

Men's Voices: Black and White Aspiring Principals Reflect on Their Preparation to be Racial Equity Leaders

Journal of Research on
Leadership Education
2023, Vol. 18(2) 228–252
© The University Council for
Educational Administration 2021
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/19427751211069149
journals.sagepub.com/home/jrl



Natalie Rasmussen¹ 
and Candace Raskin¹ 

Abstract

This phenomenological study examined the racial identity development of Black and White men—aspiring school leaders—who had recently completed a principal preparation program as members of a racially diverse cohort of students. The principal preparation program was designed with an unapologetic emphasis on race and addressing issues of racism. The study found that making race and issues of racism a focal point of all curriculum and pedagogy increased participants' racialized realization and produced Black and White male aspiring principals who felt prepared to lead schools through the lens of racial equity.

Keywords

race, Black, White, principal preparation, systemic racism

Introduction

Human beings are products of our collective experiences. For Black people in America, racial identity plays a large part in that experience. Although racial identity exists for White people in America, it often does not rise to the same level of consciousness as it does for people of color. In public K-12 education, one's identities are often measured in terms of representation and achievement. These identities are routinely disaggregated by race—for students, teachers, and administrators. These

¹Minnesota State University, Mankato at Edina, USA

Corresponding Author:

Natalie Rasmussen, Department of Educational Leadership, Minnesota State University, Mankato at Edina, 7700 France Avenue South, 55435, USA.

Email: natalie.rasmussen@mnsu.edu

measures have become established sources of data for the education continuum—depicting Black people on the low-performing end and White people on the high-performing end of what is chosen to be quantified. Many studies show that Black students are overrepresented in school discipline (Gage et al., 2019; Huang, 2018; Young, Young et al., 2018) and special education (Artiles et al., 2010; Shifrer et al., 2011) and underrepresented in gifted or honors programs (Anderson, 2020; Lamb et al., 2019). It has been a common practice to refer to these data as evidence of the “achievement gap.” We take issue with this term as it places the onus for the gap on Black students, their families, and their cultures for being academically and behaviorally inferior. We prefer the ostensibly more enlightened term of the “opportunity gap” (Akiba et al., 2007; Flores, 2007), which has been used to describe the fact that Black people as a whole aren’t given access to the experiences and materials that would allow them to be as successful in these measures as their White counterparts. Unfortunately, merely changing labels does relatively nothing to change one’s history or experiences. A commonly held belief is that this gap is due to a barrier to access—namely poverty. Students who come from financially resourced homes tend to fare better academically than poor students (Sirin, 2005); yet, in several studies for which socioeconomic status is controlled, persistent racially predictable gaps remain (Chetty et al., 2020; Lindsay, 2011; Phillips et al., 1998) which underscores race rather than resource as an indicator for how students of color experience their education.

There have been many educational efforts aimed at ameliorating racial disproportionalities without actually naming race; rather, they use euphemisms and coded language. It is common for programs to use terms like “underperforming” and “at-risk” to describe Black students. These terms frame students as deficient or broken and in need of “fixing” rather than examine the system that consistently produces the Black-White gap. It has been said that schools are not broken; they are producing exactly what they were created to produce: a perpetually White-dominant society (Walters, 2001). What then can schools do to address inequitable outcomes? We propose that this type of transformation must begin with anti-racist school leadership. It is the responsibility of racially conscious, equity-informed school leadership to recognize and address the underlying and unchallenged structures that sustain this White-dominant school experience at the expense of Black students.

Background of the Problem

The racial demographics of K-12 public schools in the United States are rapidly changing. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2019) reports that between 2015 and 2027, the percentage of White students enrolled in public schools is projected to decrease from 49% to 45%. As the collective complexion of America’s public school students darkens, the majority of school districts and school buildings are still led by White leaders. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2019) reported that of the 90,410 principals nationwide, 78% were White, 8% Hispanic, 11.5% Black or African American, and 2.5% other. Given this demographic incongruity between

students and school leadership, and the racially predictable outcomes that schools produce, it begs the question: what percentage of these school leaders have engaged in rigorous anti-racism training or preparation? Most university principal preparation programs have not traditionally included issues and training in racial equity as an integral part of their curriculum and pedagogy (Gooden & Dantley, 2012). As a result, principals are hired to lead schools without ever being required to examine their socialization, notions of privilege, beliefs about race and education, or their racial identity development. Lacking such development, they unknowingly perpetuate white supremacist structures because they are not able to see or address teachers' potential biases, curriculum barriers, or policies that have for decades disadvantaged students of color.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the racial identity development of Black and White men who had recently completed a race-centered principal preparation program—and their perceptions of their preparedness to be racially-conscious leaders. The program and course content were designed to include diverse faculty, intentional racialized conversations, and intentional racial representation of students. By collecting and cataloging these men's voices, our purpose was to better understand their transformation of professional and personal leadership as racialized beings. This study identifies the factors and experiences that affected or contributed to the racial consciousness and racial identity development of Black and White men—aspiring school leaders.

Review of the Literature

Principal Preparation Programs and Racial Equity

Traditional university principal preparation programs remain generally ineffective in preparing aspiring school leaders to address the growing racial diversity in schools (Goddard, 2015), persistent racially predictable gaps (National Assessment for Educational Progress [NAEP], 2019), and the analysis of policies and programs that perpetuate these gaps (Tuters & Portelli, 2017). Principal preparation programs have come under scrutiny for their efforts to produce culturally competent school leaders who were capable of promoting equity, inclusion, and equal access for public education's increasingly diverse student population (Black & Murtadha, 2007; Young, 2015). Hawley and James (2010) surveyed the University Council for Educational Administration programs and determined that principal preparation programs addressed issues of diversity in a one-course approach, focused on socioeconomic issues rather than race, and failed to fully engage in race-centered pedagogy.

Leadership preparation programs that incorporated social justice curriculum often did not place enough emphasis on race. Further, of principal preparation programs that addressed the issue of race, the majority of them rely on a single "diversity & culture"

class or workshop to equip their aspiring school leaders with the necessary skills and dispositions to create equitable environments and practices in schools (Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015).

While few principal programs assess the growth in cultural competence of their graduates (Barakat et al., 2019), some educational leadership preparation programs have tried to incorporate strategies to promote issues of cultural diversity and develop cultural competence (Barakat, 2014). However, it is unclear if these efforts have produced the desired and sustained leadership results (Chan, 2006; Gerstl-Pepin & Aiken, 2012).

Mabokela and Madsen (2005) assert that to be effective change agents and challenge the status quo, school leaders must understand racial, ethnic, and cultural issues. Principal preparation programs must expressly teach aspiring school administrators to lead from a place of equity and inclusion of all students (Barakat et al., 2012; Horsford et al., 2011; Ingram & Walters, 2007). Miller (2021) postulated that to effectively address systemic educational inequities, school leaders must start with developing a language and practice of race consciousness. This first step undergirds a leader's ability to discern and address racial problems and to use their positional power and influence to make their schools equitable for all students. Miller further states that a major portion of leadership development includes an examination of one's core personality, values, and beliefs. This type of internal audit informs how leaders might view their responsibility, urgency, and plan of action for anti-racism work in their schools.

The Racial Equity Focused Principal Preparation Program

There is nothing magical about preparing students for principal licensure; many institutions do this. However, in a world where systemic racism runs rampant yet unchallenged, school leaders must embed their newly minted technical skills into an equity frame to disrupt the inequitable practices and policies that continue to exist in schools. Our university's department of educational leadership faculty designed the principal preparation program with an unapologetic focus on issues of race and racism. The program's coursework, from finance to legal issues and field-based research to supervision, is viewed through the lens of racial equity and asks the essential question: How does race inform or affect principal preparation and leadership?

Racial Equity Embedded Curriculum

The five-semester university preparation program focuses on developing leaders who can lead schools with racial competence. The design of the principal preparation program centered on the development phases outlined in the Theory to Action framework (Figure 1) developed by Raskin et al. (2015), which identifies the stages in a racially conscious educational leadership journey. The required coursework, projects, and artifacts demonstrate the alignment between meeting state-mandated competencies for licensure and developing a racial equity leader.

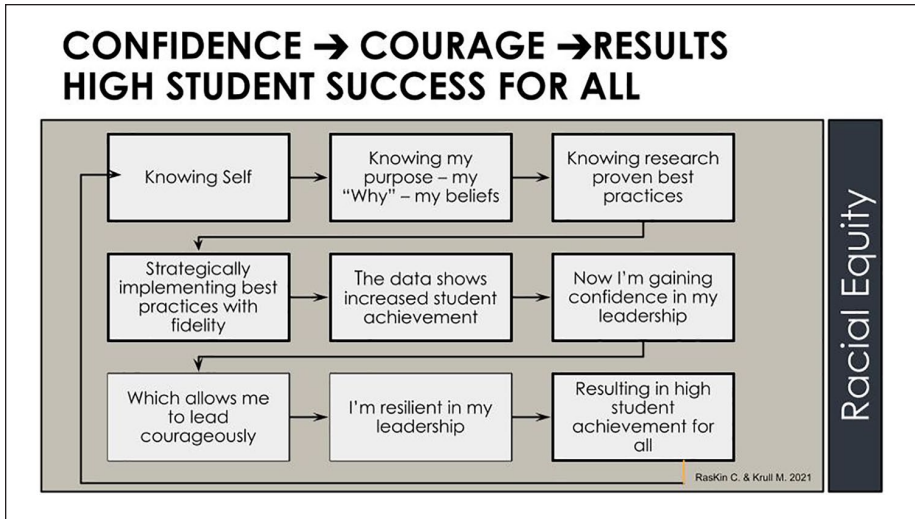


Figure 1. Theory to action framework for racial equity leadership.

Theory to action framework

Knowing self. This starts with implementing the Courageous Conversations About Race protocol (Singleton & Linton, 2005) to engage in conversations with self and others effectively.

Knowing my purpose, my why, and my beliefs. It is critical for school leaders to unpack their beliefs. They must ask and answer for themselves a battery of questions: What is my purpose? What is my “why?” Why do I want to be an administrator? What do I believe about student learning? What do I believe about the achievement of students of color?

Knowing research-proven best practices. Through the use of case studies (Gorski & Pothini, 2018), aspiring leaders hone their decision-making skills. They use tools to collect low-inference data in classroom observations (Danielson, 2007; Sullivan & Glanz, 2013) and distinguish between effective and non-effective instructional practices (Hattie, 2012; Jackson, 2011). Aspiring leaders also use action research to unearth racially predictable patterns in schools (Hendricks, 2017).

Gaining confidence. As aspiring leaders gain skills and experience through coursework, practicums, and leadership internships, they begin to gain confidence. This confidence leads to the courage needed to begin recognizing, questioning, and potentially dismantling systemic racist policies and practices within their schools. Raskin et al. (2015) also contend that strong racially conscious leadership requires individuals to continue to move through the framework.

Theoretical Framework

Racial Identity Development

The study examined the transformation of racial consciousness of Black and White men who participated in a race-centered principal preparation program. The study design incorporated three of the ten principles of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as articulated by education scholars (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2019), specifically, (1) race and racism are central factors in education practices because they occur within the systemic racism of society; (2) the experiential knowledge of people of color is fundamental, and (3) CRT, with its commitment to social justice, is a “liberatory, transformative and emancipatory theory that focuses on racial justice” and serves the goal of ending racial oppression through “systemic change” (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2019, p. 5–6). We acknowledged the first principle by choosing participants from a principal preparation program founded on the belief that systemic racism permeates the institution of education and therefore emphasizes the racial equity dimension of school leadership. Our focus group method addressed the second principle by documenting the voices of Black leaders as they describe their experiences in the program. Thirdly, in bringing each of the participants’ voices into the literature, we expand awareness about the significance of racial awareness in school leadership to create systemic change in education.

As a human developmental model, Helms (1990) racial identity theory provides another framework for analyzing the experiences of the Black and White participants in our study. The first three of Helms’ theories describe processes in which Whites and people of color gradually evolve from lower to higher “statuses” of racial identity, moving away from unresolved identity conflicts to become a more racially mature “and humanistic self” (Thompson & Carter, 2013, p. 18). Helms based her Black and people of color developmental theories on Cross (1971) seminal theory of nigrescence, the process in which Black individuals gradually transcend from believing themselves less-than to embodying confidence and an appreciation of themselves and others “as racial beings” (Thompson & Carter, 2012, p. 18).

Black identity development. In Helms (1990) initial *pre-encounter* phase of Black identity development, Black individuals internalize the belief that they and their culture are inferior to Whites and White culture and attempt to conform to White standards. At the next level, *encounter*, the Black person experiences a pivotal event that leads to the realization that no matter how much they conform, most Whites will perceive them as inferior. This ignites the decision to seek more fully a Black identity and is characterized as the *immersion-emersion* status of identity, in which the Black individual immerses themselves in Black culture and history to emerge with a new concept of being Black, surrounding themselves in symbols of Black culture and associating primarily with Blacks. A strong sense of security about their Black identity then propels them into the final status of *internalization*, where the person not only recognizes and rejects all oppression but also forges a commitment to anti-racist action (Thompson & Carter, 2012).

White identity development. While not parallel comparisons, some elements of Helms (1990, 2020) theory of White identity development theory are echoed in her theory of Black identity development. This process for White people begins at the *contact* stage (similar to *pre-encounter* for Black people), in which White individuals internalize the messages of the dominant White society. Their colorblind perspective exposes a lack of understanding of racism. A challenge to this perspective brings the person into the *disintegration* status of White identity (akin to *encounter*), which often results in feelings of guilt and shame over discovering their Whiteness and the privileges they have unconsciously gained from it. These emotional reactions can move the person into the *reintegration* phase associated with a reactionary belief in White superiority and a “blame-the-victim” attitude. In this state, White people feel their privileges are deserved because of their superior qualities. If motivated to combat those attitudes, White individuals may move on to *pseudo-independence*, the first positive phase of White racial identification. Here, they begin to understand bias, discrimination, and White privilege on an intellectual level, but do not yet see anti-racist work as their responsibility. As their racial identity matures, White individuals enter the *immersion/emersion* status, seriously grappling to make meaning of being White in a racist society. They join with other Whites who share their deep concern for the realities of racism. In the final stage of *autonomy*, the White person has a clear understanding of their White identity and is committed to taking action as an anti-racist.

Both the Black and White racial identity development theories map out a journey of self-examination and transformation, a process launched by an incident that jars an individual out of an unexamined, incomplete state of being. As graduates of a principal preparation program with a focus on leading for racial equity, our participants had embarked upon that journey and were challenged to embrace the goal of taking anti-racist action on behalf of their future staff and students. As racial identity pioneer Cross (2009) explained, racial identity theorizing continues to be relevant because unexamined identities uphold systemic racism: “The research so far is very clear. People regardless of race or culture who hold colorblind attitudes tend to be very friendly to hierarchy; they tend to be very friendly to the status quo” (4:40). We believe that school leaders who are willing to develop their racial identities will be empowered to disrupt policies stemming from current power hierarchies and challenge the educational status quo with a commitment to anti-racist action.

Methodology

This study sought to identify the factors and experiences that affected or contributed to the racial consciousness and racial identity development of Black and White men—aspiring school leaders—who had recently completed a race-centered principal preparation program. The study addressed three research questions:

1. What were the lived experiences of Black and White men in a race-centered principal preparation program?
2. What were Black and White men’s greatest areas of transformation concerning their racial identity?

3. How do Black and White men perceive their preparedness to lead through the lens of racial consciousness?

Phenomenology was employed as a means of qualitative research as it “provides a deep understanding of a phenomenon as experienced by several individuals” (Creswell, 2007, p. 62). The central phenomenon of interest for this study was the lived experiences of Black and White men in a racially centered principal preparation program and their perceptions of their efficacy as racial equity leaders. The choice of studying only males for both groups was driven by the fact that all of the Black students in the principal preparation cohort were male. There were no females of color in this particular cohort. To create homogeneity within and between focus groups, we used purposive sampling to select Black males for one focus group and White males for the second group. This gender homogeneity in both groups eliminated the variable of gender difference in group communication behavior, a variable that may “either reduce the comfort level in the discussion or affect how clearly either perspective gets discussed” (Morgan & Morgan, 1997, p. 36). For example, according to Karakowsky et al. (2004), the larger the proportions of men in a mixed male-female group, the larger the increase in men’s levels of interrupting and power displays. Our study aimed to create environments that allowed the “more free-flowing conversations” made possible with focus-group homogeneity (Morgan & Morgan, 1997, p. 35), a critical element of holding a group discussion about the sensitive issue of race.

The expanded number of Black participants in our program meant that for the first time, we had enough Black students to comprise a research focus group, which ideally consists of five to eight participants (Krueger & Casey, 2009, p. 67.) Embarking on a focus group-based study about these Black participants’ perspectives fulfilled our commitment to addressing a central principle of educational research that utilizes Critical Race Theory: recognizing the experiential knowledge of people of color. “CRT analyses highlight the importance of voice and focus on the experiences of people of color” (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2019, p. 6). Delgado and Stefancic (2017) describe the CRT notion of the Unique Voice of Color as a genuine vehicle to articulate awareness:

Because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, Black, American Indian, Asian, and Latino writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their White counterparts matters that the Whites are unlikely to know. Minority status, in other words, brings with it a presumed competence to speak about race and racism (p. 11).

While the participants had characteristics in common, the fundamental difference among them was their race. Five of the participants were Black and four were White. Through focus group interviews, the researchers were able to comprehend how the aspiring leaders experienced a principal preparation program with curriculum and pedagogy centered on racial consciousness. Further, by listening to the various stories, experiences, and opinions of the participants, a deeper understanding of the students’ perceptions emerged concerning their race.

Table 1. Participants (Pseudonyms Used).

Participants	Race	Age	Position	District type
Myles	Black	53	Teacher on special assignment—equity coach	Suburban Public
Calvin	Black	41	School social worker	Urban Public
Thomas	Black	46	Athletic director	Suburban Private
Michael	Black	55	Student behavior specialist	Rural Public
Bryan	Black	37	Student behavior specialist	Urban Public
David	White	30	Teacher on special assignment	Rural Public
Jim	White	42	School psychologist	Suburban Public
Sam	White	46	Digital specialist	Suburban Public
Jack	White	56	Dean of students	Suburban Public

The Participants

This particular cohort was comprised of 29 students—17 women and 12 men. While it is common to have some racial diversity in each principal preparation cohort, this particular group of 29 students included five Black males. Compared to past cohorts, it was a welcome anomaly to have so many Black men in the same section. They made up 17.2% of that year’s group and 41.6% of the total number of male students. Because of this large sample size of Black men (see Table 1), the researchers capitalized on the opportunity to question if Black and White men experienced the principal preparation program differently and therefore might enter into leadership differently.

All five Black male leaders in the principal preparation program cohort chose to take part in this study. Their ages ranged from 37 to 55 and their positions covered four administrative areas. Myles, 53, worked in a suburban district as a racial equity teacher coach; Calvin, 41, was a social worker in an urban district; Thomas, 46, an athletic director, represented the only private suburban school in the study; Michael, 55, was a student behavior specialist in a rural district; and Bryan, 37, was a student behavior specialist in an urban district.

Four of the seven White males in the cohort chose to participate in the study. The four White males, ages 30 to 56, held four different positions: David, 30, was a teacher on special assignment in a rural district, while the other three all worked in suburban districts. Jim, 42, served as a school psychologist; Sam, 46, as a digital learning specialist; and Jack, 56, as a dean of students. Table 1 outlines the participants and their race, age, and professional roles.

Data Collection

Two semi-structured focus groups were conducted via Zoom video conferencing. Nine participants who completed the same cohort of the principal preparation program met in racial affinity groups: One group consisted of five Black male leaders, the second group consisted of four White male leaders. Both focus groups responded to a series

of ten open-ended questions designed to understand the essence of the students' experience in the program and their assessment of their transformation.

Both researchers—a Black female and a White female—are professors in the Department of Educational Leadership and were instructors in the race-centered principal preparation program from which these men graduated. The Black female researcher facilitated the Black male focus group; the White female researcher facilitated the White male focus group. Each focus group met for approximately 90 minutes, was recorded, and then transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

All transcribed text was uploaded and analyzed through NVIVO 12 (QSR International), a qualitative research analysis software program. NVIVO 12 was chosen because of the potential for complex coding, analysis, code summary reporting, and thematic analysis support.

Bryman's (2008) four stages of qualitative text analysis were implemented. The text was first read in its entirety, establishing broad themes, then re-read and marked for more specific themes. The strength of the theme was determined through indexing, coding, nodes, and frequency. Finally, relationships and connectedness of themes and subthemes were confirmed. To validate the overarching themes and sub-themes, the researchers compared and contrasted their separately identified categories and code frequencies, searching for broad and then specific agreement on nodes and meanings for the coded language used by participants.

Limitations

Both researchers, the Black female facilitating the Black focus group and White female facilitating the White group, are faculty members in the principal leadership program from which the participants graduated. While our common racial identities with our assigned groups and familiarity with each participant may have increased the comfort level of the discussions, our roles as faculty and therefore authority figures and gender "others" may have had a dampening effect on that same openness. Our positions of authority, defined by our "institutionalized roles" as university professors who taught in the program, are examples of a power differential that may inhibit group members' behavior since power can activate "constrained behavior" (Keltner et al., 2003, pp. 265–266). At the same time, our gender may have set up conscious or unconscious barriers to fully authentic discussions. "When a woman facilitates a men-only group . . . the researcher's persona may be highlighted as the group members position themselves in relation to their collective identity and in 'opposition' to the researcher's" (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999, p. 14). We believe that because the students had all successfully graduated from the program, our positive teacher-student relationships engendered the trust and mutual respect that could offset such limitations. However, we are sensitive to the potential impact of power dynamics and implicit gender biases on the data we gathered in these focus groups.

Findings

Zarate and Mendoza (2020) posit that it is not unexpected to notice that our two racialized groups of Black and White men experience and conceptualize their coursework and their aspiring leadership differently. “The divergent responses between White participants and participants of color are important to recognize as an indication of how educators’ racialized standpoints and positionality are relevant to their practice” (p. 72). An analysis of the focus group transcripts revealed two overarching themes related to the lived experiences of aspiring principals. We labeled these two themes as the Causes and the Effect.

The Causes and the Effect

Two major themes emerged from the study. The first theme represents two practices, which we call *Intentional Racialized Conversations* (IRC) and *Racialized Representation* (RR), which are seen as the causes—the “If” in an If/Then statement. These practices, when done in tandem, create the nutrient-rich Petri dish for the development of the second theme, which we call *Racialized Realization*, the effect—the “Then” in an If/Then statement which describes the deepened racial awareness that results from a practice of self-examination. This allows for an exploration of the aspiring leader’s socialization and messaging around issues of race and racism and serves as a lens through which leaders analyze the status quo to disrupt racist policies and practices and replace them with more equitable outcomes for K-12 schools.

Intentional Racialized Conversations (IRC) is the practice of embedding and infusing all classroom discussions with a simple question: How does race show up here? These conversations are deliberately embedded in the content of every course.

Table 2 outlines Helms’ (1990, 2020) work that incorporates the racial identity development of both Black and White people at different levels or statuses. We use this tool to classify and document the sub-themes that illustrate the transformation and growth of the participants’ racial identity status as they moved through the principal preparation program. The two main cause-and-effect themes incorporate sub-themes that describe the unique perceptions and experiences as well as the racial identity statuses of White and Black male aspiring school leaders, as illustrated in Tables 3 and 4, respectively.

Intentional Racialized Conversations (IRC) is the practice of talking about issues of race and racism. Racialized Representation (RR) is characterized by racial diversity in the program. We frequently refer to them as The Causes. As a result, different lived experiences influence the substance of the class conversations and enrich the collective learning of the class as a whole. Our program utilizes a cohort model in which individuals take each of their five semesters of classes together. Consequently, students build relationships, engage in increasingly transparent conversations, and can witness each other grapple with a variety of issues. This cohort’s experience of knowing and sharing multiple perspectives guards against the danger of a single story (Adichie, 2009), where people might wrongly assume that one person’s personal experience is representative of an entire group of people.

Table 2. Black and White Racial Identity Development.

Racial identity development (Helms, 1990, 2020)	
White racial identity status	
Status	Description
Internalization	Not only recognizes and rejects all oppression but also forges a commitment to anti-racist action
Immersion/emersion	Immersion in Black culture and history. Emerges to build a new concept of being Black
Encounter	The realization that no matter how much they conform, most Whites will perceive them as inferior.
Pre-encounter	The belief that they and their culture are inferior to Whites and White culture and attempt to conform to White standards
Status	Description
Autonomy	Has a clear understanding of their White identity and is committed to taking action as an anti-racist.
Immersion/emersion	Seriously grapples to make meaning of being White in a racist society. They join with other Whites who share their deep concern for the realities of racism.
Pseudo-independence	Begins to understand bias, discrimination, and White privilege on an intellectual level, but does not yet see anti-racist work as their responsibility.
Reintegration	A reactionary belief in White superiority and a “blame-the-victim” attitude. In this state, White people feel their privileges are deserved because of their superior qualities.
Disintegration	Feelings of guilt and shame over discovering their Whiteness and the privileges they have unconsciously gained from it.
Contact	White individuals internalize the messages of the dominant White society. Their colorblind perspective exposes a lack of understanding of racism.

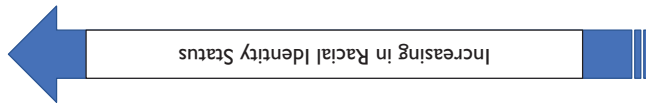


Table 3. White Men’s Subthemes as Compared to Theoretical Frameworks.

Intentional racialized conversations and racialized representation (causes)		Racialized realization (effect)	
Subthemes for White men	White identity developmental status (Helms, 1990, 2020)	Subthemes for White men	White identity developmental status (Helms, 1990, 2020)
Navigating the race work while White	Immersion/emersion	Understanding the real work and fake work.	Immersion/emersion
Conditions that allowed authentic learning	Pseudo-independence	Sharing new knowledge	Immersion/emersion
Learning from my Black colleagues	Contact	White privilege	Disintegration

Table 4. Black Men’s Subthemes as Compared to Theoretical Frameworks.

Intentional racialized conversations and racialized representation (causes)		Racialized realization (effect)	
Subthemes for Black men	Black identity developmental status Helms (1990, 2020)	Subthemes for Black men	Black identity developmental status Helms (1992, 2000)
Authentic engagement in race work	Internalization	Wearing my Blackness	Internalization
Navigating while Black	Encounter	Knowing how to lead as my authentic self	Internalization
		Skills gained to lead with racial consciousness	Internalization

The overarching themes of The Causes were further refined into subthemes. From the analysis of our data, the following subthemes emerged and were aligned with Helms’ (1992, 2020) Racial Identity Development. We categorized the subthemes according to race.

The Causes: IRC + RR Subthemes—White Men

Learning From My Black Colleagues—Contact

David demonstrated the lowest racial identity status of *contact* when he described his experience in the introductory class discussion about a talk show host who was fired

because she expressed her opinion, on-air, about the legitimacy of the use of blackface for entertainment purposes:

I can remember talking about it, and I was sitting next to one of our Black male colleagues, and I kind of mumbled something like, ‘Man, I have no idea what they’re talking about,’ and he looked at me in a way of, like, ‘Are you kidding me? Like this isn’t new.’

Jack also initially demonstrated the *contact* racial identity status that exposed his naïveté as he shared some of the tolls that classroom racial discussions took on him.

I can’t tell you how many times I went home on a Saturday after class and told my wife I was just exhausted. We talked about when [urban school] went down to play [rural school] in basketball, and the kids in [rural school] held like Trump 2020 signs and I said some comment that I thought was so smart. I said, ‘They should have not pulled the kids off. They should have played the game and then had a discussion about it.’ And one of the Black guys in our class said, ‘No.’ And he just completely explained how everything I had said was wrong. And I sat there, and I shook my head, and I was like, ‘Yeah. You’re right.’ That was just totally from my White perspective, and that was completely wrong. And those experiences in class made me realize I need to shut up a little bit and listen more.

David reflected on the arc of his learning and how having been in a cohort with these Black men during their time in the program had exposed him to their lived experiences and how they differ from his own:

And we talked about one of our colleagues who was basically arrested for no reason because of the color of his skin by a White male. Now fast-forward to where we are now, and yet he’s willing to help me, a White male, learn from that kind of stuff and let me listen. So, yeah, my perception has changed, but it took me having to go through my whole administration license, master’s, principal degree to get there. So I think the biggest aha, at least through this conversation that you put together, is why isn’t this stuff being taught earlier in the program. Because it’s that important, right?

These comments illustrated a theme that emerged about White men’s naïveté regarding racism and their own white privilege. This became apparent to them after initial contact—impactful conversations with their Black cohort members.

Conditions That Allowed for Authentic Learning—Pseudo-independence

Jim shared his assessment of what he perceived as growth in his White racial identity from the colorblind *contact* stage to *pseudo-independence*, where he begins to see the systemic nature of racism. While this realization caused him discomfort, he saw its value:

You need those experiences to develop, and that’s what the program did, is it forced us to go out and get into some uncomfortable situations and do some things and have some

difficult conversations. And I think that stumbling into those things has built up my ability—my confidence, maybe, and maybe even a little bit my comfort level of being able to go in and have those harder conversations.

Jack's significant growth in White racial identity from *contact* to *pseudo-independence* is evident as he sees the difference between his tasks and his work as an anti-racist leader:

We have this equity committee, and we would kind of like dance around some of the issues and stuff like that, and then everybody would feel good about ourselves when we were done with the committee meeting. And then I was like, 'Well, wait a minute. What do we do for kids?' So, it's sort of—I don't want to say transformation because I'm afraid of that word, but it is sort of an evolution of I'm starting to be more cognizant that I need to listen more and figure out where my perspective is coming from.

At this nascent stage, the White men were beginning to understand bias and privilege on an intellectual level. They were open to taking in more information but were not yet compelled to purposeful action.

Navigating the Race Work While White—Immersion/Emersion

The practice of engaging in Intentional Racialized Conversations (IRC)—talking about issues of race and racism—was uncomfortable for the White men. Jim embraced the discomfort:

Disequilibrium equals growth, and I think what kept popping into my head when we were having discussions is that you have to be uncomfortable and you have to name it. And by avoiding it, ignoring it, pushing it to the side, it's just going to get bigger and you're hurting kids. So, you have to name it and you have to address it.

At this point in their White identity development, the men realized that discomfort was inevitable and necessary for growth. In order to "practice" having these conversations, the White men engaged in discussions among themselves about the meaning of being White.

The Causes: IRC + RR Subthemes—Black Men

Navigating While Black—Encounter

Black men experienced discomfort during the Intentional Racialized Conversations albeit for different reasons. Calvin expressed his discomfort with engaging in IRCs as he wondered whether or not the White people would take race conversations seriously:

I guess the hardest thing for me is always when we get to subjects that are harder for us culturally, I'm always looking to see how the lighter skins in the room, if you will, are

reacting to what's being said and whether or not it's another opportunity for them to brush it off or are they actually engaging. So that's always something that sits with me, and it makes me wonder, how are people really taking in the information?

Calvin finds race conversations uncertain as Whites may perceive him and his perspective as inferior. Several Black men found this especially true when interacting with White men whose identity development is in the *contact* stage, the dominant culture's sense of superiority and colorblindness to issues of race and racism.

Authentic Engagement in Race Work—Internalization

Thomas acknowledges the hazards of doing racial equity work and advocates for self-care while continuing as an anti-racist leader:

We talk about racial fatigue, but especially when you're in this work and you're trying to make conscientious changes to inequities, there is a level of fatigue that you are going to go through, and you have to be able to take care of yourself. You have to have healthy outlets. You have to have your go-to spaces where you know you can kind of take a step back, reflect.

For Black aspiring leaders, although taxing, these exercises in racial equity work can serve as a form of validation that they are not “crazy” for feeling the effects of seldom-addressed attitudes, policies, and practices. They recognized these effects as a necessary part of the work.

The Effect: Racialized Realization—White Men

White Privilege—Disintegration

All of the White men understood that as White people they had the inherent privilege of stepping into and out of the racial equity work as it suited them or when it became uncomfortable. They also reflected upon the advancement of their racial equity journeys and how they might remain engaged in racial equity work after leaving the principal preparation program. Jim acknowledged his plans to keep growing as a racial equity leader:

It's easy to step out, but I think we keep giving examples of how we have to keep stepping in. We can turn our backs, but more and more we're not. I mean, it's happening all around us all the time. So as far as my plan, I realize that I still have a lot to learn. So the whole scholarship—learning, learning more, hearing more, paying more attention, and then having those conversations, stepping into things, and just being a part of it—I think it's just using my voice more frequently, and hopefully [being] more educated in my sharing of ideas.

The White men acknowledged the new and steep learning curve and the need to educate themselves. They were now willing to actively seek knowledge and the wisdom of others.

Sharing New Knowledge—Immersion/Emersion

Demonstrating *immersion/emersion*, Sam shared one of the revelations that shaped how he plans to assist other White people on their respective racial equity journeys:

It's that relationship and leadership with empathy because I know that it's taken me a long time to learn to see through the veils. My first experience was when you look at Band-Aids and doesn't it always look like your [White] skin color? And I was like, 'Oh, my God, I never even addressed that idea.' As a leader, what do I do for people that look like me in order to help them get through those veils so that their interaction with the kids of color isn't an unintended consequence but is a matter of growth for everybody involved?

The White men realized that their equity journey was vital. They saw the need to seek out and engage in racial discourse with other White leaders. They started to recognize specific standards crucial to measure their preparedness to lead for Black and Brown students.

The Real Work Versus the Fake Work—Immersion/Emersion

White men experienced a type of enlightenment that allowed them to see the real work ahead and what that would require of them. Jack espoused moral imperatives invoking nouns like “responsibility” and “courage” to illustrate what would be required for him to stay committed to the work of racial equity:

I think part of it is a personal responsibility, but it also is the courage to keep your fingers dirty. So, when things come up that, you know, different issues in schools, like for our school, it's honors stuff and suspensions and attendance. So, it's the willingness to stay involved in those issues that are almost cyclical or tornadic in that they just never seem to go away, yet they're very effective or affective to students of color. And you have to stay involved with those issues and continually talk about, 'So what's our agreement? What's our system of solution for this stuff, and how does that affect all students?' I think that's important, to stay engaged.

For David, it was important to stay engaged in the work and to continue his learning so as not to disappoint those who had invested in his racial equity development and leadership:

For me it's simple. How am I going to continue to do it? I'm just going to do it, right? And the reason why is because we were lucky enough to have the best colleagues of color in our class that were willing to change this. I don't want to let those people down. I don't want one of them to end up at my school and be like, 'Hey, what are you doing right now? We had this whole community and relationship and cohort and here we are five years down the road, and you're back to hurting kids.'

In the analysis of the qualitative data using Helms' (1990, 2020) theory of White identity development, we found that most of the White males entered the program at the contact status, lacking an understanding of racism. As they moved through the program,

they progressed to the *immersion/emersion* status and began grappling with the meaning of being a White man in a racist society. Jack described the shift in his thinking:

When I started, I thought in order to be a principal I've got to learn how to hire and fire and do budgets and set up the master schedule and stuff like that, and then I realized very quickly that . . . I didn't know what I didn't know, especially about race-centered issues and especially how race plays into the school system.

The White men were now able to see the difference between the fake work of tasks with its façade of busyness and the real work of leading for racial equity and social justice. This new sense of preparedness helped them to realize their maturing racially-conscious perspective and growth as aspiring leaders.

The Effect: Racialized Realization—Black Men

Wearing My Blackness—Internalization

Thomas, demonstrating the *internalization* status, shared his role in striking that balance:

For me, like I was always raised to be confident, wear my skin like it's the best suit somebody has ever bought at the best store. But for me, I guess my development came in how to improve transferring that energy and that mentality to kids that are struggling with it in the school. So this program kind of gave me more of a foundation of how I could do that in a way where they could take it to any school and be like, I have the language that I need to wear my Blackness the way I want to wear it. So that was probably the biggest thing for me.

Leading As My Authentic Self—Internalization

Myles, too, embodied the definition of *internalization* when he offered his perspective on what is necessary for establishing a common understanding of expectations for functional working relationships with White staff:

I've had this conversation with many people: What is your experience being in a peer-to-peer relationship or a hierarchical relationship with a Black man? Have you ever had that experience? And just being able to name that oftentimes helps start a healthier conversation, because it helps them be able to realize that, wow, I've never had this experience, or it's been a limited experience. So in that conversation, I'm just kind of bringing them to an awareness that, 'You know what, this may be one of the first times or one of the very few times, and you need to just have that as a framework as we have whatever conversation we're going to have.

The Black men expressed a confidence in their leadership not previously experienced. They recognized their gifts, talents, and preparedness to lead authentically in what was almost guaranteed to be a majority White staff.

Skills to Lead With Racial Consciousness—Internalization

Calvin had a similar initial thought but came to a different revelation that represented the elevated Black racial identity status of internalization:

I thought we were going to be sitting in these math classes learning how to do budgets and learning about curriculum in a very hard-structured way, but my perception has changed. Leadership is just as much about who you are as it is about the tasks that you have to do, because you have to be able to uniquely, unapologetically, and openly bring yourself and what you offer to the position to make it different than what's already going on.

Addressing the study's research questions regarding the participants' racial identity transformation, the Black men entered the preparation program at the highest status of *internalization* (Helms, 1992, 2020) with a strong sense of their racial identity. They looked at technical skills through more of an integrated, *both/and* perspective that spoke of the skills themselves and their understanding of their usefulness in both discovering and disrupting racial inequities. They grew to understand that they, in fact, had power and began to realize how best to use it. Thomas shared an example of this realization:

If I've got that person that really needs to understand the finance part of inequities in education, I feel like I have now some resources where I can pull from and say, 'Let's look at these budget things, and let's look at school reform and see how money played a role.' I feel like I have those tools now where I can really come to different stakeholders in different ways just based on where I need to meet them.

Michael described his new understanding of the power he has to question the status quo. Demonstrating *internalization*, Michael felt prepared to confront inequitable school practices:

It taught me to look at kids who are being warehoused because they were special education students that were being kept in certain areas around the school and not being allowed to get out and feel free and participate in things that normal and regular students do. And it provided me the opportunity to have a voice and to say things to administrators, like, why are these kids just being kept down here and not being allowed to participate in certain things because we look at their behaviors as something unacceptable and something that we can't control?

Discussion

Our findings suggest that the principal program positively influenced the participants' orientations toward anti-racist leadership by requiring them to examine their socialization, biases, and sources of information. These findings also propose that the routinization of intentional and purposeful interracial and intra-racial conversations about race and racism produce quality and depth of understanding for both groups.

This illustrates the causes and effect equation: intentional race-centered conversations in a racially diverse group yield the realization of who leaders are and how they do their work as racial beings. In addition to gaining the technical skills, experiences, and competencies required for administrative licensure, these men were able to apply the growth in their racial identities to promote anti-racist school leadership.

As a result of many of the program's structure and assignments, White men—for the first time—had to examine their racial identity and assess its role in how they approached their work and their aspirations for school leadership. This led to several instances of self-discovery. They acknowledged that they now noticed previously unrecognized patterns, practices, and policies that contribute to racially predictable outcomes. Once they saw it, they could not unsee it. There were several instances of growing pains and discomfort, specifically as they reported incidents where they had to admit that they didn't know what they didn't know. This was a humbling experience for them, particularly as their identities had socialized them to "have the answers." The program affected their values and beliefs and bolstered their perceptions of being equipped to lead racial equity work in education.

The Black men, although further along in their racial identity development, grew in their own estimation of their preparedness, skills and positionality to become anti-racist leaders. For them, Racialized Realization is the burgeoning identification of their value, the importance of their perspective, and the understanding of their worth as leaders. This newly realized legitimacy—both inwardly, how they now saw themselves, and outwardly, their perceptions of how others saw them—reconceptualized their beliefs and abilities around what leadership could look like as Black men. Additionally, Black leaders gained the confidence to see the work that needs to be done differently and, newly empowered with the skills, can see a pathway and a role to disrupt the inequitable practices within their schools and systems.

To produce racially conscious leaders, principal preparation programs must be redesigned for intentionally embedded conversations about race throughout all coursework, and they must actively recruit students of color to ensure diversity of thought and lived experiences. If these first two conditions are met, there is an increased probability that students will experience the Racialized Realization that will inform their perspective and decisions (Figure 2).

We caution that none of this will work if the instructors of administrative preparation programs haven't first engaged in their own racial equity journey, ensured racialized representation of faculty, and become skilled in creating learning spaces for racial equity discourse. As Gustafson et al. (2020) state:

Race work does not occur without difficult conversations. These difficult conversations need to focus on practices, data, and the examination of personal beliefs and behaviors in relationship to race, leadership, and student achievement. Faculty wishing to achieve results must first commit themselves to the work of educating themselves about issues of race and racism in educational settings—both historically and currently. There is no shortage of information available in the form of journal articles, books, podcasts, and video presentations (p. 10).

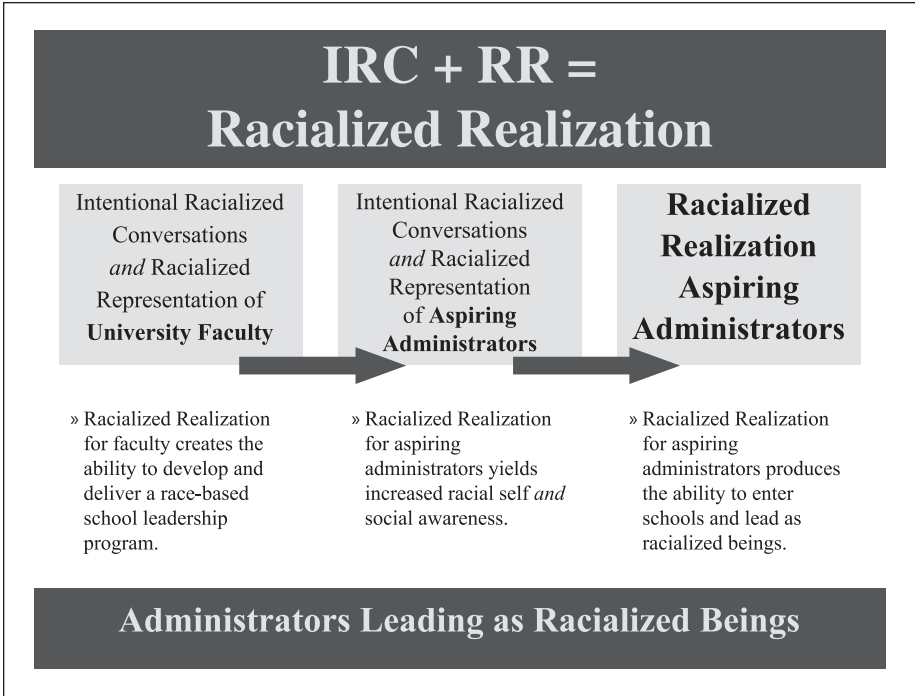


Figure 2. Intentional racialized conversations and racialized representation yields racialized realization.

Racial equity in schools is the civil rights movement of our era. This starts with leadership. Principal preparation programs have the singular ability to transform K-12 leadership by emphasizing racial equity discovery and training for aspiring administrators. If leaders make racial equity learning, growth, and best practices a priority, this will affect their policies, budgeting, scheduling, staffing, and the professional development they provide those staff—all for the betterment of their schools. We can develop racially conscious principals. It can be done. We know how to do it.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iDs

Natalie Rasmussen  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9199-9208>

Candace Raskin  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9443-1789>

References

- Adichie, C. (2009, July). *The danger of a single story*. TED Global. https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story
- Akiba, M., LeTendre, G. K., & Scribner, J. P. (2007). Teacher quality, opportunity gap, and national achievement in 46 countries. *Educational Researcher*, 36(7), 369–387. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x07308739>
- Anderson, B. N. (2020). “See me, see us”: Understanding the intersections and continued marginalization of adolescent gifted Black girls in U.S. Classrooms. *Gifted Child Today*, 43(2), 86–100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1076217519898216>
- Artiles, A. J., Kozleski, E. B., Trent, S. C., Osher, D., & Ortiz, A. (2010). Justifying and explaining disproportionality, 1968–2008: A critique of underlying views of culture. *Exceptional Children*, 76(3), 279–299. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001440291007600303>
- Barakat, M. (2014). *Preparing culturally competent educational leaders* [Doctoral dissertation]. Auburn University. https://etd.auburn.edu/bitstream/handle/10415/4210/Maysaa%20Barakat_All%20Dissertation_Final-rv_D.pdf?sequence=2&ts=1455792555516
- Barakat, M., Reames, E., & Kensler, L. A. W. (2019). Leadership preparation programs: Preparing culturally competent educational leaders. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 14(3), 212–235. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1942775118759070>
- Barakat, M., Reames, E. H., & Kensler, L. A. (2012). Educational leadership preparation programs: Preparing culturally competent leaders. In J. A. Aiken & C. Gerstl-Pepin (Eds.), *Defining social justice in a global context: The changing face of leadership* (pp. 212–235). Information Age Publishing.
- Barbour, R. S., & Kitzinger, J. (1999). *Developing focus group research: Politics, theory and practice*. SAGE.
- Black, W. R., & Murtadha, K. (2007). Toward a signature pedagogy in educational leadership preparation and program assessment. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 2(1), 1–29.
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social research methods* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Chan, T. C. (2006). Are educational leadership candidates prepared to address diversity issues in schools? *AASA Journal of Scholarship & Practice*, 3(3), 4–12.
- Chetty, R., Hendren, N., Jones, M. R., & Porter, S. R. (2020). Race and economic opportunity in the United States: An intergenerational perspective. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 135(2), 711–783.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Cross, W. E. (1971). The negro-to-Black conversion experience. *Black World*, 20(9), 13–27.
- Cross, W. E. (2009). *Post-Obama: The continued relevance of identity theorizing and research*. YouTube. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/preview/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C1779028
- Danielson, C. (2007). *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching* (2nd ed.). ASCD.
- DeCuir-Gunby, T., Chapman, T., & Schutz, P. A. (2019). *Understanding critical race research methods and methodologies*. Routledge.

- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (3rd ed.). New York: University Press.
- Flores, A. (2007). Examining disparities in mathematics education: Achievement gap or opportunity gap? *The High School Journal, 91*(1), 29–42. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hsj.2007.0022>
- Gage, N. A., Whitford, D. K., Katsiyannis, A., Adams, S., & Jasper, A. (2019). National analysis of the disciplinary exclusion of Black students with and without disabilities. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 28*(7), 1754–1764. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-019-01407-7>
- Gerstl-Pepin, C., & Aiken, J. A. (2012). *Social justice leadership for a global world*. Information Age Publishing.
- Goddard, J. T. (2015). A tangled path: Negotiating leadership for, in, of, and with diverse communities. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 14*(1), 1–11.
- Gooden, M. A., & Dantley, M. (2012). Centering race in a framework for leadership preparation. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 7*(2), 237–253.
- Gooden, M. A., & O'Doherty, A. (2015). Do you see what I see? Fostering aspiring leaders' racial awareness. *Urban Education, 50*(2), 225–255.
- Gorski, P., & Pothini, S. (2018). *Case studies on diversity and education* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Gustafson, J. A., Rasmussen, N., & Raskin, C. F. (2020). START with race: Designing racially conscious principals. *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice, 16*, 8–23.
- Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. Routledge.
- Hawley, W., & James, R. (2010). Diversity-responsive school leadership. *UCEA Review, 52*(3), 1–5.
- Helms, J. E. (1990). *Black and White racial identity: Theory, research, and practice*. Praeger.
- Helms, J. E. (2020). *A race is a nice thing to have: A guide to being a White person or understanding the White persons in your life* (3rd ed.). Cognella.
- Hendricks, C. (2017). *Improving schools through action research: A reflective practice approach* (4th ed.). Pearson.
- Horsford, S. D., Grosland, T., & Gunn, K. M. (2011). Pedagogy of the personal and professional: Toward a framework of culturally relevant leadership. *Journal of School Leadership, 21*(4), 582–606.
- Huang, F. L. (2018). Do Black students misbehave more? Investigating the differential involvement hypothesis and out-of-school suspensions. *The Journal of Educational Research, 111*(3), 284–294.
- Ingram, I. L., & Walters, T. S. (2007). A critical reflection model to teach diversity and social justice. *Journal of Praxis in Multicultural Education, 2*(1), 23–41.
- Jackson, Y. (2011). *The pedagogy of confidence: Inspiring high intellectual performance in urban schools*. Teachers College Press.
- Karakowsky, L., McBey, K., & Miller, D. L. (2004). Gender, perceived competence, and power displays: Examining verbal interruptions in a group context. *Small Group Research, 35*(4), 407–439. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496404263728>
- Keltner, D., Gruenfeld, D. H., & Anderson, C. (2003). Power, approach, and inhibition. *Psychological Review, 110*(2), 265–284. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.110.2.265>
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2009). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. SAGE.
- Lamb, K. N., Boedeker, P., & Kettler, T. (2019). Inequities of enrollment in gifted education: A statewide application of the 20% equity allowance formula. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 63*(4), 205–224. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986219830768>

- Lindsay, C. A. (2011). All middle-class families are not created equal: Explaining the contexts that Black and White families face and the implications for adolescent achievement. *Social Science Quarterly*, 92(3), 761–781. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2011.00791.x>
- Mabokela, R. O., & Madsen, J. A. (2005). ‘Color-blind’ and ‘color-conscious’ leadership: A case study of desegregated suburban schools in the USA. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 8(3), 187–206.
- Miller, P. (2021). Anti-racist school leadership: Making ‘race’ count in leadership preparation and development. *Professional Development in Education*, 47(1), 7–21.
- Morgan, D., & Morgan, L. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research* (2nd ed.). SAGE.
- National Assessment for Educational Progress. (2019). *The nation’s report card*. <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading>
- National Center for Educational Statistics. (2019). *Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups 2018*. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2019/2019038.pdf>
- Phillips, M., Brooks-Gunn, J., Duncan, G., Klebanov, P., & Crane, J. (1998). Family background, parenting practices, and the Black-White test score gap. In C. Jencks & M. Phillips (Eds.), *The Black-White test score gap* (pp. 103–145). Brookings Institution Press.
- Raskin, C. F., Krull, M., & Thatcher, R. P. (2015). Developing principals as racial equity leaders: A mixed-method study. *AASA Journal of Scholarship & Practice*, 12(2), 4–19.
- Shiffrer, D., Muller, C., & Callahan, R. (2011). Disproportionality and learning disabilities: Parsing apart race, socioeconomic status, and language. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 44(3), 246–257. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022219410374236>
- Singleton, G., & Linton, C. (2005). *Courageous conversations about race*. Corwin.
- Sirin, S. R. (2005). Socioeconomic status and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review of research. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(3), 417–453. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543075003417>
- Sullivan, S., & Glanz, J. (2013). *Supervision that improves teaching and learning: Strategies & techniques*. (4th ed.). Corwin.
- Thompson, C. E., & Carter, R. T. (2013). *Racial identity theory: Applications to individual, group, and organizational interventions*. Routledge.
- Tuters, S., & Portelli, J. (2017). Ontario school principals and diversity: Are they prepared to lead for equity? *The International Journal of Educational Management*, 31(5), 598–611. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijem-10-2016-0228>
- Walters, P. B. (2001). Educational access and the state: Historical continuities and discontinuities in racial inequality in American education. *Sociology of Education*, 74, 35–49. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2673252>
- Young, J. L., Young, J., & Butler, B. R. (2018). A student saved is not a dollar earned: A meta-analysis of school disparities in discipline practice toward Black children. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, 17(4), 6. <https://doi.org/10.31390/taboo.17.4.06>
- Young, M. D. (2015). The leadership challenge: Supporting the learning of all students. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 14(4), 389–410.
- Young, M. D., Spicer, D. E., Perrone, F., Clement, D., Player, D., Thornton, M., & Doiron, T. (2018). *Examining the principal preparation terrain: Issues of supply, demand, and capacity*. University Council for Educational Administration. <http://3fl7112qoj4l3y6ep2tqpwra.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Supply.Demand.ProgramCapacity.pdf>
- Zarate, M. E., & Mendoza, Y. (2020). Reflections on race and privilege in an educational leadership course. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 15(1), 56–80. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1942775118771666>

Author Biographies

Natalie Rasmussen is an internationally recognized educator and presenter in racial equity education. With over two decades of K-12 classroom and administrative experience in both public and independent schools, she is an associate professor and Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Candace Raskin is an internationally recognized education researcher and presenter in racial equity leadership. After serving in Minnesota public schools for more than two decades, from teacher to superintendent, Raskin served as the director of the Center for Engaged Leadership and professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Minnesota State University, Mankato. She is the founder of CFR Equity, a consulting firm focused on training racially conscious school leaders.