I am able to develop with other Black and Brown kids by virtue of our common affinity.	The worst part about being Black and working in independent schools is... ALWAYS trying to prove myself, ALWAYS.	My husband, my child, my family. They help me. When I go out and there are battles on any given day. I'm coming home to that. Someone who understands. Someone who has been in it himself and has seen it and I don't even have to speak and there is an understanding. You just mention a name and he'll go "oh, ok." So I think that certainly helps me get through right now. Of course I have a handful of colleagues that I talk to but I told you we're almost 200 and that's a total of five people and I'm going to talk with about my issues.
Michelle	I also think that if black teachers are not in the independent schools then how are the children who are not of color going to relate to people of a diverse or global situation if they only have access to white teachers?	The worst part of being black and working in independent schools is: Always feeling the need to prove capabilities professionally.	The worst part of being black and working in independent schools is: Not having a strong support group.
Nikki	It doesn't matter what will happen in the future. I will always speak up. I will always be an advocate.	I know that I'm subjected to a level of scrutiny that no other teachers are. I'm not given the benefit of the doubt.	I have found an incredible amount of support with the diversity director, the director of academics . . . and then of course my family and a friend who've seen me through
Evan		The worst part about being Black and working in independent schools is being "twice as good to be seen as half as good" as your peers... That's what keeps you on your toes.	When I got married and had a kid that sort of after-hours connection totally fell off. It definitely made it different in terms of my mental health being more or less isolated as far as who I was able to clique into. I can say that to the greater extent I've had people to interact with outside of the school the better I fit in the school.

Table 6: Theme 3 Quotes

Participant	Professional Black Identity Development
Kathleen	<p>The same year I started they had carved out a diversity coordinator position. Having that person on campus was very much a part of building my professional identity as a black teacher. There was someone on campus who was also black in a somewhat admin position that I could go to if there was something about a student of color I was concerned about or with my needs as a staff of color. I found that extremely helpful. She organized student of color lunches. Which was nice, because it was a place where I could be a role model to students of color at my school. We also had staff of color lunches which I think were even more valuable to me. We could talk about our concerns as staff of color candidly with the other staff of color. My first experience at the People of Color conference was just instrumental... going somewhere and seeing all these black staff of color networked in independent schools was just mind-blowing... Every school experience I had I have always been one of a small number. The only places where I found myself in one of a mass was in family events or doing professional outings. I think having those experiences... going to POCC makes me think I can do this.</p>
Christine	<p>I didn't really get militant about my race until about five years ago. My friends think it's cute watching me finally get to that point. I feel very sensitive about all things racial.</p>
Pam	
Maya	<p>But I did experience the immersion as a student many years ago when I went to college. So I think maybe it was something that I experienced earlier. When I got into the professional field, I think I had already worked beyond that. So when I came back to the school from which I graduated, I never had an immersion experience coming back. It's always sort of been the idea of affecting change...curricular change. Wanting to move my institution along from the inside out. I've been an informal mentor and a formal mentor to faculty of color and white female and male teachers really. After having that sort of immersion/submersion in African American studies and socializing, I reached sort of an equilibrium and continued to work on that identity... even until now. But I will say I am oh so comfortable in my skin.</p>
Charles	<p>You just develop... You come to closure with certain things like the fact that Hey, I'm a black man and that means something... They asked me to do a robotics club that I turned down. am working on a committee to put together a black male leadership forum at this school in the Spring.</p>
Leah	<p>For me it was an awakening about class. Coming into the independent school sector, when I look back even on my college experience, I wasn't aware. I didn't have the language. I didn't have the knowledge and that was really the most eye opening piece for me around identity because even in the context of my institution that I'm at right now I am certainly one of the few poor Black people here. Many have either been in independent schools, even if they come from other countries. They are from educated families. There is a legacy and a tradition. I'm first generation to college in my family. There is a whole generation behind me that hasn't made it to college. So I feel a loneliness and isolation in that identity here much more so than I do in a racialized one</p>
Michelle	
Nikki	<p>The bottom line is I've started to become a student of history. So what of the things that I've spent a lot of time reading was about Philadelphia from the 1800s to about the 1840s and the civil rights work that freed men and women were doing along with enslaved Africans and it was amazing.</p>
Evan	<p>In terms of identity development... and once again this is something that I didn't realize until I sat down with my seventh graders over a long period... Is that at least for myself, when I think of myself as a Black male it's almost as like an oppositional identity to Whiteness. So it's almost... "I'm whatever you aren't." That's a bad way to put it off the top of my head but it's like whenever I have to talk about whiteness, especially to my kids when I have to force an almost all white class to use the word "white" or acknowledge their whiteness usually at some point, it's in opposition to somebody else. Acknowledging the difference...</p>

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Curriculum Vitae

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EDUCATION

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), Las Vegas, Nevada

- Doctor of Philosophy, 5/2013
- Curriculum and Instruction

Goucher College, Towson, Maryland

- Master of Arts in Teaching, 12/2000
- K-12 General Education

Towson State University, Towson, Maryland

- Bachelor of Science, 5/1994
- Interdisciplinary Studies (African American Studies) and Sociology

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Diversity

Multicultural curriculum and instruction

Minority teacher recruitment and retention

Racial identity development

Wealth gap within the United States and its relationship with education

Educational achievement gap within the United States

Socioeconomic status and education attainment

PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

GT Tester, 11/2012- present, NISD, San Antonio, Texas

Course Instructor, 4/2011- 8/2012, Teacher Training Institute, Upper Marlboro, Maryland

Graduate Assistant Researcher, 1/2010-12/2010, The Lincy Institute, UNLV, Las Vegas, Nevada

Collected and analyzed data on Nevada nonprofit organizations, UNLV professors' involvement in Nevada nonprofit organizations and funded and non-funded research, and further research and funding necessary for supporting Nevada nonprofit organizations. Aided in creation of database on UNLV faculties' research and off campus involvement.

Assistant Director, 9/2008-6/2009, Bright Horizons Family Solutions, Valero Family Center

Opened brand new facility with a capacity of 232 children for the employees of the Valero Headquarters.

Curriculum Coordinator/Assistant Admissions Director, 8/2005-3/2006, The Harbor School, Bethesda, Maryland

Observed and trained teachers. Evaluated and developed curriculum for preschool through second grade. Served on Diversity Committee of school board.

Director, 6/2003-7/2005, Celebree Learning Centers, Ellicott City, Maryland

Responsible for daily operations of childcare center for children ages six weeks to twelve years old.

College Instructor, 1/2004-1/2005, Anne Arundel Community College-Teach Institute, Arundel Mills, Maryland

College Instructor, 5/2002-5/2003, Central Texas College, Misawa Air Base, Japan

English Teacher and Coach, 8/1999-12/2001, Indian Creek School, Crownsville, Maryland

Taught sixth and seventh grade English classes.

Diversity Coordinator, Indian Creek School, Crownsville, Maryland

Camp Director, Indian Creek School, Crownsville, Maryland

Developed and implemented summer camp for area public middle school students performing below grade level.

PRESENTATIONS

Black Teachers, Racial Tokenism, and Identity Development

- presented to graduate students at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Spring 2013

Diversity in the Independent School

- presented to faculty of Queen Anne School Spring 2001
- presented to faculty of Indian Creek School Fall 2001
- presented to faculty of Calvert School Spring 1999

HONORS

Featured in UNLV *Inspiring Achievements* magazine, Spring 2010

Awarded UNLV Book Scholarship, Fall 2010

Featured in UNLV *Innovations* Magazine, Fall 2010

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROFESSION

Established Diversity Coordinator position at Indian Creek School

Trained many early childhood educators entering the field

Facilitated diversity discussion within private school community

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

CASA San Antonio, Volunteer Advocate March 2012- present

NISD Surrogate Parent Program, May 2012- present

AERA, 2011-present

Wanke Elementary School Advisory Team, 2011- 2012 school year

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated

AmeriCorps, 8/1998-6/1999

MultiCultural Alliance, 8/1998-6/1999

COURSES TAUGHT

Teacher Training Institute

- Child Development Association (CDA) Credentials- Preschool
- CDA Credentials- Infant and Toddler

Anne Arundel Community College, Teach Institute

- Child Development
- Family and Community

Central Texas College, Misawa Air Base, Japan

- Child Development
- Family and Community