

## Beverly Daniel Tatum, Ph.D.

The following materials and articles provide consistent documentation of the remarkable impact of Beverly Daniel Tatum's work on the improvement of racial and multicultural relations in education and throughout American society. --- Raymond Wlodkowski

Resume .....	1-5
Book Jacket for <i>Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?</i> .....	6-7
<i>Harvard Educational Review</i> Article: "Talking about Race, Learning about Racism: An Application of Racial Identity Development Theory in the Classroom." .....	8-31
Letter of Appreciation from President Clinton .....	32
Acknowledgement by <i>Essence Magazine</i> as One of Fifty Women Who Are Shaping the World .....	33
<i>Liberal Education</i> Article: "The ABC Approach to Creating Climates of Engagement on Diverse Campuses." .....	34-40
<i>Journal of Social Issues</i> Article: "Family Life and School Experience: Factors in the Racial Identity Development of Black Youth in White Communities." .....	41-50

## **Beverly Daniel Tatum, Ph.D.**

Office of the President  
Spelman College  
350 Spelman Lane, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30314

(404) 270-5001 (office)  
(404) 270-5010 (fax)  
btatum@spelman.edu

### **Education:**

Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI	1984
M.A. in Religious Studies Hartford Seminary, Hartford, CT	2000
M.A. in Clinical Psychology University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI	1976
B.A. in Psychology, magna cum laude Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT	1975

### **Employment:**

President, Spelman College, Atlanta, GA. 7/02- present.

Acting President, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA. 1/02-6/02.

Dean of the College and Vice President for Student Affairs, Mount Holyoke College,  
South Hadley, MA. 1998 – 2002.

Professor, Department of Psychology and Education, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA.  
1996 – 2002. Served as Department Chair, 1997-98.

Associate Professor, Department of Psychology and Education, Mount Holyoke College,  
South Hadley, MA, 1989 - 1996.

Visiting Scholar, Stone Center, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA, 1991-92.

Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Westfield State College, Westfield, MA,  
1986-89.

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Westfield State College, Westfield, MA, 1983-86.

Lecturer, Department of Black Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1982-83.

Dissertation Fellow, Center for Black Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1980-81.

**Beverly Daniel Tatum**  
**Page Two**

**Clinical/Consulting Experience:**

Clinical Psychologist, Independent Practice (MA Lic. #4643) 1988-1998.

Individual and group counseling. Consultation and training on issues of diversity and multicultural organizational development.

**Publications:**

**Books:**

Tatum, B. D. (1997). *"Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" and other conversations about race*. New York: Basic Books. (Named 1998 Multicultural Book of the Year by the National Association of Multicultural Education.) Fifth anniversary edition, issued 2003.

Tatum, B. D. (1987). *Assimilation blues: Black families in a white community*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. (Reissued with new introduction by Basic Books, 2000).

Articles and Book Chapters:

Tatum, B. D. (2004) Family Life and School Experience: Factors in the Racial Identity Development of Black Youth in White Communities. *Journal of Social Issues* (in press).

Tatum, B. D. (2000). The ABC approach to creating climates of engagement on diverse campuses. *Liberal Education*, 86 (4), 22-29.

Tatum, B. D. (2000). Changing lives, changing communities: Building a capacity for connection in a pluralistic context. In V. H. Kazanjian and P. L. Laurence (eds.) *Education as transformation: Religious pluralism, spirituality and a new vision for higher education in America*, 79-88. NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Tatum, B. D. (2000). Examining racial and cultural thinking. *Educational Leadership*, 57(8), 54-57.

Tatum, B. D., Calhoun, W. R., Brown, S.C., and Ayvazian, A. (2000). Implementation strategies for creating an environment of achievement. *Liberal Education*, 86 (2), 18-25.

Tatum, B. D. (1999). Lighting candles in the dark: One black woman's response to white antiracist narratives. In C. Clark and J. O'Donnell (eds.) *Becoming and unbecoming white: Owning and disowning a racial identity*, 56-63. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.

Xiong, T. M. and Tatum, B. D. (1999). "In my heart I will always be Hmong": One Hmong American woman's pioneering journey toward activism. In M. Romero and A. J. Stewart (eds.) *Women's untold stories: Breaking silence, talking back, voicing complexity*, 227-242. NY: Routledge.

Tatum, B. D. (1998). What do you do when they call you a racist? *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 82(602), 43-48.

**Beverly Daniel Tatum**  
**Page Three**

- Jones, J., Tatum, B. D. and Adams, M. (1997). Knowing your students. In M. Adams, L. Bell, and P. Griffin (eds.), *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook for Teachers and Trainers*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, Inc.
- Lawrence, S. M. and Tatum, B. D. (1997). White educators as allies: Moving from awareness to action. In M. Fine, L. Weiss, L. Powell, & M. Wong (eds.) *Off/white: Readings on society, race, and culture*, 333-342. New York: Routledge.
- Tatum, B. D. (1996). Out there stranded? Black families in white communities. In H. McAdoo (ed.), *Black Families* (3rd ed.), 214-233. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Tatum, B. D. and Knaplund, E. (1996). Outside the circle? The relational implications for white women working against racism. *Work in Progress No. 78*. Wellesley, MA: Stone Center Working Paper Series.
- Tatum, B. D. (1994). Teaching white students about racism: The search for white allies and the restoration of hope. *Teachers College Record*, 95(4), 462-476.
- Ayvazian, A. and Tatum, B. D. (1994). Women, race, and racism: A dialogue in black and white. *Work in Progress No. 65*. Wellesley, MA: Stone Center Working Paper Series.
- Tatum, B. D. (1993). Racial identity and relational theory: The case of black women in white communities. *Work in Progress No. 62*. Wellesley, MA: Stone Center Working Paper Series.
- Tatum, B. D. (1992). African-American identity, achievement motivation, and missing history. *Social Education*, 56(6), 331-334.
- Tatum, B. D. (1992). Talking about race, learning about racism: An application of racial identity development theory in the classroom. *Harvard Educational Review*, 62(1), 1-24.
- Romney, P.; Tatum, B.D.; and Jones, J. (1992). Feminist strategies for teaching about oppression: The importance of process. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 20(1-2).

Selected Recent Presentations:

- Tatum, B. D. (2004). The ABC Approach to Creating a Climate of Achievement for All Students. Featured Speaker, Annual Conference of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, March 22, 2004, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Tatum, B. D. (2000). Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? Featured speaker, Annual Meeting of the National Association of Multicultural Education, November 18, 2000, Orlando, FL.
- Tatum, B. D. (2000). Black women in college: From theory to practice. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, August 2000, Washington, DC.

## **Beverly Daniel Tatum**

### **Page Four**

Tatum, B. D. (2000). The ABC approach to dealing with diversity. Featured speaker, Annual Meeting of the National Association of Independent Schools, March 2000, Baltimore, MD.

Tatum, B. D. (2000). Powerful teachers: Making connections, making change. Keynote speaker, Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators, February, 2000, Orlando, FL.

Tatum, B. D. (1999). The ABC approach to creating climates of engagement on diverse campuses. Plenary address, Annual Meeting of the American Council on Education, October 30, 1999, Albuquerque, NM.

Tatum, B. D., Rasool, J., and Tatum, T. (1998). The application of racial identity development theory in pre-service and in-service teacher training programs. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 14, 1998, San Diego, CA.

Tatum, B. D. (1997). Featured Panelist, President Clinton's Town Hall Meeting on Youth and Race, December 3, 1997, Akron Ohio.

Tatum, B. D. (1997). Featured Panelist, Presidential Initiative on Race Conference on 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Desegregation of Central High School, Little Rock Arkansas, September 27, 1997.

Tatum, B. D. (1996). An antiracist professional development course for educators: An overview. Presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, New York, April 9, 1996.

Tatum, B. D. (1995). Both oppressed and oppressor? The use of multiple identities in the classroom. Presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, April 24, 1995.

### **Community Service:**

Member, Board of Directors, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, 2004-present.

Member, Board of Directors, Metro Atlanta Arts & Culture Coalition, 2004-present.

Member, Board of Directors, Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2003-present.

Member, Board of Directors, Campus Compact, 2003-present.

Member, Board of Trustees, Wesleyan University, 2003-present.

Member, Board of Trustees, Williston Northampton School, Easthampton, MA. 1999-present.

Elder, Martin Luther King Community Presbyterian Church, Springfield, MA. 1994-1997.

Member, Board of Directors, Equity Institute, Amherst, MA, 6/85-6/90. (Chair, 1988-90)

Member, Board of Directors, Smith Child Care Center at Sunnyside, Northampton, MA, 1985-92. (Chair, 1988-1992)

**Beverly Daniel Tatum**

**Page Five**

**Professional Memberships:**

American Psychological Association (Divs. 2, 17, 35, 45)  
American Educational Research Association  
American Association of University Women  
National Association of Multicultural Education

**Grants and Awards:**

Mellon Foundation Planning Grant: Creating a Climate of Achievement for All Students.  
Mount Holyoke College, One-year grant, awarded January 2000.

Mellon Foundation Implementation Grant: Building Community in the Residence Halls – An Intergroup Dialogue Model. Mount Holyoke College, Two-year grant, awarded October 2000.

Braitmayer Foundation Grant: Supporting a Network of Anti-Racist Educators. One-year grant, awarded June 2000.

Carnegie Corporation Grant: Improving Interethnic Relations Among Youth: A School-Based Program involving Teachers, Parents and Youth. Two-year grant, awarded July, 1996.

Financial Women's Association, Public Sector Woman of the Year, 2003.  
National Association of Multicultural Education Book of the Year Award, 1998.  
Association of Women in Psychology Publication Award, 1994  
Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow, 1991-92.  
Mount Holyoke African-American Studies Research Grant, 1991.  
Mount Holyoke College Faculty Grant, 1990.  
Commonwealth Citation for Meritorious Service, Westfield State College, 1988.  
Distinguished Service Award, Westfield State College, 1986, 1987.  
American Psychological Association Minority Fellow, 1976-1979.  
Rackham Opportunity Fellowship, University of Michigan, 1975-1978.  
National Achievement Award, 1971-72.

**Professional Development:**

Harvard Seminar for New Presidents, Harvard Institutes for Higher Education,  
Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA, July 15-19, 2002.

Institute for Educational Management, Harvard Institutes for Higher Education,  
Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA July 9-21, 2000.

**References upon request.**

NATIONAL BESTSELLER

FEATURING A GROUP  
DISCUSSION GUIDE

"If you ever have been  
asked the question  
that forms the title of  
this thoughtful book,  
you ought to read it."

—EMERGE



A Psychologist  
Explains the  
Development of  
Racial Identity

WITH A NEW  
EPILOGUE BY  
THE AUTHOR

“Why Are  
All the   
Black Kids  
Sitting  
Together  
in the  
Cafeteria?”

BEVERLY DANIEL TATUM, PH.D.

## The National Association of Multi-Cultural Education's 1998 Multicultural Book of the Year

Walk into any racially mixed high school and you will see Black youth seated together in the cafeteria—and the White, Latino, Asian Pacific, and American Indian youth clustered in their own groups, too. The same phenomenon can be observed in college dining halls, faculty lounges, and in corporate cafeterias. Is this self-segregation a problem we should try to fix, or a coping strategy we should support? How can we get past our reluctance to talk about racial issues?

*"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?"* has helped hundreds of thousands of readers figure out where to start. Now updated with a new epilogue by the author, Tatum's remarkable book continues to provide innovative ways to think and talk about race.

### Praise for *"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?"*

"A remarkably jargon-free book that is as rigorously analytical as it is refreshingly practical and drives its points home with a range of telling anecdotes." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"An unusually sensitive work about the racial barriers that still divide us in so many areas of life." —Jonathan Kozol, author of *Amazing Grace*

"Beverly Daniel Tatum shows great depth and sensitivity in this thoughtfully enlightened book about the subtleties of racial interactions in America." —Alvin F. Poussaint, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School

"Beverly Daniel Tatum offers skills and experiences for an epiphany of racial enlightenment." —Derrick Bell, author of *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*

"A comprehensive recipe for how one can become an 'anti-racist.'" —*Build*

BEVERLY DANIEL TATUM, PH.D. is President of Spelman College. Prior to her appointment at Spelman she was Acting President and Dean, as well as Professor of Psychology and Education, at Mount Holyoke College. An expert on race relations in the classroom and the development of racial identity, Dr. Tatum participated in President Clinton's "Dialogue on Race," lectures extensively throughout the country, and conducts numerous workshops with students, educators, and parents. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

US \$15.95 / \$24.95 CAN

COVER DESIGN BY RICK PRACHER

COVER ILLUSTRATION © 1997 BY FRANCES MIDDENDORF

ISBN 0-415-06361-7

5 1 5 9 5



9 780465 083619

A Member of the Perseus Books Group  
www.basicbooks.com





# *Talking about Race, Learning about Racism: The Application of Racial Identity Development Theory in the Classroom*

BEVERLY DANIEL TATUM  
*Mount Holyoke College*

*The inclusion of race-related content in college courses often generates emotional responses in students that range from guilt and shame to anger and despair. The discomfort associated with these emotions can lead students to resist the learning process. Based on her experience teaching a course on the psychology of racism and an application of racial identity development theory, Beverly Daniel Tatum identifies three major sources of student resistance to talking about race and learning about racism, as well as some strategies for overcoming this resistance.*

As many educational institutions struggle to become more multicultural in terms of their students, faculty, and staff, they also begin to examine issues of cultural representation within their curriculum. This examination has evoked a growing number of courses that give specific consideration to the effect of variables such as race, class, and gender on human experience—an important trend that is reflected and supported by the increasing availability of resource manuals for the modification of course content (Bronstein & Quina, 1988; Hull, Scott, & Smith, 1982; Schuster & Van Dyne, 1985).

Unfortunately, less attention has been given to the issues of process that inevitably emerge in the classroom when attention is focused on race, class, and/or gender. It is very difficult to talk about these concepts in a meaningful way without also talking and learning about racism, classism, and sexism.<sup>1</sup> The introduction of these issues of oppression often generates powerful emotional responses in stu-

<sup>1</sup> A similar point could be made about other issues of oppression, such as anti-Semitism, homophobia and heterosexism, ageism, and so on.

dents that range from guilt and shame to anger and despair. If not addressed, these emotional responses can result in student resistance to oppression-related content areas. Such resistance can ultimately interfere with the cognitive understanding and mastery of the material. This resistance and potential interference is particularly common when specifically addressing issues of race and racism. Yet, when students are given the opportunity to explore race-related material in a classroom where both their affective and intellectual responses are acknowledged and addressed, their level of understanding is greatly enhanced.

This article seeks to provide a framework for understanding students' psychological responses to race-related content and the student resistance that can result, as well as some strategies for overcoming this resistance. It is informed by more than a decade of experience as an African-American woman engaged in teaching an undergraduate course on the psychology of racism, by thematic analyses of student journals and essays written for the racism class, and by an understanding and application of racial identity development theory (Helms, 1990).

### Setting the Context

As a clinical psychologist with a research interest in racial identity development among African-American youth raised in predominantly White communities, I began teaching about racism quite fortuitously. In 1980, while I was a part-time lecturer in the Black Studies department of a large public university, I was invited to teach a course called Group Exploration of Racism (Black Studies 2). A requirement for Black Studies majors, the course had to be offered, yet the instructor who regularly taught the course was no longer affiliated with the institution. Armed with a folder full of handouts, old syllabi that the previous instructor left behind, a copy of *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-racism Training* (Katz, 1978), and my own clinical skills as a group facilitator, I constructed a course that seemed to meet the goals already outlined in the course catalogue. Designed "to provide students with an understanding of the psychological causes and emotional reality of racism as it appears in everyday life," the course incorporated the use of lectures, readings, simulation exercises, group research projects, and extensive class discussion to help students explore the psychological impact of racism on both the oppressor and the oppressed.

Though my first efforts were tentative, the results were powerful. The students in my class, most of whom were White, repeatedly described the course in their evaluations as one of the most valuable educational experiences of their college careers. I was convinced that helping students understand the ways in which racism operates in their own lives, and what they could do about it, was a social responsibility that I should accept. The freedom to institute the course in the curriculum of the psychology departments in which I would eventually teach became a personal condition of employment. I have successfully introduced the course in each new educational setting I have been in since leaving that university.

Since 1980, I have taught the course (now called the Psychology of Racism) eighteen times, at three different institutions. Although each of these schools is very different—a large public university, a small state college, and a private, elite women's college—the challenges of teaching about racism in each setting have been more similar than different.

In all of the settings, class size has been limited to thirty students (averaging twenty-four). Though typically predominantly White and female (even in coeducational settings), the class make-up has always been mixed in terms of both race and gender. The students of color who have taken the course include Asians and Latinos/as, but most frequently the students of color have been Black. Though most students have described themselves as middle class, all socioeconomic backgrounds (ranging from very poor to very wealthy) have been represented over the years.

The course has necessarily evolved in response to my own deepening awareness of the psychological legacy of racism and my expanding awareness of other forms of oppression, although the basic format has remained the same. Our weekly three-hour class meeting is held in a room with movable chairs, arranged in a circle. The physical structure communicates an important premise of the course—that I expect the students to speak with each other as well as with me.

My other expectations (timely completion of assignments, regular class attendance) are clearly communicated in our first class meeting, along with the assumptions and guidelines for discussion that I rely upon to guide our work together. Because the assumptions and guidelines are so central to the process of talking and learning about racism, it may be useful to outline them here.

#### *Working Assumptions*

1. Racism, defined as a "system of advantage based on race" (see Wellman, 1977), is a pervasive aspect of U.S. socialization. It is virtually impossible to live in U.S. contemporary society and not be exposed to some aspect of the personal, cultural, and/or institutional manifestations of racism in our society. It is also assumed that, as a result, all of us have received some misinformation about those groups disadvantaged by racism.

2. Prejudice, defined as a "preconceived judgment or opinion, often based on limited information," is clearly distinguished from racism (see Katz, 1978). I assume that all of us may have prejudices as a result of the various cultural stereotypes to which we have been exposed. Even when these preconceived ideas have positive associations (such as "Asian students are good in math"), they have negative effects because they deny a person's individuality. These attitudes may influence the individual behaviors of people of color as well as of Whites, and may affect intergroup as well as intragroup interaction. However, a distinction must be made between the negative racial attitudes held by individuals of color and White individuals, because it is only the attitudes of Whites that routinely carry with them the social power inherent in the systematic cultural reinforcement and institutionalization of those racial prejudices. To distinguish the prejudices of students of color from the racism of White students is *not* to say that the former is acceptable and the latter is not; both are clearly problematic. The distinction is important, however, to identify the power differential between members of dominant and subordinate groups.

3. In the context of U.S. society, the system of advantage clearly operates to benefit Whites as a group. However, it is assumed that racism, like other forms of oppression, hurts members of the privileged group as well as those targeted by racism. While the impact of racism on Whites is clearly different from its impact on people of color, racism has negative ramifications for everyone. For example,

some White students might remember the pain of having lost important relationships because Black friends were not allowed to visit their homes. Others may express sadness at having been denied access to a broad range of experiences because of social segregation. These individuals often attribute the discomfort or fear they now experience in racially mixed settings to the cultural limitations of their youth.

4. Because of the prejudice and racism inherent in our environments when we were children, I assume that we cannot be blamed for learning what we were taught (intentionally or unintentionally). Yet as adults, we have a responsibility to try to identify and interrupt the cycle of oppression. When we recognize that we have been misinformed, we have a responsibility to seek out more accurate information and to adjust our behavior accordingly.

5. It is assumed that change, both individual and institutional, is possible. Understanding and unlearning prejudice and racism is a lifelong process that may have begun prior to enrolling in this class, and which will surely continue after the course is over. Each of us may be at a different point in that process, and I assume that we will have mutual respect for each other, regardless of where we perceive one another to be.

To facilitate further our work together, I ask students to honor the following guidelines for our discussion. Specifically, I ask students to demonstrate their respect for one another by honoring the confidentiality of the group. So that students may feel free to ask potentially awkward or embarrassing questions, or share race-related experiences, I ask that students refrain from making personal attributions when discussing the course content with their friends. I also discourage the use of "zaps," overt or covert put-downs often used as comic relief when someone is feeling anxious about the content of the discussion. Finally, students are asked to speak from their own experience, to say, for example, "I think . . ." or "In my experience, I have found . . ." rather than generalizing their experience to others, as in "People say . . .".

Many students are reassured by the climate of safety that is created by these guidelines and find comfort in the nonblaming assumptions I outline for the class. Nevertheless, my experience has been that most students, regardless of their class and ethnic background, still find racism a difficult topic to discuss, as is revealed by these journal comments written after the first class meeting (all names are pseudonyms):

The class is called Psychology of Racism, the atmosphere is friendly and open, yet I feel very closed in. I feel guilt and doubt well up inside of me. (Tiffany, a White woman)

Class has started on a good note thus far. The class seems rather large and disturbs me. In a class of this nature, I expect there will be many painful and emotional moments. (Linda, an Asian woman)

I am a little nervous that as one of the few students of color in the class people are going to be looking at me for answers, or whatever other reasons. The thought of this inhibits me a great deal. (Louise, an African-American woman)

I had never thought about my social position as being totally dominant. There wasn't one area in which I wasn't in the dominant group. . . . I first felt embarrassed. . . . Through association alone I felt in many ways responsible for the unequal condition existing in the world. This made me feel like shrinking in a hole

in a class where I was surrounded by 27 women and 2 men, one of whom was Black and the other was Jewish. I felt that all these people would be justified in venting their anger upon me. After a short period, I realized that no one in the room was attacking or even blaming me for the conditions that exist. (Carl, a White man)

Even though most of my students voluntarily enroll in the course as an elective, their anxiety and subsequent resistance to learning about racism quickly emerge.

#### Sources of Resistance

In predominantly White college classrooms, I have experienced at least three major sources of student resistance to talking and learning about race and racism. They can be readily identified as the following:

1. Race is considered a taboo topic for discussion, especially in racially mixed settings.
2. Many students, regardless of racial-group membership, have been socialized to think of the United States as a just society.
3. Many students, particularly White students, initially deny any personal prejudice, recognizing the impact of racism on other people's lives, but failing to acknowledge its impact on their own.

#### *Race as Taboo Topic*

The first source of resistance, race as a taboo topic, is an essential obstacle to overcome if class discussion is to begin at all. Although many students are interested in the topic, they are often most interested in hearing other people talk about it, afraid to break the taboo themselves:

One source of this self-consciousness can be seen in the early childhood experiences of many students. It is known that children as young as three notice racial differences (see Phinney & Rotheram, 1987). Certainly preschoolers talk about what they see. Unfortunately, they often do so in ways that make adults uncomfortable. Imagine the following scenario: A White child in a public place points to a dark-skinned African-American child and says loudly, "Why is that boy Black?" The embarrassed parent quickly responds, "Sh! Don't say that." The child is only attempting to make sense of a new observation (Derman-Sparks, Higa, & Sparks, 1980), yet the parent's attempt to silence the perplexed child sends a message that this observation is not okay to talk about. White children quickly become aware that their questions about race raise adult anxiety, and as a result, they learn not to ask the questions.

When asked to reflect on their earliest race-related memories and the feelings associated with them, both White students and students of color often report feelings of confusion, anxiety, and/or fear. Students of color often have early memories of name-calling or other negative interactions with other children, and sometimes with adults. They also report having had questions that went both unasked and unanswered. In addition, many students have had uncomfortable interchanges around race-related topics as adults. When asked at the beginning of the semester, "How many of you have had difficult, perhaps heated conversations with

someone on a race-related topic?", routinely almost everyone in the class raises his or her hand. It should come as no surprise then that students often approach the topic of race and/or racism with both curiosity and trepidation.

*The Myth of the Meritocracy*

The second source of student resistance to be discussed here is rooted in students' belief that the United States is a just society, a meritocracy where individual efforts are fairly rewarded. While some students (particularly students of color) may already have become disillusioned with that notion of the United States, the majority of my students who have experienced at least the personal success of college acceptance still have faith in this notion. To the extent that these students acknowledge that racism exists, they tend to view it as an individual phenomenon, rooted in the attitudes of the "Archie Bunkers" of the world or located only in particular parts of the country.

After several class meetings, Karen, a White woman, acknowledged this attitude in her journal:

At one point in my life—the beginning of this class—I actually perceived America to be a relatively racist free society. I thought that the people who were racist or subjected to racist stereotypes were found only in small pockets of the U.S., such as the South. As I've come to realize, racism (or at least racially orientated stereotypes) is rampant.

An understanding of racism as a system of advantage presents a serious challenge to the notion of the United States as a just society where rewards are based solely on one's merit. Such a challenge often creates discomfort in students. The old adage "ignorance is bliss" seems to hold true in this case; students are not necessarily eager to recognize the painful reality of racism.

One common response to the discomfort is to engage in denial of what they are learning. White students in particular may question the accuracy or currency of statistical information regarding the prevalence of discrimination (housing, employment, access to health care, and so on). More qualitative data, such as autobiographical accounts of experiences with racism, may be challenged on the basis of their subjectivity.

It should be pointed out that the basic assumption that the United States is a just society for all is only one of many basic assumptions that might be challenged in the learning process. Another example can be seen in an interchange between two White students following a discussion about cultural racism, in which the omission or distortion of historical information about people of color was offered as an example of the cultural transmission of racism.

"Yeah, I just found out that Cleopatra was actually a Black woman."

"What?"

The first student went on to explain her newly learned information. Finally, the second student exclaimed in disbelief, "That can't be true. Cleopatra was beautiful!" This new information and her own deeply ingrained assumptions about who is beautiful and who is not were too incongruous to allow her to assimilate the information at that moment.

If outright denial of information is not possible, then withdrawal may be. Physical withdrawal in the form of absenteeism is one possible result; it is for precisely

this reason that class attendance is mandatory. The reduction in the completion of reading and/or written assignments is another form of withdrawal. I have found this response to be so common that I now alert students to this possibility at the beginning of the semester. Knowing that this response is a common one seems to help students stay engaged, even when they experience the desire to withdraw.

Following an absence in the fifth week of the semester, one White student wrote, "I think I've hit the point you talked about, the point where you don't want to hear any more about racism. I sometimes begin to get the feeling we are all hypersensitive." (Two weeks later she wrote, "Class is getting better. I think I am beginning to get over my hump.")

Perhaps not surprisingly, this response can be found in both White students and students of color. Students of color often enter a discussion of racism with some awareness of the issue, based on personal experiences. However, even these students find that they did not have a full understanding of the widespread impact of racism in our society. For students who are targeted by racism, an increased awareness of the impact in and on their lives is painful, and often generates anger.

Four weeks into the semester, Louise, an African-American woman, wrote in her journal about her own heightened sensitivity:

Many times in class I feel uncomfortable when White students use the term Black because even if they aren't aware of it they say it with all or at least a lot of the negative connotations they've been taught goes along with Black. Sometimes it just causes a stinging feeling inside of me. Sometimes I get real tired of hearing White people talk about the conditions of Black people. I think it's an important thing for them to talk about, but still I don't always like being around when they do it. I also get tired of hearing them talk about how hard it is for them, though I understand it, and most times I am very willing to listen and be open, but sometimes I can't. Right now I can't.

For White students, advantaged by racism, a heightened awareness of it often generates painful feelings of guilt. The following responses are typical:

After reading the article about privilege, I felt very guilty. (Rachel, a White woman)

Questions of racism are so full of anger and pain. When I think of all the pain White people have caused people of color, I get a feeling of guilt. How could someone like myself care so much about the color of someone's skin that they would do them harm? (Terri, a White woman)

White students also sometimes express a sense of betrayal when they realize the gaps in their own education about racism. After seeing the first episode of the documentary series *Eyes on the Prize*, Chris, a White man, wrote:

I never knew it was really that bad just 35 years ago. Why didn't I learn this in elementary or high school? Could it be that the White people of America want to forget this injustice? . . . I will never forget that movie for as long as I live. It was like a big slap in the face.

Barbara, a White woman, also felt anger and embarrassment in response to her own previous lack of information about the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. She wrote:

*Harvard Educational Review*

I feel so stupid because I never even knew that these existed. I never knew that the Japanese were treated so poorly. I am becoming angry and upset about all of the things that I do not know. I have been so sheltered. My parents never wanted to let me know about the bad things that have happened in the world. After I saw the movie (*Mitsuye and Nellie*), I even called them up to ask them why they never told me this. . . . I am angry at them too for not teaching me and exposing me to the complete picture of my country.

Avoiding the subject matter is one way to avoid these uncomfortable feelings.

*"I'm Not Racist, But . . ."*

A third source of student resistance (particularly among White students) is the initial denial of any personal connection to racism. When asked why they have decided to enroll in a course on racism, White students typically explain their interest in the topic with such disclaimers as, "I'm not racist myself, but I know people who are, and I want to understand them better."

Because of their position as the targets of racism, students of color do not typically focus on their own prejudices or lack of them. Instead they usually express a desire to understand why racism exists, and how they have been affected by it.

However, as all students gain a better grasp of what racism is and its many manifestations in U.S. society, they inevitably start to recognize its legacy within themselves. Beliefs, attitudes, and actions based on racial stereotypes begin to be remembered and are newly observed by White students. Students of color as well often recognize negative attitudes they may have internalized about their own racial group or that they have believed about others. Those who previously thought themselves immune to the effects of growing up in a racist society often find themselves reliving uncomfortable feelings of guilt or anger.

After taping her own responses to a questionnaire on racial attitudes, Barbara, a White woman previously quoted, wrote:

I always want to think of myself as open to all races. Yet when I did the interview to myself, I found that I did respond differently to the same questions about different races. No one could ever have told me that I would have. I would have denied it. But I found that I did respond differently even though I didn't want to. This really upset me. I was angry with myself because I thought I was not prejudiced and yet the stereotypes that I had created had an impact on the answers that I gave even though I didn't want it to happen.

The new self-awareness, represented here by Barbara's journal entry, changes the classroom dynamic. One common result is that some White students, once perhaps active participants in class discussion, now hesitate to continue their participation for fear that their newly recognized racism will be revealed to others.

Today I did feel guilty, and like I had to watch what I was saying (make it good enough), I guess to prove I'm really *not* prejudiced. From the conversations the first day, I guess this is a normal enough reaction, but I certainly never expected it in me. (Joanne, a White woman)

This withdrawal on the part of White students is often paralleled by an increase in participation by students of color who are seeking an outlet for what are often feelings of anger. The withdrawal of some previously vocal White students from



the classroom exchange, however, is sometimes interpreted by students of color as indifference. This perceived indifference often serves to fuel the anger and frustration that many students of color experience, as awareness of their own oppression is heightened. For example, Robert, an African-American man, wrote:

I really wish the White students would talk more. When I read these articles, it makes me so mad and I really want to know what the White kids think. Don't they care?

Sonia, a Latina, described the classroom tension from another perspective:

I would like to comment that at many points in the discussions I have felt uncomfortable and sometimes even angry with people. I guess I am at the stage where I am tired of listening to Whites feel guilty and watch their eyes fill up with tears. I do understand that everyone is at their own stage of development and I even tell myself every Tuesday that these people have come to this class by choice. Some days I am just more tolerant than others. . . . It takes courage to say things in that room with so many women of color present. It also takes courage for the women of color to say things about Whites.

What seems to be happening in the classroom at such moments is a collision of developmental processes that can be inherently useful for the racial identity development of the individuals involved. Nevertheless, the interaction may be perceived as problematic to instructors and students who are unfamiliar with the process. Although space does not allow for an exhaustive discussion of racial identity development theory, a brief explication of it here will provide additional clarity regarding the classroom dynamics when issues of race are discussed. It will also provide a theoretical framework for the strategies for dealing with student resistance that will be discussed at the conclusion of this article.

### Stages of Racial Identity Development

Racial identity and racial identity development theory are defined by Janet Helms (1990) as

a sense of group or collective identity based on one's *perception* that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group. . . racial identity development theory concerns the psychological implications of racial-group membership, that is belief systems that evolve in reaction to perceived differential racial-group membership. (p. 3)

It is assumed that in a society where racial-group membership is emphasized, the development of a racial identity will occur in some form in everyone. Given the dominant/subordinate relationship of Whites and people of color in this society, however, it is not surprising that this developmental process will unfold in different ways. For purposes of this discussion, William Cross's (1971, 1978) model of Black identity development will be described along with Helms's (1990) model of White racial identity development theory. While the identity development of other students (Asian, Latino/a, Native American) is not included in this particular theoretical formulation, there is evidence to suggest that the process for these oppressed groups is similar to that described for African Americans (Highlen, et

al., 1988; Phinney, 1990).<sup>2</sup> In each case, it is assumed that a positive sense of one's self as a member of one's group (which is not based on any assumed superiority) is important for psychological health.

*Black Racial Identity Development*

According to Cross's (1971, 1978, 1991) model of Black racial identity development, there are five stages in the process, identified as Preencounter, Encounter, Immersion/Emersion, Internalization, and Internalization-Commitment. In the first stage of Preencounter, the African American has absorbed many of the beliefs and values of the dominant White culture, including the notion that "White is right" and "Black is wrong." Though the internalization of negative Black stereotypes may be outside of his or her conscious awareness, the individual seeks to assimilate and be accepted by Whites, and actively or passively distances him/herself from other Blacks.<sup>3</sup>

Louise, an African-American woman previously quoted, captured the essence of this stage in the following description of herself at an earlier time:

For a long time it seemed as if I didn't remember my background, and I guess in some ways I didn't. I was never taught to be proud of my African heritage. Like we talked about in class, I went through a very long stage of identifying with my oppressors. Wanting to be like, live like, and be accepted by them. Even to the point of hating my own race and myself for being a part of it. Now I am ashamed that I ever was ashamed. I lost so much of myself in my denial of and refusal to accept my people.

In order to maintain psychological comfort at this stage of development, Helms writes:

The person must maintain the fiction that race and racial indoctrination have nothing to do with how he or she lives life. It is probably the case that the Preencounter person is bombarded on a regular basis with information that he or she cannot really be a member of the "in" racial group, but relies on denial to selectively screen such information from awareness. (1990, p. 23)

This de-emphasis on one's racial-group membership may allow the individual to think that race has not been or will not be a relevant factor in one's own achievement, and may contribute to the belief in a U.S. meritocracy that is often a part of a Preencounter worldview.

Movement into the Encounter phase is typically precipitated by an event or series of events that forces the individual to acknowledge the impact of racism in one's life. For example, instances of social rejection by White friends or colleagues (or reading new personally relevant information about racism) may lead the indi-

<sup>2</sup> While similar models of racial identity development exist, Cross and Helms are referenced here because they are among the most frequently cited writers on Black racial identity development and on White racial identity development, respectively. For a discussion of the commonalities between these and other identity development models, see Phinney (1989, 1990) and Helms (1990).

<sup>3</sup> Both Parham (1989) and Phinney (1989) suggest that a preference for the dominant group is not always a characteristic of this stage. For example, children raised in households and communities with explicitly positive Afrocentric attitudes may absorb a pro-Black perspective, which then serves as the starting point for their own exploration of racial identity.

vidual to the conclusion that many Whites will not view him or her as an equal. Faced with the reality that he or she cannot truly be White, the individual is forced to focus on his or her identity as a member of a group targeted by racism.

Brenda, a Korean-American student, described her own experience of this process as a result of her participation in the racism course:

I feel that because of this class, I have become much more aware of racism that exists around. Because of my awareness of racism, I am now bothered by acts and behaviors that might not have bothered me in the past. Before when racial comments were said around me I would somehow ignore it and pretend that nothing was said. By ignoring comments such as these, I was protecting myself. It became sort of a defense mechanism. I never realized I did this, until I was confronted with stories that were found in our reading, by other people of color, who also ignored comments that bothered them. In realizing that there is racism out in the world and that there are comments concerning race that are directed towards me, I feel as if I have reached the first step. I also think I have reached the second step, because I am now bothered and irritated by such comments. I no longer ignore them, but now confront them.

The Immersion/Emersion stage is characterized by the simultaneous desire to surround oneself with visible symbols of one's racial identity and an active avoidance of symbols of Whiteness. As Thomas Parham describes, "At this stage, everything of value in life must be Black or relevant to Blackness. This stage is also characterized by a tendency to denigrate White people, simultaneously glorifying Black people. . . ." (1989, p. 190). The previously described anger that emerges in class among African-American students and other students of color in the process of learning about racism may be seen as part of the transition through these stages.

As individuals enter the Immersion stage, they actively seek out opportunities to explore aspects of their own history and culture with the support of peers from their own racial background. Typically, White-focused anger dissipates during this phase because so much of the person's energy is directed toward his or her own group- and self-exploration. The result of this exploration is an emerging security in a newly defined and affirmed sense of self.

Sharon, another African-American woman, described herself at the beginning of the semester as angry, seemingly in the Encounter stage of development. She wrote after our class meeting:

Another point that I must put down is that before I entered class today I was angry about the way Black people have been treated in this country. I don't think I will easily overcome that and I basically feel justified in my feelings.

At the end of the semester, Sharon had joined with two other Black students in the class to work on their final class project. She observed that the three of them had planned their project to focus on Black people specifically, suggesting movement into the Immersion stage of racial identity development. She wrote:

We are concerned about the well-being of our own people. They cannot be well if they have this pinned-up hatred for their own people. This internalized racism is something that we all felt, at various times, needed to be talked about. This semester it has really been important to me, and I believe Gordon [a Black classmate], too.

The emergence from this stage marks the beginning of Internalization. Secure in one's own sense of racial identity, there is less need to assert the "Blacker than thou" attitude often characteristic of the Immersion stage (Parham, 1989). In general, "pro-Black attitudes become more expansive, open, and less defensive" (Cross, 1971, p. 24). While still maintaining his or her connections with Black peers, the internalized individual is willing to establish meaningful relationships with Whites who acknowledge and are respectful of his or her self-definition. The individual is also ready to build coalitions with members of other oppressed groups. At the end of the semester, Brenda, a Korean American, concluded that she had in fact internalized a positive sense of racial identity. The process she described parallels the stages described by Cross:

I have been aware for a long time that I am Korean. But through this class I am beginning to really become aware of my race. I am beginning to find out that White people can be accepting of me and at the same time accept me as a Korean.

I grew up wanting to be accepted and ended up almost denying my race and culture. I don't think I did this consciously, but the denial did occur. As I grew older, I realized that I was different. I became for the first time, friends with other Koreans. I realized I had much in common with them. This was when I went through my "Korean friend" stage. I began to enjoy being friends with Koreans more than I did with Caucasians.

Well, ultimately, through many years of growing up, I am pretty much in focus about who I am and who my friends are. I knew before I took this class that there were people not of color that were understanding of my differences. In our class, I feel that everyone is trying to sincerely find the answer of abolishing racism. I knew people like this existed, but it's nice to meet with them weekly.

Cross suggests that there are few psychological differences between the fourth stage, Internalization, and the fifth stage, Internalization-Commitment. However, those at the fifth stage have found ways to translate their "personal sense of Blackness into a plan of action or a general sense of commitment" to the concerns of Blacks as a group, which is sustained over time (Cross, 1991, p. 220). Whether at the fourth or fifth stage, the process of Internalization allows the individual, anchored in a positive sense of racial identity, both to proactively perceive and transcend race. Blackness becomes "the point of departure for discovering the universe of ideas, cultures and experiences beyond blackness in place of mistaking blackness as the universe itself" (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991, p. 330).

Though the process of racial identity development has been presented here in linear form, in fact it is probably more accurate to think of it in a spiral form. Often a person may move from one stage to the next, only to revisit an earlier stage as the result of new encounter experiences (Parham, 1989), though the later experience of the stage may be different from the original experience. The image that students often find helpful in understanding this concept of recycling through the stages is that of a spiral staircase. As a person ascends a spiral staircase, she may stop and look down at a spot below. When she reaches the next level, she may look down and see the same spot, but the vantage point has changed.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> After being introduced to this model and Helms's model of White identity development, students are encouraged to think about how the models might apply to their own experience or the experiences of people they know. As is reflected in the cited journal entries, some students resonate to the theories quite readily, easily seeing their own process of growth reflected in them. Other students are some-

### White Racial Identity Development

The transformations experienced by those targeted by racism are often paralleled by those of White students. Helms (1990) describes the evolution of a positive White racial identity as involving both the abandonment of racism and the development of a nonracist White identity. In order to do the latter,

he or she must accept his or her own Whiteness, the cultural implications of being White, and define a view of Self as a racial being that does not depend on the perceived superiority of one racial group over another. (p. 49)

She identifies six stages in her model of White racial identity development: Contact, Disintegration, Reintegration, Pseudo-Independent, Immersion/Emersion, and Autonomy.

The Contact stage is characterized by a lack of awareness of cultural and institutional racism, and of one's own White privilege. Peggy McIntosh (1989) writes eloquently about her own experience of this state of being:

As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage. . . . I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group. (p. 10)

In addition, the Contact stage often includes naive curiosity about or fear of people of color, based on stereotypes learned from friends, family, or the media. These stereotypes represent the framework in use when a person at this stage of development makes a comment such as, "You don't act like a Black person" (Helms, 1990, p. 57).

Those Whites whose lives are structured so as to limit their interaction with people of color, as well as their awareness of racial issues, may remain at this stage indefinitely. However, certain kinds of experiences (increased interaction with people of color or exposure to new information about racism) may lead to a new understanding that cultural and institutional racism exist. This new understanding marks the beginning of the Disintegration stage.

At this stage, the bliss of ignorance or lack of awareness is replaced by the discomfort of guilt, shame, and sometimes anger at the recognition of one's own advantage because of being White and the acknowledgement of the role of Whites in the maintenance of a racist system. Attempts to reduce discomfort may include denial (convincing oneself that racism doesn't really exist, or if it does, it is the fault of its victims).

For example, Tom, a White male student, responded with some frustration in his journal to a classmate's observation that the fact that she had never read any books by Black authors in any of her high school or college English classes was an example of cultural racism. He wrote, "It's not my fault that Blacks don't write books."

---

times puzzled because they feel as though their own process varies from these models, and may ask if it is possible to "skip" a particular stage, for example. Such questions provide a useful departure point for discussing the limitations of stage theories in general, and the potential variations in experience that make questions of racial identity development so complex.

*Harvard Educational Review*

After viewing a film in which a psychologist used examples of Black children's drawings to illustrate the potentially damaging effect of negative cultural messages on a Black child's developing self-esteem, David, another White male student, wrote:

I found it interesting the way Black children drew themselves without arms. The psychologist said this is saying that the child feels unable to control his environment. It can't be because the child has notions and beliefs already about being Black. It must be built in or hereditary due to the past history of the Blacks. I don't believe it's cognitive but more biological due to a long past history of repression and being put down.

Though Tom's and David's explanations seem quite problematic, they can be understood in the context of racial identity development theory as a way of reducing their cognitive dissonance upon learning this new race-related information. As was discussed earlier, withdrawal (accomplished by avoiding contact with people of color and the topic of racism) is another strategy for dealing with the discomfort experienced at this stage. Many of the previously described responses of White students to race-related content are characteristic of the transition from the Contact to the Disintegration stage of development.

Helms (1990) describes another response to the discomfort of Disintegration, which involves attempts to change significant others' attitudes toward African Americans and other people of color. However, as she points out,

due to the racial naivete with which this approach may be undertaken and the person's ambivalent racial identification, this dissonance-reducing strategy is likely to be met with rejection by Whites as well as Blacks. (p. 59)

In fact, this response is also frequently observed among White students who have an opportunity to talk with friends and family during holiday visits. Suddenly they are noticing the racist content of jokes or comments of their friends and relatives and will try to confront them, often only to find that their efforts are, at best, ignored or dismissed as a "phase," or, at worst, greeted with open hostility.

Carl, a White male previously quoted, wrote at length about this dilemma:

I realized that it was possible to simply go through life totally oblivious to the entire situation or, even if one realizes it, one can totally repress it. It is easy to fade into the woodwork, run with the rest of society, and never have to deal with these problems. So many people I know from home are like this. They have simply accepted what society has taught them with little, if any, question. My father is a prime example of this. . . . It has caused much friction in our relationship, and he often tells me as a father he has failed in raising me correctly. Most of my high school friends will never deal with these issues and propagate them on to their own children. It's easy to see how the cycle continues. I don't think I could ever justify within myself simply turning my back on the problem. I finally realized that my position in all of these dominant groups gives me power to make change occur. . . . It is an unfortunate result often though that I feel alienated from friends and family. It's often played off as a mere stage that I'm going through. I obviously can't tell if it's merely a stage, but I know that they say this to take the attention off of the truth of what I'm saying. By belittling me, they take the power out of my argument. It's very depressing that being compassionate and considerate are

seen as only phases that people go through. I don't want it to be a phase for me, but as obvious as this may sound, I look at my environment and often wonder how it will not be.

The societal pressure to accept the status quo may lead the individual from Disintegration to Reintegration. At this point the desire to be accepted by one's own racial group, in which the overt or covert belief in White superiority is so prevalent, may lead to a reshaping of the person's belief system to be more congruent with an acceptance of racism. The guilt and anxiety associated with Disintegration may be redirected in the form of fear and anger directed toward people of color (particularly Blacks), who are now blamed as the source of discomfort.

Connie, a White woman of Italian ancestry, in many ways exemplified the progression from the Contact stage to Reintegration, a process she herself described seven weeks into the semester. After reading about the stages of White identity development, she wrote:

I think mostly I can find myself in the disintegration stage of development. . . . There was a time when I never considered myself a color. I never described myself as a "White, Italian female" until I got to college and noticed that people of color always described themselves by their color/race. While taking this class, I have begun to understand that being White makes a difference. I never thought about it before but there are many privileges to being White. In my personal life, I cannot say that I have ever felt that I have had the advantage over a Black person, but I am aware that my race has the advantage.

I am feeling really guilty lately about that. I find myself thinking: "I didn't mean to be White, I really didn't mean it." I am starting to feel angry towards my race for ever using this advantage towards personal gains. But at the same time I resent the minority groups. I mean, it's not our fault that society has deemed us "superior." I don't feel any better than a Black person. But it really doesn't matter because I am a member of the dominant race. . . . I can't help it . . . and I sometimes get angry and feel like I'm being attacked.

I guess my anger toward a minority group would enter me into the next stage of Reintegration, where I am once again starting to blame the victim. This is all very trying for me and it has been on my mind a lot. I really would like to be able to reach the last stage, autonomy, where I can accept being White without hostility and anger. That is really hard to do.

Helms (1990) suggests that it is relatively easy for Whites to become stuck at the Reintegration stage of development, particularly if avoidance of people of color is possible. However, if there is a catalyst for continued self-examination, the person "begins to question her or his previous definition of Whiteness and the justifiability of racism in any of its forms. . . ." (p. 61). In my experience, continued participation in a course on racism provides the catalyst for this deeper self-examination.

This process was again exemplified by Connie. At the end of the semester, she listened to her own taped interview of her racial attitudes that she had recorded at the beginning of the semester. She wrote:

Oh wow! I could not believe some of the things that I said. I was obviously in different stages of the White identity development. As I listened and got more and

*Harvard Educational Review*

more disgusted with myself when I was at the Reintegration stage, I tried to remind myself that these are stages that all (most) White people go through when dealing with notions of racism. I can remember clearly the resentment I had for people of color. I feel the one thing I enjoyed from listening to my interview was noticing how much I have changed. I think I am finally out of the Reintegration stage. I am beginning to make a conscious effort to seek out information about people of color and accept their criticism. . . . I still feel guilty about the feeling I had about people of color and I always feel bad about being privileged as a result of racism. But I am glad that I have reached what I feel is the Pseudo-Independent stage of White identity development.

The information-seeking that Connie describes often marks the onset of the Pseudo-Independent stage. At this stage, the individual is abandoning beliefs in White superiority, but may still behave in ways that unintentionally perpetuate the system. Looking to those targeted by racism to help him or her understand racism, the White person often tries to disavow his or her own Whiteness through active affiliation with Blacks, for example. The individual experiences a sense of alienation from other Whites who have not yet begun to examine their own racism, yet may also experience rejection from Blacks or other people of color who are suspicious of his or her motives. Students of color moving from the Encounter to the Immersion phase of their own racial identity development may be particularly unreceptive to the White person's attempts to connect with them.

Uncomfortable with his or her own Whiteness, yet unable to be truly anything else, the individual may begin searching for a new, more comfortable way to be White. This search is characteristic of the Immersion/Emersion stage of development. Just as the Black student seeks to redefine positively what it means to be of African ancestry in the United States through immersion in accurate information about one's culture and history, the White individual seeks to replace racially related myths and stereotypes with accurate information about what it means and has meant to be White in U.S. society (Helms, 1990). Learning about Whites who have been antiracist allies to people of color is a very important part of this process.

After reading articles written by antiracist activists describing their own process of unlearning racism, White students often comment on how helpful it is to know that others have experienced similar feelings and have found ways to resist the racism in their environments.<sup>5</sup> For example, Joanne, a White woman who initially experienced a lot of guilt, wrote:

This article helped me out in many ways. I've been feeling helpless and frustrated. I know there are all these terrible things going on and I want to be able to do something. . . . Anyway this article helped me realize, again, that others feel this way, and gave me some positive ideas to resolve my dominant class guilt and shame.

Finally, reading the biographies and autobiographies of White individuals who have embarked on a similar process of identity development (such as Barnard, 1987) provides White students with important models for change.

<sup>5</sup> Examples of useful articles include essays by McIntosh (1988), Lester (1987), and Braden (1987). Each of these combines autobiographical material, as well as a conceptual framework for understanding some aspect of racism that students find very helpful. Bowser and Hunt's (1981) edited book, *Impacts of Racism on Whites*, though less autobiographical in nature, is also a valuable resource.



Learning about White antiracists can also provide students of color with a sense of hope that they can have White allies. After hearing a White antiracist activist address the class, Sonia, a Latina who had written about her impatience with expressions of White guilt, wrote:

I don't know when I have been more impressed by anyone. She filled me with hope for the future. She made me believe that there are good people in the world and that Whites suffer too and want to change things.

For White students, the internalization of a newly defined sense of oneself as White is the primary task of the Autonomy stage. The positive feelings associated with this redefinition energize the person's efforts to confront racism and oppression in his or her daily life. Alliances with people of color can be more easily forged at this stage of development than previously because the person's antiracist behaviors and attitudes will be more consistently expressed. While Autonomy might be described as "racial self-actualization, . . . it is best to think of it as an ongoing process . . . wherein the person is continually open to new information and new ways of thinking about racial and cultural variables" (Helms, 1990, p. 66).

Annette, a White woman, described herself in the Autonomy stage, but talked at length about the circular process she felt she had been engaged in during the semester:

If people as racist as C. P. Ellis (a former Klansman) can change, I think anyone can change. If that makes me idealistic, fine. I do not think my expecting society to change is naive anymore because I now *know* exactly what I want. To be naive means a lack of knowledge that allows me to accept myself both as a White person and as an idealist. This class showed me that these two are not mutually exclusive but are an integral part of me that I cannot deny. I realize now that through most of this class I was trying to deny both of them.

While I was not accepting society's racism, I was accepting society's telling me as a White person, there was nothing I could do to change racism. So, I told myself I was being naive and tried to suppress my desire to change society. This is what made me so frustrated—while I saw society's racism through examples in the readings and the media, I kept telling myself there was nothing I could do. Listening to my tape, I think I was already in the Autonomy stage when I started this class. I then seemed to decide that being White, I also had to be racist which is when I became frustrated and went back to the Disintegration stage. I was frustrated because I was not only telling myself there was nothing I could do but I also was assuming society's racism was my own which made me feel like I did not want to be White. Actually, it was not being White that I was disavowing but being racist. I think I have now returned to the Autonomy stage and am much more secure in my position there. I accept my Whiteness now as just a part of me as is my idealism. I will no longer disavow these characteristics as I have realized I can be proud of both of them. In turn, I can now truly accept other people for their unique characteristics and not by the labels society has given them as I can accept myself that way.

While I thought the main ideas that I learned in this class were that White people need to be educated to end racism and everyone should be treated as human beings, I really had already incorporated these ideas into my thoughts. What I learned from this class is being White does not mean being racist and being idealistic does not mean being naive. I really did not have to form new ideas about people of color; I had to form them about myself—and I did.

### Implications for Classroom Teaching

Although movement through all the stages of racial identity development will not necessarily occur for each student within the course of a semester (or even four years of college), it is certainly common to witness beginning transformations in classes with race-related content. An awareness of the existence of this process has helped me to implement strategies to facilitate positive student development, as well as to improve interracial dialogue within the classroom.

Four strategies for reducing student resistance and promoting student development that I have found useful are the following:

1. the creation of a safe classroom atmosphere by establishing clear guidelines for discussion;
2. the creation of opportunities for self-generated knowledge;
3. the provision of an appropriate developmental model that students can use as a framework for understanding their own process;
4. the exploration of strategies to empower students as change agents.

### *Creating a Safe Climate*

As was discussed earlier, making the classroom a safe space for discussion is essential for overcoming students' fears about breaking the race taboo, and will also reduce later anxieties about exposing one's own internalized racism. Establishing the guidelines of confidentiality, mutual respect, "no zaps," and speaking from one's own experience on the first day of class is a necessary step in the process.

Students respond very positively to these ground rules, and do try to honor them. While the rules do not totally eliminate anxiety, they clearly communicate to students that there is a safety net for the discussion. Students are also encouraged to direct their comments and questions to each other rather than always focusing their attention on me as the instructor, and to learn each other's names rather than referring to each other as "he," "she," or "the person in the red sweater" when responding to each other.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Power of Self-Generated Knowledge*

The creation of opportunities for self-generated knowledge on the part of students is a powerful tool for reducing the initial stage of denial that many students experience. While it may seem easy for some students to challenge the validity of what they read or what the instructor says, it is harder to deny what they have seen with their own eyes. Students can be given hands-on assignments outside of class to facilitate this process.

For example, after reading *Portraits of White Racism* (Wellman, 1977), some students expressed the belief that the attitudes expressed by the White interviewees in the book were no longer commonly held attitudes. Students were then asked to use the same interview protocol used in the book (with some revision) to interview a White adult of their choice. When students reported on these interviews in class, their own observation of the similarity between those they had inter-

<sup>6</sup> Class size has a direct bearing on my ability to create safety in the classroom. Dividing the class into pairs or small groups of five or six students to discuss initial reactions to a particular article or film helps to increase participation, both in the small groups and later in the large group discussions.

viewed and those they had read about was more convincing than anything I might have said.

After doing her interview, Patty, a usually quiet White student, wrote:

I think I learned a lot from it and that I'm finally getting a better grip on the idea of racism. I think that was why I participated so much in class. I really felt like I knew what I was talking about.

Other examples of creating opportunities for self-generated knowledge include assigning students the task of visiting grocery stores in neighborhoods of differing racial composition to compare the cost and quality of goods and services available at the two locations, and to observe the interactions between the shoppers and the store personnel. For White students, one of the most powerful assignments of this type has been to go apartment hunting with an African-American student and to experience housing discrimination firsthand. While one concern with such an assignment is the effect it will have on the student(s) of color involved, I have found that those Black students who choose this assignment rather than another are typically eager to have their White classmates experience the reality of racism, and thus participate quite willingly in the process.

#### *Naming the Problem*

The emotional responses that students have to talking and learning about racism are quite predictable and related to their own racial identity development. Unfortunately, students typically do not know this; thus they consider their own guilt, shame, embarrassment, or anger an uncomfortable experience that they alone are having. Informing students at the beginning of the semester that these feelings may be part of the learning process is ethically necessary (in the sense of informed consent), and helps to normalize the students' experience. Knowing in advance that a desire to withdraw from classroom discussion or not to complete assignments is a common response helps students to remain engaged when they reach that point. As Alice, a White woman, wrote at the end of the semester:

You were so right in saying in the beginning how we would grow tired of racism (I did in October) but then it would get so good! I have *loved* the class once I passed that point.

In addition, sharing the model of racial identity development with students gives them a useful framework for understanding each other's processes as well as their own. This cognitive framework does not necessarily prevent the collision of developmental processes previously described, but it does allow students to be less frightened by it when it occurs. If, for example, White students understand the stages of racial identity development for students of color, they are less likely to personalize or feel threatened by an African-American student's anger.

Connie, a White student who initially expressed a lot of resentment at the way students of color tended to congregate in the college cafeteria, was much more understanding of this behavior after she learned about racial identity development theory. She wrote:

I learned a lot from reading the article about the stages of development in the model of oppressed people. As a White person going through my stages of identity development, I do not take time to think about the struggle people of color go

through to reach a stage of complete understanding. I am glad that I know about the stages because now I can understand people of color's behavior in certain situations. For example, when people of color stay to themselves and appear to be in a clique, it is not because they are being rude as I originally thought. Rather they are engaged perhaps in the Immersion stage.

Mary, another White student, wrote:

I found the entire Cross model of racial identity development very enlightening. I knew that there were stages of racial identity development before I entered this class. I did not know what they were, or what they really entailed. After reading through this article I found myself saying, "Oh. That explains why she reacted this way to this incident instead of how she would have a year ago." Clearly this person has entered a different stage and is working through different problems from a new viewpoint. Thankfully, the model provides a degree of hope that people will not always be angry, and will not always be separatists, etc. Although I'm not really sure about that.

Conversely, when students of color understand the stages of White racial identity development, they can be more tolerant or appreciative of a White student's struggle with guilt, for example. After reading about the stages of White identity development, Sonia, a Latina previously quoted, wrote:

This article was the one that made me feel that my own prejudices were showing. I never knew that Whites went through an identity development of their own.

She later told me outside of class that she found it much easier to listen to some of the things White students said because she could understand their potentially offensive comments as part of a developmental stage.

Sharon, an African-American woman, also found that an understanding of the respective stages of racial identity development helped her to understand some of the interactions she had had with White students since coming to college. She wrote:

There is a lot of clash that occurs between Black and White people at college which is best explained by their respective stages of development. Unfortunately schools have not helped to alleviate these problems earlier in life.

In a course on the psychology of racism, it is easy to build in the provision of this information as part of the course content. For instructors teaching courses with race-related content in other fields, it may seem less natural to do so. However, the inclusion of articles on racial identity development and/or class discussion of these issues in conjunction with the other strategies that have been suggested can improve student receptivity to the course content in important ways, making it a very useful investment of class time. Because the stages describe kinds of behavior that many people have commonly observed in themselves, as well as in their own intraracial and interracial interactions, my experience has been that most students grasp the basic conceptual framework fairly easily, even if they do not have a background in psychology.

#### *Empowering Students as Change Agents*

Heightening students' awareness of racism without also developing an awareness of the possibility of change is a prescription for despair. I consider it unethical to

do one without the other. Exploring strategies to empower students as change agents is thus a necessary part of the process of talking about race and learning about racism. As was previously mentioned, students find it very helpful to read about and hear from individuals who have been effective change agents. Newspaper and magazine articles, as well as biographical or autobiographical essays or book excerpts, are often important sources for this information.

I also ask students to work in small groups to develop an action plan of their own for interrupting racism. While I do not consider it appropriate to require students to engage in antiracist activity (since I believe this should be a personal choice the student makes for him/herself), students are required to think about the possibility. Guidelines are provided (see Katz, 1978), and the plans that they develop over several weeks are presented at the end of the semester. Students are generally impressed with each other's good ideas, and, in fact, they often do go on to implement their projects.

Joanne, a White student who initially struggled with feelings of guilt, wrote:

I thought that hearing others' ideas for action plans was interesting and informative. It really helps me realize (reminds me) the many choices and avenues there are once I decided to be an ally. Not only did I develop my own concrete way to be an ally, I have found many other ways that I, as a college student, can be an active anti-racist. It was really empowering.

Another way all students can be empowered is by offering them the opportunity to consciously observe their own development. The taped exercise to which some of the previously quoted students have referred is an example of one way to provide this opportunity. At the beginning of the semester, students are given an interview guide with many open-ended questions concerning racial attitudes and opinions. They are asked to interview themselves on tape as a way of recording their own ideas for future reference. Though the tapes are collected, students are assured that no one (including me) will listen to them. The tapes are returned near the end of the semester, and students are asked to listen to their own tapes and use their understanding of racial identity development to discuss it in essay form.

The resulting essays are often remarkable and underscore the psychological importance of giving students the chance to examine racial issues in the classroom. The following was written by Elaine, a White woman:

Another common theme that was apparent in the tape was that, for the most part, I was aware of my own ignorance and was embarrassed because of it. I wanted to know more about the oppression of people in the country so that I could do something about it. Since I have been here, I have begun to be actively resistant to racism. I have been able to confront my grandparents and some old friends from high school when they make racist comments. Taking this psychology of racism class is another step toward active resistance to racism. I am trying to educate myself so that I have a knowledge base to work from.

When the tape was made, I was just beginning to be active and just beginning to be educated. I think I am now starting to move into the redefinition stage. I am starting to feel ok about being White. Some of my guilt is dissipating, and I do not feel as ignorant as I used to be. I think I have an understanding of racism; how it effects [sic] myself, and how it effects this country. Because of this I think I can be more active in doing something about it.

*Harvard Educational Review*

In the words of Louise, a Black female student:

One of the greatest things I learned from this semester in general is that the world is not only Black and White, nor is the United States. I learned a lot about my own erasure of many American ethnic groups. . . . I am in the (immersion) stage of my identity development. I think I am also dangling a little in the (encounter) stage. I say this because a lot of my energies are still directed toward White people. I began writing a poem two days ago and it was directed to White racism. However, I have also become more Black-identified. I am reaching to the strength in Afro-American heritage. I am learning more about the heritage and history of Afro-American culture. Knowledge = strength and strength = power.

While some students are clearly more self-reflective and articulate about their own process than others, most students experience the opportunity to talk and learn about these issues as a transforming process. In my experience, even those students who are frustrated by aspects of the course find themselves changed by it. One such student wrote in her final journal entry:

What I felt to be a major hindrance to me was the amount of people. Despite the philosophy, I really never felt at ease enough to speak openly about the feelings I have and kind of watched the class pull farther and farther apart as the semester went on. . . . I think that it was your attitude that kept me intrigued by the topics we were studying despite my frustrations with the class time. I really feel as though I made some significant moves in my understanding of other people's positions in our world as well as of my feelings of racism, and I feel very good about them. I feel like this class has moved me in the right direction. I'm on a roll I think, because I've been introduced to so much.

Facilitating student development in this way is a challenging and complex task, but the results are clearly worth the effort.

**Implications for the Institution**

What are the institutional implications for an understanding of racial identity development theory beyond the classroom? How can this framework be used to address the pressing issues of increasing diversity and decreasing racial tensions on college campuses? How can providing opportunities in the curriculum to talk about race and learn about racism affect the recruitment and retention of students of color specifically, especially when the majority of the students enrolled are White?

The fact is, educating White students about race and racism changes attitudes in ways that go beyond the classroom boundaries. As White students move through their own stages of identity development, they take their friends with them by engaging them in dialogue. They share the articles they have read with roommates, and involve them in their projects. An example of this involvement can be seen in the following journal entry, written by Larry, a White man:

Here it is our fifth week of class and more and more I am becoming aware of the racism around me. Our second project made things clearer, because while watching T.V. I picked up many kinds of discrimination and stereotyping. Since the project was over, I still find myself watching these shows and picking up bits and pieces every show I watch. Even my friends will be watching a show and they will

say, "Hey, Larry, put that in your paper." Since they know I am taking this class, they are looking out for these things. They are also watching what they say around me for fear that I will use them as an example. For example, one of my friends has this fascination with making fun of Jewish people. Before I would listen to his comments and take them in stride, but now I confront him about his comments.

The heightened awareness of the White students enrolled in the class has a ripple effect in their peer group, which helps to create a climate in which students of color and other targeted groups (Jewish students, for example) might feel more comfortable. It is likely that White students who have had the opportunity to learn about racism in a supportive atmosphere will be better able to be allies to students of color in extracurricular settings, like student government meetings and other organizational settings, where students of color often feel isolated and unheard.

At the same time, students of color who have had the opportunity to examine the ways in which racism may have affected their own lives are able to give voice to their own experience, and to validate it rather than be demoralized by it. An understanding of internalized oppression can help students of color recognize the ways in which they may have unknowingly participated in their own victimization, or the victimization of others. They may be able to move beyond victimization to empowerment, and share their learning with others, as Sharon, a previously quoted Black woman, planned to do.

Campus communities with an understanding of racial identity development could become more supportive of special-interest groups, such as the Black Student Union or the Asian Student Alliance, because they would recognize them not as "separatist" but as important outlets for students of color who may be at the Encounter or Immersion stage of racial identity development. Not only could speakers of color be sought out to add diversity to campus programming, but Whites who had made a commitment to unlearning their own racism could be offered as models to those White students looking for new ways to understand their own Whiteness, and to students of color looking for allies.

It has become painfully clear on many college campuses across the United States that we cannot have successfully multiracial campuses without talking about race and learning about racism. Providing a forum where this discussion can take place safely over a semester, a time period that allows personal and group development to unfold in ways that day-long or weekend programs do not, may be among the most proactive learning opportunities an institution can provide.

## References

- Barnard, H. F. (Ed.). (1987). *Outside the magic circle: The autobiography of Virginia Foster Durr*. New York: Simon & Schuster. (Originally published in 1985 by University of Alabama Press)
- Bowser, B. P., & Hunt, R. G. (1981). *Impacts of racism on whites*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Braden, A. (1987, April-May). Undoing racism: Lessons for the peace movement. *The Nonviolent Activist*, pp. 3-6.
- Bronstein, P. A., & Quina, K. (Eds.). (1988). *Teaching a psychology of people: Resources for gender and sociocultural awareness*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Cross, W. E., Jr. (1971). The Negro to black conversion experience: Toward a psychology of black liberation. *Black World*, 20(9), 13-27.

- Cross, W. E., Jr. (1978). The Cross and Thomas models of psychological nigrescence. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 5(1), 13-19.
- Cross, W. E., Jr. (1991). *Shades of black: Diversity in African-American identity*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Cross, W. E., Jr., Parham, T. A., & Helms, J. E. (1991). The stages of black identity development: Nigrescence models. In R. Jones (Ed.), *Black psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 319-338). San Francisco: Cobb and Henry.
- Derman-Sparks, L., Higa, C. T., & Sparks, B. (1980). Children, race and racism: How race awareness develops. *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*, 11(3/4), 3-15.
- Helms, J. E. (Ed.). (1990). *Black and white racial identity: Theory, research and practice*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Highlen, P. S., Reynolds, A. L., Adams, E. M., Hanley, T. C., Myers, L. J., Cox, C., & Speight, S. (1988, August 13). *Self-identity development model of oppressed people: Inclusive model for all?* Paper presented at the American Psychological Association Convention, Atlanta, GA.
- Hull, G. T., Scott, P. B., & Smith, B. (Eds.). (1982). *All the women are white, all the blacks are men, but some of us are brave: Black women's studies*. Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press.
- Katz, J. H. (1978). *White awareness: Handbook for anti-racism training*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Lester, J. (1987). *What happens to the mythmakers when the myths are found to be untrue?* Unpublished paper, Equity Institute, Emeryville, CA.
- McIntosh, P. (1988). *White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies*. Working paper, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley, MA.
- McIntosh, P. (1989, July/August). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Peace and Freedom*, pp. 10-12.
- Parham, T. A. (1989). Cycles of psychological nigrescence. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 17(2), 187-226.
- Phinney, J. (1989). Stages of ethnic identity in minority group adolescents. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 9, 34-39.
- Phinney, J. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: Review of research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108(3), 499-514.
- Phinney, J. S., & Rotheram, M. J. (Eds.). (1987). *Children's ethnic socialization: Pluralism and development*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Schuster, M. R., & Van Dyne, S. R. (Eds.). (1985). *Women's place in the academy: Transforming the liberal arts curriculum*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld.
- Wellman, D. (1977). *Portraits of white racism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

December 18, 1997

Ms. Beverly Tatum  
Mount Holyoke College  
50 College Street  
South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075

Dear Beverly:

Thank you again for serving as one of our participants at the Akron town meeting.

I am grateful to you for sharing your insights on the issue of racial identity. Your experience with young people especially helped our dialogue. As we discussed, this generation of young people will be the leaders of the next century, and it is crucial that they remain a focus of our initiative on race. I hope that the conversation we began in Akron will continue in communities across our nation.

Best wishes for a peaceful holiday season and happy New Year.

Sincerely,

*Bill Clinton*

# Women

who are shaping our world

**BEVERLY DANIEL TATUM, 49**  
PRESIDENT, SPELMAN COLLEGE

As the author of *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* and *Assimilation Blues*, Tatum has made it her business to keep public discourse about race on the front burner. And as Spelman's ninth president, she has the opportunity to inspire a whole new generation of Black women to continue the fight.

They're leading corporations and advising presidents. They're working to end poverty, injustice and disease. They're winning awards in Hollywood and on the global stage. They're healers, artists, visionaries and peacemakers. These sisters—starting with Oprah—are changing the way the world sees Black women.

BEVERLY DANIEL TATUM

# THE ABC APPROACH TO CREATING CLIMATES OF ENGAGEMENT ON DIVERSE CAMPUSES

DISCOURSE

**As we consider creating climates of engagement, we must be intentional in structuring opportunities to cross the long-standing boundaries that separate us in American society**

## **The Benefits of Engagement**

Increasingly, faculty, students and administrators alike are recognizing the importance of engagement across difference as an essential dimension of preparing the next generation for effective participation in a pluralistic

world (AAC&U 1995). This assess-

ment of the importance of diversity is supported by a growing body of empirical research demonstrating the educational benefits of learning in a diverse community (Hurtado 1999). For example, social psychologist Pat Gurin (1999) has found that students who experienced the most racial and ethnic diversity in and out of their classrooms showed the greatest engagement in active thinking processes, growth in intellectual engagement and motivation, and growth in intellectual and academic skills. Moreover, they showed the most engagement during college in various forms of citizenship, the most engagement with people from different races and cultures, and were the most likely to acknowledge that group differences are compatible with the interests of the broader community. These results persisted beyond graduation. Students with the most diversity experiences during college had the most cross-racial friends, neighbors, and work associates nine years after college entry.

The last finding is a particularly powerful one in light of the self-perpetuating power of segregation in U.S. society. Gurin concludes,

"If institutions of higher education are able to bring together students from various ethnic and racial backgrounds at the critical time of late adolescence and early adulthood, they have the opportunity to disrupt an insidious cycle of lifetime segregation that threatens the fabric of our pluralistic democracy" (116).

The benefits of engaging diversity are compelling, but are enough students taking advantage of these formal and informal learning opportunities? The popular perception is that they are not. Newspapers and magazines regularly feature stories about the dilemma of so-called "self-segregation" on college campuses. The question, "Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" is frequently asked in this context (Tatum 1997). Despite this perception, there is some evidence that there is more student desire for cross-group interaction than a quick glance in the cafeteria may indicate.

In a recent study of friendship groups within a diverse campus community, Anthony Lising Antonio (1999) found that while over 90 percent of the 638 third-year students he surveyed reported that students predominantly cluster by race and ethnicity, almost half (46 percent) described their own friendship groups as racially and ethnically mixed with no racial or ethnic group predominating. Clearly these students did not view their own behavior as the norm.

In a study of Berkeley undergraduates, Troy Duster (1993) and his associates found that most students express interest in more interracial experiences, yet how that interest is expressed varies along racial lines. White stu-

---

BEVERLY DANIEL TATUM is dean of the college at Mt. Holyoke College



dents who wanted to make friends with African Americans wanted to do so in informal settings and were less likely to want to participate in special programs, courses, or activities that structure interethnic contacts. Conversely, African Americans were far more likely to want special programs and activities and were less interested in developing cross-racial friendships and social activities. Duster concludes, "The task is to provide all students with a range of safe environments and options where they can explore and develop on terms that they find comfortable. In the absence of such opportunities, the tendencies remain for each group to see the others from a distance, in terms of images, stereotypes, stories, and myths that are not informed by direct contact and experience" (241).

How then can we create campus environments where engagement across lines of difference is perceived as a norm, rather than as an exception? How can we maximize the learning opportunities created by the diversity of our communities? Drawing on an understanding of identity development during the college years and the insights provided by the research on diversity in higher education, let's consider a three-pronged approach, which I have referred to elsewhere (Tatum 1998) as the ABCs: affirming identity, building community, and cultivating leadership. This approach has implications for curricular as well as co-curricular initiatives on campus, and both will be considered in this discussion.

#### **Affirming identity**

All undergraduate students, regardless of age, are engaged in an important process of exploration, asking the questions, *Who am I? What will I be? With whom will I be associated?* The concept of identity is a complex one, shaped by individual characteristics, family dynamics, historical factors, and social and political contexts. *Who am I?* The answer depends in large part on who the world around me says I am. *Who do my parents say I am? Who do my peers say I am? What message is reflected back to me in the faces and voices of my teachers? My neighbors? The store clerks? What do I learn from the media about myself? How am I represented in the cultural images around me? Or am I missing from the picture altogether?*

In order to create a climate of engagement, we must begin by asking what images are re-

flected in the mirror of our institutions. Does the reflection affirm the identities of all our students? Every student should be able to see important parts of herself reflected in some way. All should be able to find themselves in the faces of other students and among the faculty and staff, as well as reflected in the curriculum.

In addition to the important work of curricular inclusion, a common approach to affirming marginalized identities institutionally is through the establishment of cultural centers. At Mount Holyoke College, there are five such spaces, serving the needs of the African-American/Afro-Caribbean, Latina, Native-American, Asian and Asian-American, and lesbian/bisexual/transgendered student populations. Some observers argue that while the existence of such curricular and co-curricular spaces affirms identity, they work against building community, encouraging separation rather than the cross-group engagement we seek. As paradoxical as it may seem, the opposite is more often the case. As Daryl Smith and her associates (1997) report, one persistent research finding is that student involvement with campus groups reflecting personal, cultural, or service interests helps students feel that they belong on campus, that they are contributing to the campus culture, and that their interests are reflected in the institution. Students who feel affirmed in this way are more likely to be willing to reach out beyond their own identity groups to engage with others.

#### **Building community**

Even as we strive to reflect the diversity of our campuses, we need to inculcate a sense of shared purpose as members of a particular educational community. This task of creating unity from diversity mirrors the ongoing challenge of American society, and our efforts to successfully build community in a diverse context provide excellent modeling for our students, who will need these skills in the pluralistic communities they will enter after graduation.

As has been noted, affirming identity is not contradictory to, but rather a prerequisite for building community. When institutions work to affirm historically underrepresented groups, however, it is sometimes students from dominant groups (i.e., whites, males, Christians, heterosexuals) that begin to feel left out. As institutions become more responsive to di-



**How can we maximize the learning opportunities created by the diversity of our communities?**

verse constituents, students from dominant groups may need help seeing that there is still a place for them in a pluralistic community.

We recently confronted this dilemma as part of our orientation programming for first year students at Mount Holyoke.

We used a poetry-writing activity described by Linda Christensen (1998), which can be done quite spontaneously. Using the stem, "I am from" for each stanza, we asked students to describe familiar items found around their home, sights and sounds from their neighborhood, names of foods and dishes that recall family gatherings, familiar family sayings, names of relatives, especially those that link them to the past. In doing so, we helped them make their own cultures visible not only to themselves but also to others. Here are some sample stanzas:

I am from books, books, and more books,  
long afternoons spent at the library,  
traveling way beyond the limits of my small town.

I am from stone walls, and dairy farms,  
brilliant autumn leaves and church school hayrides,  
the sound of my brother's saxophone at 5 a.m.,  
and the cheers of the Saturday afternoon football crowd across the street.

I am from tofu balls and biscuits, grits and eggs  
pancakes every Saturday,  
coconut cake on my birthday,  
and pizza, pizza and more pizza if J.T. has his way.

I am from "Treat people the way you want to be treated,"  
"If you don't have something nice to say,  
don't say anything at all,"  
and "We are pleased but not surprised,"  
when I share good news.

I am from "Eat your vegetables" but not the lima beans!

I am from Hazel and Maxwell, Bob and Catherine,  
Victor Hugo and Constance Eleanor,  
a long line of educators,  
I am from proud men and women working for change.

After discussing their poems in small groups, students were given the opportunity to read their poems to an auditorium full of other first year students. Many were eager to share a glimpse of their cultural heritage with

their classmates. Students quickly began to make connections to each other's experiences. Their evaluations of this orientation activity were positive, and included such telling comments as "Even white suburbia has culture," "Although we have a lot of

differences, we also have many things in common. This is an amazing group of people!" Educational experiences such as this one not only affirm individual and group identities, but also build community; and that is the goal—to find ways to do both.

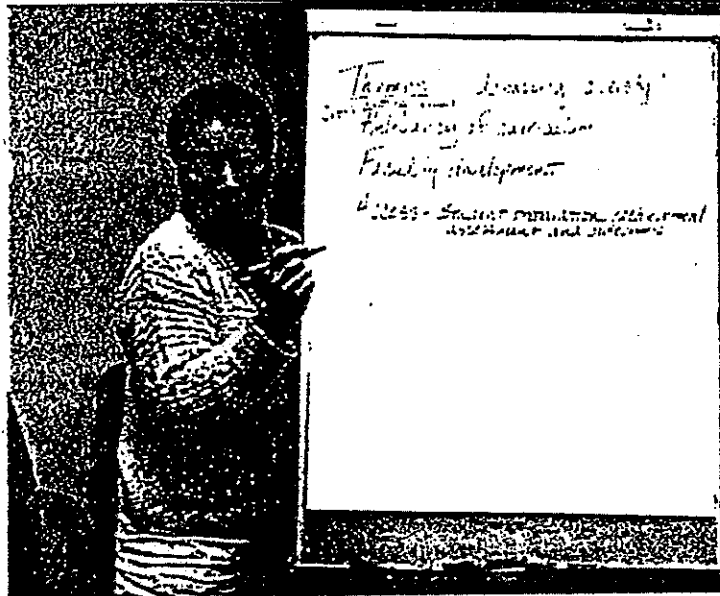
Community building can also be emphasized in the curriculum. Easily implemented pedagogical strategies such as assigning students to diverse discussion groups (rather than letting them choose groups themselves) help students make connections with one another across lines of difference. Allport's (1958) four conditions for positive intergroup contact (equal status, common goal, interdependence, and support from authorities for the contact) can often be created in the classroom. Indeed, cooperative learning, service learning, and collaborative learning communities have been shown to facilitate the development of intellectual complexity as well as multicultural competencies (Smith 1997).

Other dimensions of community building in a classroom are more difficult to achieve. Particularly when discussing issues related to social justice (i.e., racism and classism), passions run high, and polarization, rather than connection, can result. However, engaging students in ongoing discussions of racism may be the most powerful tool for community building available to us. In his assessment of the impact of diversity and multiculturalism on students, Astin (1993) reported that "the largest number of positive effects was associated with the frequency with which students discussed racial/ethnic issues during their undergraduate years" (47). This is an intriguing finding, given the tensions that are often associated with race-related discussions in racially mixed settings. The American Commitments National Panel noted that "of all the sources of unequal power in the United States, race is the razor that most brutally cuts and divides" (24). In order to avoid being "cut," many students, white and of color, retreat into silence.

Yet, building community requires dialogue.

Racism, like the other "isms" of sexism, classism, anti-Semitism, heterosexism, and ableism, is a powerful source of disconnection in our society. It alienates us not only from others but also from ourselves and our own experiences. As Jean Baker Miller (1988) describes it, when we have meaningful experiences, we usually seek validation from the other. When we do not feel heard, a relational disconnection takes place, and we feel invalidated. We might try again to be heard, or we may choose to disconnect from that person. If there are others available who will listen and affirm us, we may turn to them. But if disconnection means what Miller calls "condemned isolation," then we will do whatever we have

Beverly Tatum at  
Tri-National  
Seminar



to in order to remain in connection with others. That may mean denying our own experiences of racism, selectively screening things out of our conscious awareness so that we can continue our relationships with reduced discomfort. That may be an important coping strategy in some contexts, but it may also lead to the self-blame and self-doubt of internalized oppression.

The consequences of silence are different, but also damaging for white people. Many whites have been encouraged by a culture of silence about racism to disconnect from their racial experiences. When white children make racial observations, for example, they are often silenced by their parents, who feel uncomfortable and unsure of how to respond. As children get older, the observed contradic-

tions—between parental attitudes and behaviors or between societal messages about meritocracy and visible inequities—become difficult to process in a culture of silence. In order to prevent chronic discomfort, individuals may learn to "not notice."

But, in not noticing, one loses opportunities for greater insight into oneself and one's own experience. Privilege goes unnoticed, and all but the most blatant acts of racial bigotry are ignored. Not noticing requires energy. Exactly how much energy is used up in this way becomes apparent when the opportunity to explore those silenced perceptions is made available. It is as though a blockage has been removed, and energy is released.

According to Jean Baker Miller, when a relationship is growth-producing, it results in five good things: increased zest, a sense of empowerment, greater knowledge, an increased sense of self-worth, and a desire for more connection. It is exactly these kinds of characteristics that have been reported by researchers like Astin, Hurtado, Curin, and Smith, who have all investigated the benefits of diverse interactions on campus. In my own research (Tatum and Knaplund 1996) involving interviews with white teachers who were actively engaged in leading discussions with others about racism, there was abundant evidence of these benefits.

Said one teacher, "The thing that's happened for me is that I'm no longer afraid to bring [race] up. I look to bring it up; I love bringing it up." This teacher now brings up these issues regularly with her colleagues, and they, like her, seem to feel liberated by the opportunity for dialogue. Describing a discussion group in which participants talked about racial issues, she said: "It was such a rich conversation, and it just flowed the whole time. It was exciting to be a part of it, and everybody contributed, and everybody had their say. And everybody felt the energy and the desire."

Numerous writers have addressed strategies for encouraging dialogic interaction in the classroom in the context of talking about race: e.g., Tatum 1992; Schoem, Frankel, Zu-

**The multiracial,  
multiethnic,  
multireligious  
America of the late  
twentieth century is  
"truly a new frontier"**

niga, and Lewis 1993; Adams, Bell, and Griffin 1997. Common strategies include establishing clear guidelines for discussion (i.e., honoring confidentiality, maintaining mutual respect, "no zaps") and the use of dyads and small group discussions in combination with other teaching methods.

Specifically, when teaching about racism, I have found it useful to alert students to the emotional responses—guilt, shame, embarrassment, or anger—that many people have when talking and learning about racism. Such responses are predictable, but students often think that they alone are struggling with these powerful emotions. Talking explicitly about the fact that these feelings may be part of the learning process helps to normalize the experience and helps students remain engaged with the course content and each other when these strong emotions begin to surface.

Of particular value has been an understanding of racial identity development, the process by which each of us constructs meaning about what it means to be white or a person of color in a race-conscious society (Tatum 1992, 1997). For young people of color, the process often begins to unfold in early adolescence, typically in response to encounters with racism and often entails an initial period of anger and/or confusion and a desire to surround oneself with visible symbols of one's racial identity. Actively seeking opportunities to learn about one's history and culture in the company of other members of one's racial/ethnic group is a common response during the college years. For whites living in predominantly white areas, racial identity development may not begin to unfold until late adolescence or even later. It is often the experience of living in a diverse campus community that triggers the process for white students. Moving from lack of awareness of one's own whiteness to an awareness of racism and white privilege is often accompanied by feelings of guilt and/or anger and a desire to take action against racism. Coming to terms with cultural messages about white superiority and then defining for oneself what it means to be white is a central task of this identity development process.

The fact that adolescents of color and

mental timelines in terms of racial identity development is a potential source of misunderstanding and conflict. However, sharing the process of racial identity development with students gives them a framework for understanding

each other's processes as well as their own. This cognitive framework does not necessarily prevent conflict, but it does allow students to be less frightened or resentful when it occurs. For example, a white student in my psychology of racism course observed, "As a white person going through my stages of identity development, I do not take time to think about the struggle people of color go through to reach a stage of complete understanding. I am glad that I know about the stages because now I can understand people of color's behavior in certain situations." Similarly, a Latina student talked about the value of the information for her: "This article was the one that made me feel that my own prejudices were showing. I never knew that whites went through an identity development of their own." She later told me outside of class that she found it much easier to listen to some of the things white students said because she could understand their naïve—and sometimes offensive—comments as part of a developmental stage. Reducing both fear and resentment increases the possibility of engagement both in and outside the classroom—a precursor to the genuine building of community.

**Cultivating leadership**

Every institution of higher education sees itself as preparing the next generation for leadership and effective civic participation. But are we providing the tools needed for democratic participation and leadership in the twenty-first century? The multiracial, multiethnic, multireligious America of the late twentieth century is "truly a new frontier" (Eck 1996). What is required in this new context?

In their book, *Democratic Education in an Age of Difference* (1997, 8), Guarasci and Cornwell argue, "We need a democratic order that can contain the contradiction of difference and connection, self and community, one and many. It must be democracy in which commonality is understood as negotiated and

**By absorbing a plethora of social and political agendas, liberal education has lost shape and direction**

community in which paradox, contradiction, and ambiguity can be appreciated rather than feared."

The critical thinking skills associated with a liberal arts education are essential for functioning effectively in such a democracy, but insufficient without experience. What is also needed is the opportunity for practice. Our efforts to affirm identity and build community inevitably create situations that allow students to engage in what Henry Giroux (1992) calls "border studies, the points of intersection, where different histories, languages, experiences and voices intermingle amidst diverse relations of power and privilege" (209). When we encourage students to become border crossers, we are cultivating their capacity for leadership in the evolving democracy of the twenty-first century.

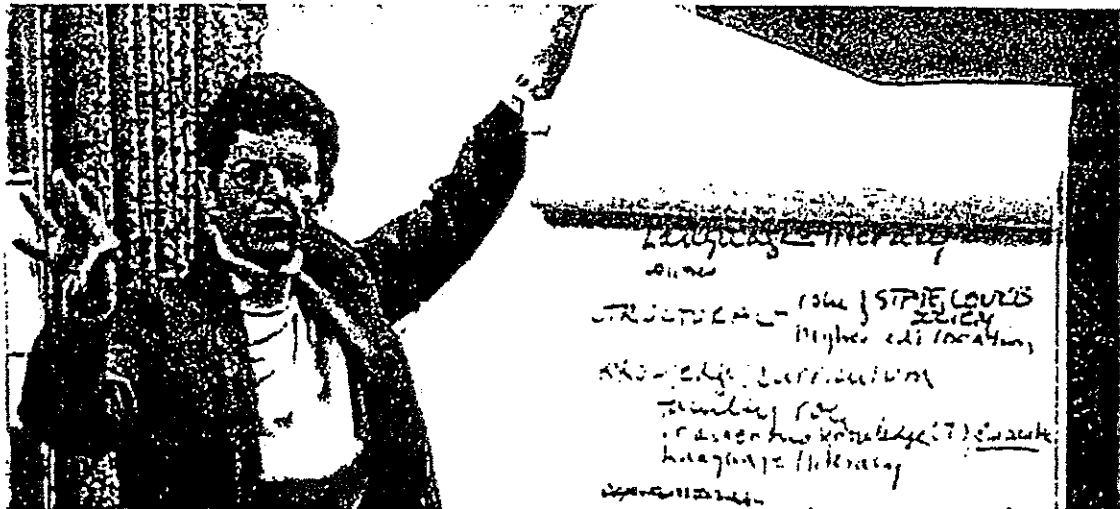
Some border crossing happens socially as students enter unfamiliar spaces on campus. For example, when "minority" students organize programming at their cultural centers and invite "majority" students to participate, a unique learning opportunity is created in that

the invited students are required to shift their cultural lens "from the center to the margin." While there may be initial discomfort, the potential for learning is great. Such experiences are essential for developing the skills required

to interact effectively in the increasingly pluralistic world. Faculty and administrators need to model this border-crossing behavior whenever possible and actively encourage students to follow suit.

Border crossing can be institutionalized in the curriculum as well. The Intergroup Relations, Conflict and Community (IGRCC) Program at the University of Michigan is an excellent model that is being replicated at a number of universities around the United States. This multifaceted program includes academic courses (first year seminars as well as upper-level courses) that provide interdisciplinary understandings of intergroup relations, community, and conflict, as well as face-to-face intergroup dialogues, student leadership training, and workshops (Schoem 1997). The intergroup dialogues, in particular,

Tri-National Seminar





offer an opportunity to explore differing experiences of United States democracy and the impact of individual and group identity on the pursuit of equal opportunity. The interactive nature of the dialogue and the other pedagogical strategies used in these courses facilitate an experiential as well as a cognitive understanding of these topics.

### Implementing the ABCs

A faculty member associated with the intergroup dialogue program at Michigan observed, "Students are not really choosing to be separate, but there is no vehicle to cross boundaries" (Schoem, 146). As we consider creating climates of engagement, we must be intentional in structuring opportunities to cross the long-standing boundaries that separate us in American society.

As we revamp old programs and consider new initiatives on our campuses, it is important to remember that our efforts to cultivate leadership must be built on the foundation of affirming identity and building community. The ABCs must be woven together in a seamless fabric if we are to maximize the benefits made available to us by our diverse communities. If we create a climate that supports pluralistic expression and provides authentic and sustained opportunities to practice, we and our students will be ready for the challenges and opportunities of this new frontier. □

### WORKS CITED

- Adams, M., L. Bell, and P. Griffin, eds. 1997. *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook for teachers and trainers*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, Inc.
- Allport, G. W. 1958. *The nature of prejudice*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Antonio, A. L. 1999. Racial diversity and friendship groups in college: What the research tells us. *Diversity Digest*, 3 (4): 6-7, 16.
- Association of American Colleges and Universities. 1995. *American pluralism and the college curriculum*. Washington, DC: AAC&U.
- Association of American Colleges and Universities. 1995. *The drama of diversity and democracy: Higher education and American commitments*. Washington, DC: AAC&U.
- Astin, A. W. 1993. Diversity and multiculturalism on the campus: How are students affected? *Change*, 25 (2): 44-49.
- Christensen, L. 1998. Where I'm from: Inviting student lives into the classroom. In E. Lee, D. Menkart, and M. Okazawa-Rey, eds. *Beyond heroes and holidays: A practical guide to K-12 anti-racist, multicultural education and staff development*. Washington, DC: Network of Educators on the Americas.
- Duster, Troy. 1993. The diversity of the University of California at Berkeley: An emerging reformulation of competence in an increasingly multicultural world. In B. W. Thompson and S. Tyagi, eds. *Beyond a dream deferred: Multicultural education and the politics of excellence*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Giroux, H. A. 1992. Resisting difference: Cultural studies and the discourse of critical pedagogy. In L. Grossberg, C. Nelson, and P. Treichler, eds. *Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Guarasci, R. and G.H. Cornwell, and associates. 1997. *Democratic education in an age of difference: Redefining citizenship in higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gurin, P. 1999. Expert report of Patricia Gurin. In, The compelling need for diversity in higher education, presented in Gratz, et al. v. Bollinger, et al. and Grueter, et al. v. Bollinger, et al. Washington, DC: Wilmer, Cutler and Pickering.
- Gurin, P., T. Peng, G. Lopez, and B.R. Nagda. (In press). Context, identity, and intergroup relations. In D. Prentice and D. Miller, eds. *Cultural divides: The social psychology of intergroup contact*. New York: Russell Sage.
- Hurtado, S. 1999. Reaffirming educators' judgment: Educational value of diversity. *Liberal Education*, 85 (2): 24-31.
- Miller, J. B. 1988. Connections, disconnections and violations. *Work in Progress*, No. 33. Wellesley, MA: Stone Center.
- Schoem, D. 1997. Intergroup relations, conflict, and community. In, R. Guarasci, G.H. Cornwell and associates, eds. *Democratic education in an age of difference: Redefining citizenship in higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schoem, D., L. Frankel, X. Zuniga, and E.A. Lewis, eds. 1993. *Multicultural teaching in the university*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Smith, D. G. and associates. 1997. *Diversity works: The emerging picture of how students benefit*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Tatum, B. D. 1992. Talking about race, learning about racism: The application of racial identity development theory in the classroom. *Harvard Educational Review*, 62 (1): 1-24.
- Tatum, B. D. 1997. "Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" and other conversations about race. New York: Basic Books.
- Tatum, B. D. 1998. *Affirming identity, building community, cultivating leadership: A developmental approach to diversity on campus*. Paper presented at the Diversity and Learning Conference sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, November 12, 1998, Philadelphia.
- Tatum, B. D. and E. G. Knapplund. 1996. Outside the circle: The relational implications for white women working against racism. *Work in Progress*, No. 78. Wellesley, MA: Stone Center Working Paper Series.

## **Family Life and School Experience: Factors in the Racial Identity Development of Black Youth in White Communities**

**Beverly Daniel Tatum\***

*Spelman College*

*Eighteen middle-class Black college students were interviewed in-depth about their experiences growing up in predominantly White communities. Using Cross's model of racial identity development as a theoretical framework for analysis, case studies of three women and two men are presented to highlight the impact of varied parental socialization practices and school experiences on racial identity development. For all, positive same-race peer relationships, information about African-American achievements, the availability of role models, and the encouragement of significant adults were important for academic success and the beginning resolution of identity conflicts. The implications of these findings for understanding aspects of school integration and for developing relevant school-based interventions are considered.*

Persistent residential segregation in the United States has hampered efforts to achieve the full racial and ethnic integration in schools envisioned in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954; Orfield & Eaton, 1996). Nevertheless, a number of African American adolescents have come of age in predominantly White communities, and understanding their experiences can provide us with insights into key issues in school desegregation. Though these children and their families represent less than ten percent of the Black population (Landry, 1987), they are on the leading edge of housing and school desegregation. The children of these typically middle- to upper-middle-class families have access to educational and economic resources that might prepare them to assume leadership positions in American society. This leadership potential is an important resource for the development of African

---

\*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Beverly Daniel Tatum, President, Spelman College, 350 Spelman Lane, SW Box 616, Atlanta, GA 30314-4399, [e-mail: btatum@spelman.edu].

Americans as a group. To what extent do these young people see themselves as part of a larger Black collective? More specifically, what is the nature of their racial group identity development? How has their identity been shaped and defined by their family lives and school experiences as they grow up in White communities?

In a previous qualitative interview study of Black families living in a predominantly White and prosperous suburb of California (Tatum, 1987/1992), I found that most parents were concerned about the impact of living in a White community, and in particular of attending predominantly White schools, on the developing racial identity of their children. Within this context, some parents adopted a *race-conscious* family frame, actively seeking out Black playmates for their children and encouraging involvement in Black cultural activities whenever possible, in order to promote a more positive Black identity in their children. Other parents adopted a *race-neutral* approach (Spencer, 1985), making no particular efforts to influence their children's social interactions on the basis of racial group membership. A few parents expressed only minor concern with these issues, and instead adopted a *class-conscious* family frame, emphasizing their socio-economic group as the most relevant reference group for their children. To the extent that these families sought to distance themselves from other African Americans, they might also be described as *race-avoidant*. However, because the children interviewed in this study were young (ranging in age from 6-12), the question of their own racial identity development remained unanswered.

### Stages of Black Racial Identity Development

The process of asking, "Who am I? Who can I be? What does it mean to be a member of my racial group?" typically begins to unfold for Black youth during adolescence (Phinney, 1989) and has important implications for self-esteem (Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997; Rowley, Sellers, Chavous, & Smith, 1998) and academic performance (Sellers, Chavous, & Cooke, 1998). Cross' model of Black racial identity development has been well-tested in the literature, and has been revised accordingly since its introduction in 1971 (Cross, 1971). According to this model, there are five stages in the process, identified as pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment (Cross, 1978/1991; Cross & Vandiver, 2001; Vandiver, Fhagen-Smith, Cokley, Cross, & Worrell). In the first stage, the individual absorbs many of the beliefs and values of the dominant White culture, including the idea that it is "better" to be White. Simply as a function of being socialized in a Eurocentric culture, the role models, life-styles, and value systems of the dominant group may be more highly valued than those of one's own cultural group, and the person may seek to assimilate and be accepted by Whites. The personal and social significance of one's racial group membership has not yet been realized.

Transition to the encounter stage is typically precipitated by an event or series of events that force the individual to acknowledge the personal impact of racism. Anger, confusion, and feelings of alienation are commonly experienced emotions. Having now had some firsthand experience of racially-motivated rejection, the individual begins to grapple with what it means to be a member of a group targeted by racism. Though Cross (1991) and Parham (1989) describe this process as one that unfolds in late adolescence and early adulthood, my research suggests that for Black youth in White communities it may begin as early as junior high school (Tatum, 1992, 1993, 1997; see also Phinney & Tarver, 1988).

Initial attempts to define one's Black identity may be based on internalized stereotypes about African Americans (see, e.g., Vandiver et al., 2001, for a review). Certain styles of speech, dress, and music may be embraced as "authentically Black" and become highly valued, while those attitudes and behaviors that are associated with Whites are now viewed with disdain. Unfortunately, as Fordham and Ogbu (1986) point out, because the visible symbols of school achievement are usually White, this stage can have negative implications for the academic success of Black youth.

This desire to surround oneself with visible symbols of one's racial identity and actively avoid symbols of "Whiteness" is characteristic of the early part of the immersion/emersion stage. During the later part of this stage, the person actively seeks out opportunities to learn about his/her own history and culture with the support of Black peers. Access to new, less stereotypical information about other people of African descent allows the individual to expand the definition of what it means to be Black, and results in a newly defined and affirmed sense of self (Tatum, 1992; 1997).

Emerging from this process into the internalization stage with a sense of security in one's own racial identity, the individual is now able to view his/her own group (and other groups) more objectively. The individual is willing to establish meaningful relationships across racial lines with those that acknowledge and are respectful of his/her self-definition. Cross suggests that there are few psychological differences between this fourth stage and the fifth stage, internalization-commitment. However, those at the fifth stage have found ways to translate their "personal sense of Blackness into a plan of action or a general sense of commitment" to the concerns of Blacks as a group, which is sustained over time (Cross, 1991, p. 220).

Whether at the fourth or fifth stage, the individual is now anchored in a positive sense of racial identity, and is prepared to both proactively perceive and transcend race. Though they may not use the language of racial identity development theory to describe it, most Black parents want their children to achieve personal security, knowledge of the reality of racism and empowerment to respond effectively to it (Tatum, 1987/1992; 1997). What can parents do to foster this positive growth and how do the school environments in which they place their children facilitate or

hinder this process? An interview study was designed to explore the experiences of Black college students who were raised in primarily White communities and to explore the processes by which families and schools fostered or inhibited the development of racial identity. The case studies presented below illustrate common patterns with students and families and serve to demonstrate the relationships between parents' racial orientation and young adults' ongoing struggle or resolution with racial identity development (for discussion of case study methodology and examples, see Franz & Stewart, 1994).

**Method**

*Participants*

Self-identified Black college students raised in predominantly White communities were recruited from two elite, coeducational New England colleges. At one school, the researcher made a request in a colleague's Introductory Psychology class. In another, the Dean of Multicultural affairs sent a letter describing the study to all Black students on campus. Students were not compensated for participation. They were told the focus of the study was their experiences growing up in a primarily White community. Twenty-four students volunteered to participate in the in-depth individual interviews about their family life, school experiences, and peer relationships in their communities of origin, their current level of racial awareness, and adjustment to their current, predominantly White college environment. After indicating how they chose the college they did, all were asked if they had considered attending a historically Black college or university. All of the interviews were conducted by the same Black female interviewer and were approximately two hours in length.

All of those who volunteered were interviewed, however six of those were either children from interracial marriages, adopted by White families, or recent immigrants to the United States. While the experiences of these adolescents is also worthy of investigation (Root, 1996), this discussion is limited to the remaining eighteen participants, all of whom had two Black parents, and grew up in the care of at least one of them while residing in the United States.

Interviews focused on participants' home and school experiences while growing up as well as their current experiences at a predominantly White college. The taped interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically, with particular attention to details regarding parents' attitudes toward racial socialization, school experiences, and changing self-perceptions regarding racial identity. Participants' descriptions of their families were used to categorize the families as: *race-conscious, race-neutral, or class-conscious/race-avoidant* according to Spencer's (1985) framework described above. Ten families were categorized as *race-conscious*, seven as *race-neutral*, and only one as *class-conscious/race-avoidant*.

Two coders made each judgement, and their agreement was nearly 100%. The cases described below were chosen to highlight aspects of these three categorizations.

These participants (six men, twelve women) ranged in age from 18-22, with a median age of 20. Ten were raised in two-parent households, while eight were primarily reared in one-parent households. Family size ranged from one to three children. All but one of the thirty-six parents had at least a high school education, twenty were college graduates, and twelve had post-graduate degrees. The reported median family income was \$55,000. Eleven of the participants have lived in a predominantly White community since they were in preschool or younger. Four moved to their predominantly White neighborhoods in elementary school, and the remaining three moved in junior high school. However, all have attended predominantly White schools since their elementary years. Most are from suburban areas of East Coast cities, ranging as far south as Washington, D.C. and as far north as Massachusetts. Two of the participants are from the Midwest, and one from the Southwest.

**Case Studies and Discussion**

In order to illustrate the dynamic intersection of home and school environments and their impact on racial identity development, profiles of five students, three women and two men, are presented here. They represent five different manifestations of the three different categories of families described above. The names of individuals in each profile have been changed.

*"Our There Stranded"*

Janice is the only participant to come from a family categorized as class-conscious/race-avoidant. She is a twenty-year old junior from the suburbs of an East Coast city. When asked about her ethnicity, she described her parents' ancestry in multi-racial terms, but concluded by saying "but you look at them and you just say Afro-American." Identifying more with her mother's side of the family than her father's, Janice describes her own cultural background as West Indian.

In response to her mother's fears that Janice was becoming "gangsterified" in her integrated neighborhood, the family moved to a neighborhood that was "just entirely White kids," most of whom were younger than Janice. There was little contact with extended family members, and her parents' own Black social network was quite small. Especially during adolescence, Janice was lonely and expressed regrets that her parents did not help her to connect with any Black kids. "I was never like in a Jack and Jill [a Black social club] or my mom was never in a sorority or anything so I never had any Black, kind of like 'bourgie' network of friends to hang out with."

Identified as a gifted student early in her education, Janice remembers the White nuns in her predominantly White, Catholic school "being so amazed" that she was not like "whatever they thought Black students are supposed to be." There were only two other Black girls (and no Black boys) in her "A track" classes. She made friends with some of her white classmates, but she felt their acceptance of her was limited. "I was friends with them at school, and that's where it stopped."

Janice's social isolation was particularly painful in adolescence. White boys wouldn't ask her to dance, and White girlfriends never introduced her to their brothers or male friends. "That prom thing was like out of the question." Though retrospectively, Janice can see that race was a factor in this situation, at the time she could not acknowledge it. She explained, "I didn't really see my Blackness in high school at all. I mean I was aware of how I was treated differently... [but I would say] 'we don't see color here. Everyone is friends and they treat me the same.'"

Though she could not name the problem, Janice did try to address it by asking her parents to send her to a racially-mixed public "magnet" school in the city. Her parents, however, expressed concerns about transportation arrangements and the school's "dangerous" neighborhood. Janice abandoned the idea, but resented their discouragement and the fact that they did not make other choices available. "They never presented an option for me as a Black female teenager." Without a Black friendship network to fall back upon, she described herself as "out there stranded."

Janice considered attending Howard University, a historically Black institution, but her parents again discouraged her, telling her it would be a "culture shock" for her. At her parents' urging, she went to a prestigious White college instead, a decision she now regrets. Since coming to college she has become more aware of racism directed at her, from "being treated like an Affirmative Action case" to having bottles and epithets hurled at her from a passing car. She has also learned more about her own heritage through African-American Studies courses, an education that has been both painful and a source of pride. She has tried to share her new sense of "Afro-Americaness" with her family, but they have been resistant. "I wanted to practice Kwanza with my family; no one wanted to do it. I wanted to do all these Black things... I can tell with my parents, it's kind of like a self-hate type thing."

Though she has a small racially mixed circle of friends, she still feels socially rejected by Whites, has done little dating, and is desperate to be in a supportive Black community.

I knew my high school experience was just very weird, just by the way the Whites treated me. But my self-esteem has gone down the toilet since I've been here... Being made to feel that you're never quite good enough, never quite pretty enough, never quite smart enough, or even if you're all of these things, just being made to feel that you're different, something's not quite right. Obviously I know there's nothing wrong with me, but it's constant reinforcement of something's not quite right.... I'm going to Howard grad school if it kills me.

From Janice's description she spent most of her adolescence in the pre-encounter stage, had many "encounter" experiences in college, and is now seeking a Black community in which to immerse herself.

Though Janice clearly blames her parents for leaving her "stranded," it should be pointed out that there was little, if any, support in her high school setting in terms of the curriculum or available role models to help foster positive racial identity development. Though her college experience has been of some benefit in that she has had exposure to African-American studies, it has been at a high cost in terms of her social alienation. Janice has a lot in common with her classmate, Karen. They are the same age, grew up in the same city, and both always attended predominantly White private schools. Yet Karen's story is very different. Her story is that of the race-conscious family.

#### *"The 'Burb's Are Kind of Nice"*

Karen describes herself ethnically as African-American and economically "well off." An only child, she and her parents lived with her grandmother until Karen was eleven, in the same predominantly Black neighborhood where her parents had grown up. When her parents were financially ready to purchase their own home, they found an affordable house in a nearby predominantly White community. Though they were living in a White suburb, Karen's parents maintained close ties with their old friends, most of whom were African American, some of whom had also moved to suburban areas.

Karen remembers that there were only two or three Black children in her small, private elementary school, but everyone was friendly. As she pointed out, "when there's only twelve people in your class, there's only so much excluding you can get away with." After the sixth grade, she enrolled in a slightly larger private school from which she graduated. Being active in sports helped her feel included in this environment, and she was often invited to parties by her White teammates, when some of the other Black students were not. There was little dating going on among her group of friends ("guys and girls just used to hang out"), so the fact that she wasn't dating didn't bother her. "It was just the way the cookie crumbles."

Karen began to recognize some racism in high school and was confused by it. When White friends referred to Karen as "not really Black," she was offended by the stereotypical assumptions implied in the statement. "Obviously they think that everyone who's Black is either carrying a gun or talking in some sort of slang." She resented other assumptions they made:

When it was time to apply to schools, people were like, "Oh, you don't have to worry; you're a minority. Everyone needs minorities." You're like, "Wait. I've been in school with you for the past seven years. I've been going to school like you have. I don't think I've been sitting in my room everyday going, 'Oh when it's time to apply to college, it's not going to

matter anyway. I'll go whether I can read or can't read, whether I can add or can't add." I was very pissed off... I told them how pissed off I was at them.

Unsure of whether these comments were malicious in intent or simply a reflection of ignorance, she found it "hard to decipher sometimes where that person stood." Her parents were helpful in talking to her about these situations as they arose, and she felt satisfied with the preparation they had provided.

Her parents "strongly suggested" that she consider attending a Black college, but Karen rejected the idea primarily because of her school and peer culture. Her school was "this kind of pre-college building ground where you get sent to the most prestigious universities in America, whatever malarkey they teach you." Like Janice, Karen has had second thoughts about her college choice. As a pre-med student, she believes some of her White male professors (particularly in science) have problems dealing with "female students, with Black students, with any minority group students on the whole." The social environment, revolving around "boring" beer parties, has also been disappointing. By contrast, her experience in a summer program for pre-med minority students was very rewarding academically and socially. She is now seriously considering applying to a Black medical school.

Though Karen describes herself as "fine with everyone in the Black community" at her college, her circle of friends is not exclusively African American. While there are some White students she chooses to avoid, she has become friendly with others through her continuing involvement in sports. She has observed other Black students from White communities struggling with their identity, and objects to the "Blacker than thou" attitude some of them have, "It seems to me that a lot of people are all of a sudden defining what Blackness is. Like who's really Black, who's not... I don't know, it just doesn't go over well with me." Her view is that they should be more understanding of the variety of backgrounds Black students come from and how that might influence the social choices they make.

In reflecting on her own identity development, Karen described the impact of learning new information about her own cultural heritage.

I think a lot of it, the changes that I went through have been after I came here... I mean at home I don't think I was ever lacking. I mean my parents have all these books for me, like books by Black authors, poetry, jazz music, I mean I had it all at home. But I think it was different in school that you really didn't start to learn how much you were being excluded historically and things like that in school until you get here and you get a chance to do other things. Like you get a chance to take Black studies courses... I've done a fair amount of work in African-American literature, especially women's literature. And so that's something I never, ever had a chance to do in high school... I think that a lot of the changes I've gone through have happened here just by getting a different sort of education and having the ability to choose for myself what I want to take, what I want to learn about... But on the whole I don't think I act any different than I did necessarily, I think it's just now I know more.

In many ways Karen seems to be truly bicultural, moving back and forth between Black and White communities with relative ease. Though she has had

"encounter" experiences in both high school and college, she does not seem demoralized by them in the way that Janice was. In fact, Karen's own summation of her experience was that "the 'burbs are kind of nice, growing up in the 'burbs wasn't bad."

Perhaps her parents' race-consciousness in Karen's early years allowed her to internalize a positive view of Blackness that contributed to her resilience. Though she certainly identified with her White peers in high school, even then she seemed secure enough in her own African American identity to confront racism when it was necessary. The opportunity to learn more about her heritage in college has been important for the further development of that identity. It seems regrettable that there were no opportunities for such learning in high school. It also seems unfortunate that her guidance counselor did not understand enough about her developmental needs as a Black adolescent to at least suggest that she consider, also, a historically Black college.

The role of the school in facilitating or hindering positive racial group identity development is especially clear in the case of Terri. From a race-neutral family, Terri's interactions with teachers were critical to her sense of racial identity in her growing up years.

*"Ave You Okay with Yourself?"*

In her second college semester at the time of the interview, Terri described herself as a "middle-class Afro-American female." Though she grew up in a largely White, affluent community, there was a large Black, low-income population in the neighboring city. When school bussing began between the two communities, racial tensions were high, and Terri felt the brunt of these tensions in school. School administrators often assumed that she and her brother were "less intelligent... troublemakers" from the city.

Terri provided a very poignant example of this faulty assumption when she described an interaction with a teacher who refused to let Terri board her bus at the end of the day. The teacher said, "None of the Black students go on this bus." Though Terri cried in protest, the teacher insisted that she was right. When all the buses had gone, and Terri still remained, unsure of how she would get home, the irritated teacher asked, "Well, why didn't you get on your bus?" "Because you pushed me and wouldn't let me," Terri replied. Realizing her error, the teacher apologized and drove the second-grader home, but as Terri said, "to this day, it still sticks in my mind."

However, Terri felt that "the worst thing that happened" was the rejection she experienced from the other Black children who were being bussed to her school. Though she wanted to be friends with them, they teased her, calling her an "oreo cookie" and sometimes they beat her up. The only close Black friend Terri had was a biracial girl from her neighborhood.

Racial tensions also affected her relationships with White students. One White friend's parents commented, "I can't believe you're Black. You don't seem like all the Black children. You're nice." Though other parents made similar comments, Terri reported her White friends didn't start making them until junior high school when Terri's Blackness became something to be explained. For example, one friend introduced Terri to another White girl by saying, "She's not really Black, she just went to Florida and got a really dark tan." A White sixth-grade "boyfriend" became embarrassed when his friends discovered he had a crush on a Black girl. He stopped telling Terri how pretty she was, and instead called her a "nigger" and said "Your lips are too big. I don't want to see you. I won't be your friend anymore."

Despite supportive parents who expressed concern about her situation, Terri was a "very depressed child." Her father would have conversations with her "about being Black and beautiful. And the union of people of color that had always existed that I needed to find. And the pride." However, neither he nor his wife had a network of Black friends to help support her.

It was the intervention of a Black junior high school teacher that Terri feels helped her the most. Mrs. Campbell "really exposed me to the good Black community because I was so down on it. And she recognized it... she never said anything, but she sure... got it out of me." Her teacher got her involved in singing gospel music, and introduced her to other Black students who would accept her. "That's when I started having other Black friends. And I thank her a lot for that."

Mrs. Campbell taught Terri things about her culture that her parents had also tried to convey, but somehow the information seemed more credible coming from Mrs. Campbell. She was not the first teacher who had tried to help Terri. Her fourth-grade teacher asked her to do an oral presentation on Sojourner Truth. Embarrassed to "talk about a Black woman in front of all these White kids," Terri did it anyway, and found the experience "opened" her a little bit. "Mrs. Campbell opened me a lot." Her friendship with Mrs. Campbell continued through high school.

Though she now had some Black friends, she still didn't have any dates. She was the only Black person in the "enriched group" all through high school. White boys did not pursue her in high school, and she felt the Black guys were either "intimidated" by her intelligence, or put off by her shyness. When she came to college, she felt socially awkward, unsure of how to approach the "handsome Black men" she met at her predominantly White college because of her lack of dating experience.

The first young man to pursue her at college was a White student who "was very much into trying to understand the Black community. He was studying Black music, Black art, Black history, Black." Though the relationship ended, Terri felt it really helped her identity development. This boyfriend challenged her to look at her own internalized oppression.

I always had low self-esteem and no self-confidence and always believed I was ugly... And he'd want to touch my hair and I'd never let him. And he'd say, "Why can't I touch

your hair?" I'm like, "Just don't." And he was like, "Are you okay with yourself?" And I'd be like, "Of course, I'm okay with myself. What do you mean?"... "You don't think you're ugly because you're Black or anything do you? Because that's really stupid." And I was just like, "No, I don't think I'm ugly because I'm Black. How dare you." And then when you think about it, "Did you? Did you?"... He really made me look at things... and it really helped me a great deal.

Terri also became friends with an African American classmate, and Terri reports that her obvious pride in her heritage helped Terri develop some of her own. Terri sums up her identity development process as a movement from being ashamed, to being accepting, to being proud. "There was a time period when [I thought] 'Oh my goodness, this is the curse of my life.' Then, 'Well, I'm Black, so (sigh) deal.' To the point now where 'I'm Black. Hey! I'm glad.' I wouldn't change it.... I'm much more proud of who I am."

Though Terri credits her parents, "extremely giving and understanding people," for trying to prepare her for dealing with racial issues, the social pressures within her school environment were formidable. While there were many instances of destructive behavior on the part of teachers, the significant role that Mrs. Campbell played in helping Terri to "open up" illustrates the constructive potential that informed adults can have in the identity development process. She recognized Terri's need for a same-race peer group, and helped her find one. At age eighteen, Terri has not expressed the desire to immerse herself in a Black community in the ways that Janice and Karen have, yet in all three cases the opportunity for positive interactions with same-race peers has been an important factor in their identity development.

While none of these young women dated in high school, most of the young African American men in the sample did, sometimes exercising the option of interracial dating. But as college-bound Black adolescents, they were part of what has been called in the popular press "an endangered species." Defining their identity in the context of prevailing Black male stereotypes was one of the major challenges of their adolescence.

*"Thought I Was on the Cutting Edge"*

Describing himself as "Black, African American, and middle, sort of upper middle class," Jonathan was twenty-two at the time of his interview, and on the verge of his college graduation. He grew up in a mostly White, but "very integrated" university community in the Midwest. The child of divorced parents, he lived with his mother and made regular visits to his father's home in a Southern city. Both parents remarried, and all sets of parents are very well-educated individuals. His mother was a *race-conscious* parent, very involved in a Black social network with "very progressive politics." It was "a very strong home environment.... I mean we have African art all over the place.... She used to take me to celebrations and stuff like that."



Jonathan thought growing up in such an integrated community was "great," believing as a child that "that's how it was everywhere." In elementary school, race seemed insignificant to Jonathan except on Martin Luther King Day, or "whenever we did something related to Black people. That's when you realized that you were different from everyone in here." Though he had some White friends, most of his friends were Black until junior high school.

With the institution of tracking in junior high and high school, he became aware that his Black friends "weren't going anywhere" academically. In his school "those who you'd characterize as successful, they're overwhelmingly White. And since I wanted to be successful, I tended to hang out with people who, you know, I thought had similar interests." Jonathan started taking honors courses, and typically was the only Black student in his class. However, he described himself as "uncomfortable" in this position:

... at no point did I ever think I was White or did I ever want to be White, you know. But, um, I guess it was one of those things where I tried to de-emphasize the fact that I was Black... insofar as I wanted to fit in... or have their respect, I felt I had to de-emphasize my differences and emphasize my similarities.

Despite this effort to "fit in," Jonathan began to realize that "being Black was perceived as a negative." Angry about that, he tried to disprove the stereotypes by excelling in school and avoiding "anything that was traditionally Black, like I never played basketball." In this integrated community, he was socially accepted by White classmates. But when he traveled outside of this community, he quickly realized that "I'm Black, and that's the thing that they're going to see first, no matter how much I try to de-emphasize my Blackness."

Though his father encouraged him to apply to historically Black colleges, Jonathan wanted the prestige associated with attending a White "Ivy League" school. Admitted to the school of his choice, he was excited to be in a place where there were also other Black students that shared his goals and ambitions. However, at his first Black Student Union meeting, he felt intimidated "because I had never been in like an all Black environment like that meeting... I was like, 'I don't even know the first thing about being Black.'" He also found that the White students in college were not as accepting of him as they had been in his hometown. The transition was "really hard." Eventually, he made a conscious decision to educate himself, and actively sought out African-American studies courses.

As a college senior, having both learned about the historical contributions of Black people and experienced a socially alienating college environment, his view of Black colleges had changed.

If I could go all the way back and redo high school, you know, I would have spent a lot more time doing the things that my mom did... reading the extensive collection of books that she has and learning a lot more about my culture... If I were a high school senior right now, no question about it, I'd go to a Black school.

At the time of the interview, Jonathan had already been accepted at a prestigious predominantly White graduate school. Though he is making a choice similar to the one he made in high school, his thinking has clearly changed over time about himself and his relationship to other African-Americans.

It's like I went through three phases... my first phase was being cool, doing whatever was particularly cool for Black people at the time, and that was like in junior high. Then in high school, you know, I thought being Black was basically all stereotypes, so I tried to avoid all of those things. Now in college, you know, I realize that being Black means a variety of things....

Learning his history has definitely been of great psychological importance to Jonathan, providing him with role models he had been missing in high school. Learning of the intellectual legacy of Black men at his own college particularly inspired him:

When you look at those guys who were here in the 20s... they couldn't live on campus. They couldn't eat on campus. They couldn't get their hair cut in town.... And yet they were all Phi Beta Kappa.... And guess what, it hasn't gotten worse.... we really need to know our history and the accomplishments of our people, so that we can get beyond this "I can't do well here because the professor doesn't like me." Well, you know what, you're probably right, the professor probably doesn't like you... but you know what, you paid your \$20,000.... At some point, we have to suck it up—that's what being Black really is, you know, knowing who you are, your history, your accomplishments.... When I was in junior high, I had White role models. And then I got into high school, you know I wasn't sure but I just didn't think having White role models was a good thing.... So I got rid of those. And I basically just, you know, only had my parents for role models.... I kind of grew up thinking that... we were on the cutting edge. We were doing something radically different than everybody else. And not realizing that there are all kinds of Black people doing the very things that I thought we were the only ones doing. You've gotta do the very best you can so that you can continue the great traditions that have already been established.

Despite the shortcomings of his pre-college education, Jonathan credits his parents with raising him to believe he "was equal to everyone," and giving him the opportunity to grow up in "an integrated environment." Now, he feels "ready to deal" with whomever he meets, regardless of ethnicity.

Though Jonathan struggled with his role as a Black male in high school, he ultimately returned to his family roots as a *race conscious* individual committed to Black progress as a result of his college experiences. His present stage of identity development sounds much like the immersion stage described earlier. His perhaps pre-encounter high school strategy of de-emphasizing his race is one that has been described in other settings (Fordham, 1988; Miller, 1989). His classmate, Derrick, struggled with some of the same questions and used a very different strategy:

*"To Be Cool or Smart"*

Derrick described himself as "middle class" from a family that has a lot of "history" in his city. His mother is from a family of "very, very light-skinned Blacks"



with a long history of education in predominantly White schools and colleges. Though his father is also well-educated, he "comes from the ghettos, . . . very, very brown skinned . . . very poor." His father used his G.I. benefits to attend a Black college. His parents met and married in graduate school, but were divorced soon after Derrick's birth. Though he had regular visits with his father, his mother raised him as a single parent. Immediately following the divorce, they lived with his maternal grandparents in a Black neighborhood, but later moved to a racially mixed suburb just outside of the city. His family life was categorized as *race-conscious*.

His mother's social network of friends and associates ranged "from upper White middle class to Black poor," but she "was never into the bourgeois typical clubs" and did not involve him in Black children's clubs. He had many opportunities to interact with his mother's family, though he has never met his father's relatives, most of whom are in the South.

Derrick described his growing-up experiences as very diverse. "I spent a lot of time in very urban [areas] and also time in ritzy-ditzy suburbs." He started school in a predominantly White Montessori preschool, and then went to a predominantly Black private school. He stayed there only a year and a half, however. His mother moved him to a predominantly White public elementary school in his neighborhood, where unfortunately he became "very bored with school."

Bored by the lack of challenge in his grade school classroom, Derrick entertained himself by talking to his classmates. Unfortunately, his teachers, all of whom were White, did not recognize the source of the problem and offer him more challenge. Instead one teacher told his mother, "I'd never be, you know, an achiever, because I was . . . too social. I was really smart, so it really made my mom upset."

Derrick's elementary school experiences set the stage for his junior high and high school performance. Bussed to another predominantly White school in sixth grade, his mother was again upset when Derrick was not placed in honors classes. She considered moving him to a private school, but Derrick persuaded her to let him stay with his friends in public school. Even in the "regular classes," Derrick found that he was still one of the few African-Americans in his class. He had a lot of White friends, and played soccer on a mostly White team. Though his father expressed concerns about his son growing up in a predominantly White environment for fear he might become "Whitewashed," his mother expressed concern only "if too many little White girls . . . would be calling the house."

While there had been little racial tension in elementary school, it increased in junior high. In ninth grade, Derrick changed schools again, and began to make more Black friends. Though he still played on the same soccer team, his "closest friends," the people he "hung out with," were all Black. Still only an "average student, and not really into school," he got on what he described as a "wayward path" in high school. Derrick was part of a popular crowd of young Black men, who attracted the attention of White girls in school. During this period, he described

the young people in this group engaging in acts of anti-White violence. "Some [of his] associates" who would "just run White women, I mean, upper middle class White women . . . It was a trip . . . I saw some wild stuff in high school." He and his friends would sometimes go to high school parties, and just "beat up White guys for the heck of it."

"My grandfather had been saying, since I was a baby, 'He's gonna go to [my alma mater].'" His friends warned him that he would come back from college like his grandfather, "smoking a pipe and spouting Shakespeare." Though Derrick did not think that would happen, he did worry that he would not have any friends. "If you went to high school and saw the people who were going to these schools, it's like, 'you're going to be hanging out with them?'" Right! I'd have no friends." Nevertheless, he took his grandfather's advice.

It was a difficult adjustment at first, because he felt "worlds apart" from the White students, and even from the Black students. Whether from the city or the suburbs, none of them seemed to have spent as much time on the streets as he had in high school. Not interested in spending time with White students, he got involved in Black student activities. It was a new experience to have Black friends who were actually interested in school. His high school study habits did not serve him well in college, but at least one professor spotted his talent. The professor observed, says Derrick:

... that I was probably one of the best writers in that class. It's just that I obviously hadn't done the reading and so couldn't get a good grade on the paper. . . . "you're a good student, you just need to have better study skills." . . . That was something that stuck in my head, and I'll never forget that.

At the time of the interview, Derrick was on the verge of completing a senior honors thesis, and had been accepted to a prestigious graduate school. He declared, "I'm taking care of business now, I have some direction." After graduate school, he plans to start a Black-owned business with some college friends. Since coming to college, Derrick has joined the Nation of Islam and he sees his future plans as consistent with their "agenda for Black empowerment."

Reflecting on his own racial identity development, Derrick recalled:

It's funny that I would come here and just everything would . . . come together all at once . . . that first semester, freshman year . . . that was when I started getting angry, going through the angry stages . . . I was reading the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* for the first time . . . in my political science class. And sure enough, I got home . . . and here are all the books about Black history on the bookshelves of my ma's . . . I was like, "I can't believe you even have this stuff . . . Why didn't you make me read this?" . . . She was nobering me, but not with any politics, you know . . . I've always been a pretty self-confident person, and secure person . . . but now I know the reasons behind certain things, and I know a lot more of what I should be proud about in terms of being a Black person. And . . . in what direction.

In many ways, Derrick and his friends were the people in high school of whom Jonathan spoke with such disdain. They were the womanizing, trouble-making

underachievers, fulfilling the societal Black male stereotypes that Jonathan tried so hard to disprove. It was primarily the strength of his family's educational tradition that saved Derrick from the fate of many of his classmates. Jonathan and Derrick took divergent paths, but they have ended up in similar places. Both from *race-conscious* families, they seemed to work through aspects of their racial identity without a sense of demoralization.

Though they made different social choices in high school, they (and the other men in the sample) seemed to have options, such as interracial dating, which were relatively unavailable to the young Black women (see Johnson, Roberts, & Worell, 1999). Consequently, the men received some personal validation that the women did not. For this reason, a same-race social network that includes Black males may be especially important for the maintenance of self-esteem for Black adolescent females.

### Implications for Educational Intervention

While those young people raised in race-conscious families seem to have been given a good foundation on which to build a positive racial identity, the educational experiences of all of the participants suggest that White-dominated schools, which formally and informally perpetuate the racial order, can work to undermine that foundation. In all of the cases presented, the perception that teachers did not expect excellence from their Black students (in fact, were surprised by it), the invisibility of African Americans in their curricula in their high schools, and the stereotypical expectations of both Black and White peers hindered the development of a positive Black identity.

The extent to which the students in this study were fully socially integrated with their high school peers is questionable. Many of these students socialized primarily with White peers. However, this racial integration was often superficial (see also Gerard, 1988), as none of the Black women in this study dated in high school (see also Johnson, Roberts, & Worell, 1999), and all participants reported having White friends at school who did not socialize with them outside of school.

Opportunities to immerse themselves in information and contact with people from their own racial background was important but often lacking for these youth. In all of the cases presented, the opportunity for same-race peer relationships, the opportunity to gain new information about African-American heritage and accomplishments, the availability of role models, and the encouragement of significant adults were reported as important components in these students' successes and in their resolution of racial identity issues. As we assess where we are 50 years after Brown, it seems there is still much to improve in the racial integration of schools. Many of these students' parents chose to live in these White communities in part because of what the schools offered, but doing so left their children with few Black peers and in an environment that was not geared towards producing positive racial

identities for its Black students (see also Brower & Ketterhagen, this issue; Zirkel, this issue).

For school administrators interested in providing educational environments that foster positive racial identity development in adolescents, the path seems clear. Why was it that being Black and being smart seemed to be a contradiction for these students, their peers, and in some cases, their teachers? Tracking patterns and assessment methods need to be examined so that gifted African American students are appropriately identified, and not bored the way Derrick was early in his education (see also Fisher et al., 1996; Oakes, 1996).

As Jonathan said, knowledge of the accomplishments of your forefathers (and foremothers) will "sustain you." Ironically, while a tacit assumption of *Brown v. Board* was that Black students would learn the values of White students (Gerard, 1988), these interviews suggest that what integrated Black students need is for their families to build a firm foundation for their developing racial identities. Black children need to know that there is a heritage of African American excellence to which they can aspire. In the context of this knowledge, academic excellence can be included in the adolescent definition of what it means to be Black.

Also, it is important for Black students to explore same-race, as well as cross-race, friendships. The desire to see harmonious interracial interactions among students can sometimes blind us to the way not having same race peers can interfere with racial identity development among students of color. Teachers and school administrators would do well to understand and acknowledge different stages of racial identity development, just as they are knowledgeable about adolescent sexuality and other aspects of adolescent development. Unfortunately, because this information is often absent from developmental texts used in teacher preparation, many teachers are unaware of this developmental process. While they may have noticed changes in their African-American students' behavior, they do not necessarily have a conceptual framework for understanding those changes. The often-asked question, "Why are all the Black students sitting together in the cafeteria?" is an indication of this missing framework (Tatum, 2005). If such a framework is provided to teachers, not only will the need for a safe haven among other Black peers be understood in its developmental context, but also teachers will be better equipped to make interventions that facilitate positive racial identity development. (See also Brown & Dobbins, this issue, for other strategies for White instructors.) The opportunity to build supportive relationships with both Black male and female peers was very important for all of the participants, but seems especially significant for Black girls in predominantly White communities. Teachers aware of this need can find ways to foster such relationships, as Mrs. Campbell did for Terri Janice did not receive this kind of help at school or at home, and felt "stranded" as a result.

While the focus here is clearly on the developmental needs of Black youth it should be pointed out that issues of racial identity are also important for White

students and other students of color (Tatum, 2003). The incorporation of African American contributions (as well as those of other underrepresented cultural groups) would benefit them as well. Had the White students and their teachers been exposed to multicultural curricula and racially diverse authority figures in their own educational backgrounds, the number of problematic interracial interactions described by these participants might have been reduced. Teacher expectations for Black student achievement might have been higher, and White students might have been prepared to be "allies" (Tatum, 1994), able to recognize and interrupt (rather than perpetrate) some of the racism with which these young African Americans were routinely confronted. Attention to the nonracist racial identity development of both White students and students of color in schools will help to foster more positive intragroup and intergroup interactions and create an environment which encourages academic excellence for all.

## References

- Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka. 347 U.S. 483 (1954).
- Cross W. E., Jr. (1971). The Negro-to-Black conversion experience. *Black World*, 20(9), 13-27.
- Cross W. E., Jr. (1978). The Cross and Thomas models of psychological nigrescence. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 5(1), 13-19.
- Cross, W. E., Jr. (1991). *Shades of black: Diversity in African-American identity*. Philadelphia: Temple University.
- Fisher, C. S., Hoar, M., Jankowski, M. S., Lucas, S. R., Swidler, A., & Voss, K. (1996). *Inequality by design: Cracking the bell curve myth*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Fordham, S. (1988). Racelessness as a factor in Black students' school success: Pragmatic strategy or pyrrhic victory? *Harvard Educational Review*, 58(1), 54-84.
- Fordham, S., & Ogbu, J. U. (1986). Black students' school success: Coping with the burden of "acting White." *Urban Review*, 18, 176-206.
- Franz, C., & Stewart, A. J. (1994). (Eds.). *Women creating lives: Identities, resilience, and resistance*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Gerard, H.B. (1988). School desegregation: The social science role. In P. A. Katz & D. A. Taylor (Eds.), *Eliminating racism: Profiles in controversy* (pp. 225-236). New York: Plenum Press.
- Johnson, N. G., Roberts, M. C., & Worell, J. (Eds.). (1999). *Beyond appearance: A new look at adolescent girls* (pp. 53-83). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Landy, B. (1987). *The new Black middle class*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Miller, R. L. (1989). Desegregation experiences of minority students: Adolescent coping strategies in five Connecticut high schools. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 4, 173-189.
- Oakes, J. (1996). Two cities' tracking and within school segregation. In E. C. Langemann & L. P. Miller (Eds.), *Brown v. Board of Education: The challenge for today's schools*. (pp. 81-90). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Orfield, G., & Eaton, S. E. (1996). *Dismantling desegregation: The quiet reversal of Brown v. Board of Education*. New York: The New Press.
- Parham, T. A. (1989). Cycles of psychological nigrescence. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 17(2), 187-226.
- Phinney, J. (1989). Stages of ethnic identity in minority group adolescents. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 9, 34-39.
- Phinney, J., Cantu, C. L., & Kurtz, D. (1997). Ethnic and American identity as predictors of self-esteem among African American, Latino, and White adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 26, 165-185.
- Phinney, J., & Tarver, S. (1988). Ethnic identity search and commitment in Black and White eighth graders. *Journal of Early Adolescence Research*, 8, 265-277.
- Root, M. P. P. (Ed.). (1996). *The multiracial experience: Racial borders as the new frontier*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rowley, S. J., Sellers, R. M., Chavous, T. M., & Smith, M. A. (1998). The relationship between racial identity and self-esteem in African American college and high school students. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 715-724.
- Sellers, R. M., Chavous, T. M., & Cooke, D. Y. (1998). Racial ideology and racial centrality as predictors of African American college students' academic performance. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 24, 8-27.
- Slaughter, D. T., & Johnson, D. I. (Eds.). (1988). *Visible now: Blacks in private schools*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Spencer, M. B. (1985). Cultural cognition and social cognition as identity correlates of Black children's personal-social development. In M. B. Spencer, G. K. Brookins, & W. R. Allen (Eds.), *Beginnings: The social and affective development of Black children* (pp. 215-230). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Tatum, B. D. (1987/1992). *Assimilation blues*. Northampton, MA: Hazel-Maxwell Publishing. (Original work published 1987).
- Tatum, B. D. (1992). African-American identity, achievement motivation, and missing history. *Social Education*, 56(6), 331-334.
- Tatum, B. D. (1993). *Racial identity and relational theory: The case of Black women in White communities*. Work in Progress, No. 62. Wellesley, MA: Stone Center Working Paper Series.
- Tatum, B. D. (1994). Teaching White students about racism: The search for White allies and the restoration of hope. *Teachers College Record*, 95(4), 462-476.
- Tatum, B. D. (1997). *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And other conversations about race*. New York: Basic Books.
- Vandiver, B. J., Flagg-Smith, P. E., Cokley, K. O., Cross, W. E., Jr., & Worell, F. C. (2001). Cross' Nigrescence model: From theory to scale to theory. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 29, 174-200.

**BEVERLY DANIEL TATUM**, born in Tallahassee, Florida, during her father's tenure at Florida A&M University is a fourth generation college professor. Raised in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, she earned the Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Wesleyan University, a Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Clinical Psychology from the University of Michigan, and a Master of Arts degree in Religious Studies from Hartford Seminary in Connecticut.

Dr. Tatum is currently the President of Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. She is the former acting President of Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, where she was a member of the faculty since 1989 as a Professor of Psychology and Education and later served as Dean of the College. Prior to joining the Mount Holyoke faculty, she was a member of the faculty at Westfield State College from 1983-1989, and a lecturer at the University of California at Santa Barbara from 1980-1983.

As a licensed clinical psychologist, Dr. Tatum has toured extensively, leading workshops and presenting papers and lectures on racial identity development. She is the author of the book *Why Are All The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race* (2003), as well as *Assimilation Blues: Black Families in a White Community* (1987). In 1997, she was chosen to participate in President Clinton's national conversation about race.