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Sherry L. Deckman
CUNY Lehman College

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**Managing Race and Race-ing Management:
Teachers' Stories of Race and Classroom Conflict**

Sherry L. Deckman

Lehman College, CUNY

Abstract

Little is known about how novice teachers construct and interpret classroom management moments—instances when they perceive their ability to maintain order and promote sanctioned behavior is tested—in a way that contributes to or challenges racial bias. Using data from a hybrid, online/in-person professional development course for beginning teachers, I find two patterns of connecting race and classroom management. Teachers in this study tended to share stories either about “managing race”—narratives about deescalating racial tension or reproaching transgressors of racial colorblindness—or “race-ing management”—stories that read race into incidents in such a way as to reveal latent racial dynamics. Further, these patterns aligned with teachers’ self-identified racial backgrounds, with teachers who expressed a strong minority racial identity tending to focus on race-ing management, and those who expressed a more tenuous racial identity or who described themselves as White, tending to focus on managing race. This research can inform efforts to restore racial proportionality and justice in student discipline, to retain an experienced teacher workforce in under-resourced schools, and to support school administrators’ reflective inquiry when called to interpret management decisions made by classroom teachers in taking larger disciplinary action.

KEY WORDS: Teachers and Race, Urban Education, Equity, Classroom Management, Narrative Analysis,
Novice Teachers

Introduction

How racial difference, or “diversity,” is viewed, discussed, and ultimately, negotiated—engaged or silenced—in classrooms and schools can have real consequences for educators and their students (e.g. Cochran-Smith, 1995; Lewis, 2001; Marx, 2006). Numerous studies have found that educators create and limit opportunities for students, often unwittingly, along race lines through a number of seemingly innocuous practices—such as calling on students of different racial backgrounds during classroom instruction, posing more challenging questions to White and Asian students and recall-level questions to Black and Latino students (McAfee, 2014), and tracking students into classes in ways that align with racial and class background (Oakes, 2005)—that unfairly constrain or reify privilege (see for example, Delpit, 1995; King, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Luttrell, 2003; McAfee, 2014; Minor, 2014; Oakes, 2005; Pollock, 2008a). Recently, scholars have documented racialized institutional-level disciplinary trends in schools and school districts, for example showing that in the 2011-2012 school year, 16% of Black students and 7% of Latino students were suspended, compared to 5% of White students (Bradshaw, Mitchell, O’Brennan, & Leaf, 2010; R. J. Skiba et al., 2014) and that Black students are likelier to be suspended or expelled than their White counterparts, even for less severe behavioral infractions (e.g. Losen, Hodson, Keith, Morrison, & Belway, 2015; R. J. Skiba et al., 2014; R. J. Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2000; Wald & Losen, 2003).¹ This research has also considered how student–teacher relationships influence student behaviors and consequently teacher perceptions of disciplinary infractions (see for example Gregory & Weinstein, 2008), with some arguing that discrepancies in school discipline contribute to the “school-to-prison” pipeline, connecting the unequal suspension and expulsion of Black and Latino/a students with the disproportionate incarceration rate of these same populations (see Wadhwa, 2016; Wald & Losen, 2003).

Research exploring suspension and expulsion practices, and, to a lesser extent, general

administrator referrals, suggests that teachers may play a key role in perpetuating racial disproportionality in school discipline by interpreting student behavior through racialized and racist lenses (see Ferguson, 2001; Vavrus & Cole, 2002; Wadhwa, 2016) and by viewing the behavior of students of color as an affront to their authority (e.g. Gregory & Weinstein, 2008), resulting in more frequent punishing of Black and Latino students. The problem may be compounded for novice teachers, who are likely to be teaching in high-poverty, high-“minority” schools (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2005; Gagnon & Mattingly, 2012), where discipline is a pronounced concern for educators (see Fenning & Rose, 2007). It is in these schools that students are likeliest to be suspended or expelled (R. J. Skiba et al., 2014). Furthermore, novice teachers regularly cite struggles with classroom management as a factor in their decisions to leave the profession (Freeman, Simonsen, Briere, MacSuga-Gage, & Sugai, 2014; Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2006). Here it is important to differentiate between school discipline and classroom management, as the two are related but distinct. Teachers’ struggles with management—the skills and techniques used to maintain order and promote on-task behavior—may lead to disciplinary action in the form of administrator referral, detention, suspension, and ultimately expulsion. Thus, the aim of this study is to explore how novice teachers construct and interpret classroom management moments—instances when they perceive their ability to maintain order and promote sanctioned behavior is being challenged—and, when applicable, related disciplinary infractions, along race lines. By better understanding the role of race in novice teacher interpretations of classroom management, this research can inform efforts to restore racial proportionality and justice in student discipline, retain an experienced teacher workforce in under-resourced schools, and support school administrators’ reflective inquiry when called to interpret management decisions made by classroom teachers in taking larger disciplinary action.

This study specifically explores online postings by novice teachers in a professional

development course on race, class, and gender equity in schools and considers how these teachers' narratives of incidents in their classrooms connect—or conflate in many cases—racial difference and classroom management problems. Teacher narratives, also called “stories,” defined here as a “contingent sequence” of events or ideas that are “extended, topic-centered, ordered segment(s)” of text (Riessman, 2008, p. 102), are important because of the insights they provide into how people understand and navigate the world (Bruner, 1993). Therefore, my analysis of novice teachers' narratives of racial difference and classroom management allows me to parse teachers' commonsense understandings of classroom dynamics and provide key insights into how teachers may make sense of and negotiate racial difference in their classrooms in ways that perpetuate or challenge racial inequity in school disciplinary practices (see Edley, 2001). This investigation offers two specific findings: when narrating incidents involving race and classroom management, teachers in this study approached the stories as being about “managing race”—narratives about deescalating racial tension or reproaching transgressors of racial colorblindness—or “race-ing management”—stories that read race into incidents in such a way as to reveal latent racial dynamics in what are framed as unjust/unjustified classroom management practices.

Literature Review

Much of the literature on classroom management and school discipline has presented quantitative analyses of large-scale data sets that relay statistics tracking the serious problem of racial disproportionality in school discipline (e.g. Losen et al., 2015; R. J. Skiba et al., 2014; R. J. Skiba et al., 2000). These studies suggest that latent racial dynamics are at play in school and classroom contexts, and in teachers'—the majority of whom are White in the United States (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckery, 2014)—perceptions of and reactions to “disciplinary moments” (Vavrus & Cole, 2002). For instance, in two connected, smaller-scale, quantitative studies Gregory and Weinstein (2008) showed that African

American students were significantly over-represented in school disciplinary referrals for “*defiance to teacher authority*” (p. 461, emphasis added). Further, they found that not only did students’ self-assessment of their own defiant or cooperative behavior align with teachers’ perceptions of students’ behavior, but also that students rated themselves as more cooperative with teachers they perceived to care about them. This research suggests that students are both active participants in constructing their schooling experiences and susceptible to teachers’ impressions of them, reaffirming the role teachers may play in creating classroom management conflicts through their interpretation of student behavior—in this case viewing behavior as defiant or not. Though it is clear that teachers are important participants in perpetuating racially unequal school disciplinary practices—wittingly or unwittingly—less thoroughly explored in the literature is *how* teachers, and novice teachers in particular, might be making meaning of disciplinary incidents in a way that illuminates the saliency of race. Such research may provide a key to better supporting teachers to enact more socially just practices.

Research that attempts to illuminate the role of teachers’ meaning making of classroom management and discipline often infers teacher views based on observed actions. Such studies suggest that not only do teacher assessments of defiant behavior differ by students’ race (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008), but also that teachers may view Black boys as young as eleven or twelve as more violent—and headed for incarceration—due to societal images of Black men as such, consequently leading to disproportionate punishment (see Ferguson, 2001).² Other research (Bettie, 2000; Vavrus & Cole, 2002) suggests that it might also be African American and Latina students’ violations of *unspoken* norms of interaction valued by “Anglo-Americans” that leads to disproportionate suspension rates, even in absence of nonviolent actions. In their study of one veteran and one novice teachers’ practice in a multiethnic high school, Vavrus and Cole draw on ethnographic data to show that students’ attempts to get the teachers’ attention in ways that were implicitly unsanctioned might have been viewed as an

affront to the teachers' authority and thus punished (see also Kitzmiller, 2013 for a more thorough discussion of the relationship between teacher authority, school discipline, and classroom management). This research demonstrates the powerful influence of highly subjective processes of teacher interpretation of students' actions in disciplinary referrals.

Overall, classroom management and disciplinary trends have been well-documented on two levels: societally and intuitionally through broad-scale statistical analysis of racial proportionality in school discipline; and at the classroom level through ethnographic research, prioritizing what ethnographers perceive as happening. Yet, the level of focus in this paper—the individual teacher level—is distinct. Rather than considering the discourse that is happening in the classroom, teachers in this study wrote narratives about their experiences, which illuminates how they uniquely make sense of classroom management incidents and may ultimately provide important insights to addressing unjust racialized practices in classroom management and school discipline.

Theoretical Framework

Stories, unlike other forms of communication, may reveal unique insights into how educators negotiate racial difference and offer opportunities for shifting unjust practices linked to racial background (see Schultz & Ravitch, 2013 for a discussion on the role of narrative in teacher learning and identity). Scholars suggest that narratives are notably important to investigate because they can demonstrate the core tensions or shared understandings of any “culture” (Bell, 2003; Ewick & Silbey, 1995) or community of practice, and are a cornerstone of understanding human experience and how people make sense of the world (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Heilbrun, 1988). Furthermore, narrative theorists have demonstrated that narratives particularly reveal sometimes implicit notions of power structures related to race, racism, and more generally, social position—called “hidden transcripts” (Scott, 1990). Thus, this study focuses on analyzing novice teacher narratives to make visible “hidden”

power structures at work in everyday schooling practices.

Stories—and counterstories, which aim to challenge the status quo—have also been particularly important in understanding racializing systems in education via a critical race theory (CRT) lens (e.g. Yosso, 2006). CRT as applied to education argues that racism pervades American institutions, including schools, and manifests in White privilege, or treating Whiteness as “normal,” taking up seemingly race neutral positions that reify the dominance of Whiteness, and attributing issues of racism to individuals, as opposed to systemic causes (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Pearce, 2012; Stovall, 2006). For instance, Bell (2003) found that educators (and others in the human services field) told dramatically different stories about racism depending on their racial background and that these stories served to potentially ignore or challenge societal inequality, also along racial lines. Most of the White participants in Bell’s study told stories that minimized racism or presented a “colorblind” perspective, in which the speakers tacitly or explicitly denied “see[ing] color” (p. 15). On the other hand, the participants of color told what Bell refers to as “counter-narrative stories” that “attest[ed] to the ongoing existence of racism” (p. 23). Therefore, research suggests that educators’ racial background often may influence the ways they attend to and articulate racial dynamics in recalling their experiences and thus inform their actions in the world.

Research Design and Methodology

The context of the present study was *Understanding Race, Class, and Gender to Leverage Student Achievement*,³ a 10-week, hybrid, online/in-person professional development course for teachers in relatively large, urban Midwestern school district, which involved two face-to-face meetings, about race, class, and gender equity in urban schools. The course, which was a university–school district collaboration, was aimed at increasing the capacity of novice, in-service teachers to serve students of diverse backgrounds by engaging participants in a program of reflection and discussion. The inquiry

presented in this paper was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do novice, in-service teachers narrate classroom management and disciplinary moments from their practice?
2. What do their narratives of these moments reveal about how they might negotiate racial difference in the classroom?

The Opportunity of an Online Context

The present study focused explicitly on teachers' narratives about race and classroom management in an online context. This purposive context was chosen because, while scholars have shown that how teachers talk and the stories they tell about race and equity matter, many have also documented teachers' hesitance to discuss race specifically as it relates to their work in the classroom and how this contributes to patterns of racial inequity in schools (e.g. Delpit, 1995; Pollock, 2004; Singleton & Hays, 2008). Online reflective writing may ameliorate teacher fears about in-person confrontation, as it gives each participant the opportunity to thoughtfully select the words they use to express their meaning without the pressure of keeping up with conversation (see Author et al., 2010, for a discussion of preservice teacher reflective writing in journals). Further, literature on teacher reflective writing often claims that writing provides a distinctive window into teachers' thought processes (Britton, 1970; Emig, 1977; Hoover, 1994) and also gives teachers the opportunity to make tacit knowledge explicit (Emig, 1977; Perl, 1979; Smyth, 1989). These elements of reflective writing make novice teachers' online narratives particularly useful for investigating commonsense understandings and implicit meanings in teachers' everyday practice.

Additionally research in the fields of sociology and psychology suggest further opportunities with exploring teachers' discussions of race in an online context. This literature finds that online contexts can reduce inhibition related to discussing race in U.S. society (Atkinson & DePalma, 2008;

Chester & Gwynne, 1999). These researchers have found that because people cannot see each other, minorities—in various senses of the word—can feel safer to state their views in an online discussion. They have also found that disinhibition and a lack of visual cues can lead to members of dominant groups being more open in sharing perspectives that they might otherwise not, views that could be considered taboo or even hateful. Either way, participants may be more willing to express their views in an online than in-person context.

Thus teachers' written conversation online, in a shared, public format that allows for revisiting and revision (e.g. Emig, 1977; Perl, 1979; Smyth, 1989), and gives all participants equal opportunity to share and still allows for a back-and-forth exchange, may provide unique insights into how teachers grapple with and understand racial difference (see Glazier, 2009 for example of challenges of in-person discussions of race where teachers of color get positioned as "experts"). In the context of this study, the hybrid online design, in which participants had met each other twice, but engaged in online discussions, may have allowed them to experience the benefits of a somewhat "anonymous" forum in terms of being more open to discussing what they might have perceived as controversial topics.

Participants and Site

The data for this study are comprised of 420 posts and responses from seven teachers across the 10-week, asynchronous course. A "post" is a participant's initial reply to a prompt, while "responses" are participants' reactions to each other's posts and subsequent responses. Prompts, which were presented to participants via the course's online platform, varied and were organized into topical units of study, and often asked participants to complete readings and informal journal writing prior to posting (see Appendix A for a chart of prompt topics and sequencing). For example, the first formal course session prompt asked participants to "relate an incident involving race, class, or gender from your teaching career that stands out for you as a particularly important moment – what we are calling a

‘critical incident in practice’” (Unit 1, Session 1 directions; see Appendix B). Participants, who volunteered to participate and earned pass/fail professional development credit for the course through a local college, were all within their first four years of teaching at different secondary public schools, grades 7-12, with 43% of in their first-year as a teacher, and participants represented a range of ages—27-55 years old—and racial backgrounds (see Table 1 below for selected demographics).

The district, according to its official website, serves just over 90,000 students from early childhood through grade 12 across approximately 220 schools. Student demographics in the district’s public schools mirror those of other large urban districts: about 58% of the students are identified as African American, another 20% Hispanic, 4.5% Asian, about 1% Native American, 3% “other,” and approximately 13% White. The district also serves a majority of students coming from low-income backgrounds (approximately 67%). Thus, the district context is one in which teachers navigate issues of racial difference regularly.

Educators met twice in-person while participating in the course and participants’ real names were attached to their posts. The first meeting, which was introductory, took place between the second and third sessions. The second meeting took place at the end of the program. Finally, university-based professors who created the course met with participants to secure consent to participate in the study, while the online sessions were facilitated by an adjunct faculty member who provided feedback throughout the course.⁴

Data Analysis

I began my analysis by reading through the entire dataset and identifying the classroom management-related narratives participants shared at any point during the course. Drawing on the definition of classroom management provided above, these stories described moments in which 1) the

narrating teacher's ability to manage his/her classroom was challenged; 2) when a student outside of the classroom context elsewhere in the school challenged the teacher's authority or was described as behaving inappropriately in response to the teacher; or 3) when another school adult was engaged in a management/disciplinary moment with a student that involved the narrating teacher. Through that first round of coding, 51 classroom management stories emerged, a robust number for a research methodology that relies on close narrative analysis (see for example Gabriel & Lester, 2013). All participants shared at least two management-related narratives during the course (see Table 1 below).

<<Insert Table 1. Chart of Participants and Management Narratives>>

Next, I considered what storylines, including plots and characters, and themes emerged in each narrative and organized the data in a matrix focusing on the various narrative components of each, including narrative summary and structure, imagery and metaphor, and coda, a narrative element that brings the narrative back to the present and ends the narrative (Riessman, 2008)—for example, after telling a story that happened in the past, in numerous instances, teachers would explain how the incident impacts their current practice (see Appendix C for a sample from the matrix which is too lengthy to be shared in its entirety here). Then, after examining each individual's narratives, I looked for patterns across all participants. Following narrative analysis conventions, coding relied on grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), allowing patterns to emerge from the data, and thematic analysis (Riessman, 2008), which allowed me to pinpoint specific trends that spanned the data. Following precedent of methodologically similar research, my analysis was grounded in "(a) repeated readings of the texts while making theoretical and analytical memos throughout; (b) selection, organization, and identification of discursive patterns; (c) generation of explanations linked to the overarching patterns; and (d) reflexive and transparent documentation of [my] claims" (Gabriel & Lester, 2013, p. 11). My goal was to stay

close to the data and what the data revealed about participants' beliefs and interactions, rather than viewing the data through the lens of pre-existing theory. This paper specifically explores the way in which these classroom management-related narratives took up issues of race.⁵

Warranting Claims and Researcher Positionality

With any qualitative research, especially that which involves interpreting other people's personal narratives, it is important to acknowledge the role of the researcher as the research instrument and to account for the possibility of alternative interpretations of the data (Gabriel & Lester, 2013). To account for and make my perspective transparent, I designed the analysis to include several precautionary measures, each described below. First and foremost, I engaged in this research reflexively, "making the research process visible at multiple levels: personal, methodological, theoretical, epistemological, ethical, and political" (Luttrell, 2010a, p. 4). At these various levels, I engaged in processes of memo-writing and considering various factors that not only shaped my interpretation of the data, but also my design of the research. For instance, I considered how my position as a bi-racial (Black/White) woman, who had both been a student in an under-resourced urban school and a classroom teacher in one, might impact my research. I also found myself in the position of interpreting qualitative data from research participants whom I had never met, nor had any personal interaction with. The online course studied in this project and the data were designed and collected by other researchers. To consider how this position might allow for more seeming objectivity, yet perhaps also a dehumanization of participants, I engaged in reflexive writing exercises that I subsequently shared with an interpretive community of other researchers (Luttrell, 2010b).

Additionally, I worked with various interpretive communities of other qualitative researchers—also known as "peer debriefers" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)—with whom I shared entire teacher

stories/posts and responses, along with my interpretations. These interpretative communities supported my consideration of discrepant evidence and alternative explanations. Similarly, in this paper, segments of data are provided for reader scrutiny along with my interpretations, providing the opportunity to evaluate my claims (Gabriel & Lester, 2013). Finally, related to this point, as a further practice to ensure the validation of my findings, my interpretations are presented alongside existing research (Gabriel & Lester, 2013; Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

Taken together, these practices allowed me to view data from multiple angles and consider emergent patterns and themes, using Richardson's (1997) standard of crystallization for making claims of findings. Crystallization is offered as an alternative to validity and triangulation. It requires the researcher to engage data from multiple angles with an "infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach" (p. 92).

Findings

Two patterns of storytelling emerged across the data when participants discussed race and classroom management, what I call managing race and race-ing management. The managing race pattern downplayed or ignored issues of systemic power, privilege, and oppression. While, on the other hand, race-ing management did just the opposite and exposed such dynamics.

Managing Race

With the managing race pattern, race or racial difference was described implicitly or explicitly as the cause of conflict or the conflict was framed as a transgression of racial taboos (i.e. colorblind ideology (Nieto & Bode, 2008)). There were four recurrent characteristics of the managing race pattern in the narratives. First, commenting on difference was presented as a cause of conflict because of social taboos. Teachers also described anxiety addressing racial difference and conflict and consequently,

colorblindness and compliance were presented as resolutions. Finally, race was treated as invisible, yet volatile.

Commenting on difference as a cause of conflict because of social taboos. One characteristic of managing race stories is that they are typically set up on the premise that commenting on racial difference is inherently conflictual or has the high potential to cause conflict, conflict which may challenge a teacher's classroom management capacity and escalate into a disciplinary moment. Libby, a White teacher, illustrates this in how she juxtaposes her students' backgrounds to set up her narrative about a White student she calls "John" who gets into an argument with an unnamed African American female student over a comment he makes about "her people." Libby writes that her classroom is "a mix of African-American and White with some African-Americans being quite out-spoken" and in response to John's comment to the "African American girl," she expresses that "*...all of the African American students were arguing with him*" [emphasis added]. In this way, Libby ascribes "out-spoken[ness]" to her African American students, treating Black students as a monolithic group. Furthermore, though some teachers appreciate and even cultivate outspokenness in students, for others the notion connotes students who talk back and defy teacher authority (see Research for Action (American Association of University Women), 2002). While Black students are described as a group with a potential for behaving inappropriately, on the other hand, the White student, John, is described as an individual, although he is also described as being a classroom management challenge. Libby writes: "John doesn't follow my rules, the school rules, nor anyone else's." Thus, the scene is set for conflict between *different types* of people in the classroom—the mass of "quite outspoken" Black students and the lone, racist White individual, which Libby captures when she writes, "I think the issue at hand here is [John's] racism towards the African-Americans."

As with Libby's story, the pivotal moment in Kim's story, which she titles, "Racial Discomfort," is when one student calls out another's racial difference, in this case, referring to a student as "Pocahontas," noting the student's Native American heritage. The setting of Kim's story is her classroom at an alternative high school, which serves "pregnant and parenting at-risk teens," according to the school's website. Also similar to Libby, Kim, who identifies as biracial (Black/White) but says she is often mistaken for being White, connects broad student demographics and racial difference with this moment of classroom conflict. She begins by describing the student body of her school as, "ninety percent African American but the remainder is a mixture of Latino American, Native American, Asian American, and Caucasian students." Kim goes on to highlight the role of commenting on racial difference in this incident by writing that "because of her different cultural background [the student who is referred to as "Pocahontas"]...stood out among the masses at my high school," allowing readers to believe that the antagonists were indeed African American—part of the 90 percent of the "masses." Kim notes that she was "shocked" and "dumbfounded" that the students would use such a "stereotypical name" in reference to a classmate. Though this naming of difference does not escalate into a punishable scenario in Kim's story, she does resolve to manage—and minimize—such moments in her practice by inculcating her students into a mindset of "we are all the same," discussed below.

In both Libby's and Kim's stories, the moment of conflict is when a student transgresses the invisible and unspoken classroom comportment line of naming racial difference. From a social justice perspective, it is arguable that the way in which the students in these stories are noticing difference does further social fissures and hegemonic paradigms. However, what is more interesting for this study is the teachers' reactions to and characterizations of the incidents. For example, in both of the stories discussed thus far and in Gladys's story discussed below, the race of the antagonist(s) is omitted. Libby,

for instance, only divulges John's race after Judy, an African American teacher, responds, "You did not mention but I assumed that John was white." Then Libby confirms, "I am sorry, yes he is white." While there may be many reasons these teachers omit the race of the transgressing student, the move obscures racial power dynamics. For example, rather than discuss the specific implications of the racially loaded phrase, "your people," used by John, Libby focuses her narration on the classroom management and disciplinary components of the incident.

Furthermore, in both of these stories and other stories in which participants take a managing race approach in these data, Black students are treated as a somewhat uniform group, with uniform behavior. Students of other racial backgrounds are treated as individuals. Creating a racial hierarchy wherein certain groups (e.g. African Americans) are treated as monolithic and other groups (e.g. White people) are treated as individuals reinforces racist structures through a system of White privilege according to critical race theorists (see for example Tatum, 1997). Accordingly, if novice educators view Black students as an indistinguishable group with a tendency to present classroom management challenges, this has important implications for addressing racial inequity in the school discipline system as Black students' actions may be assigned different—negative—meaning in the mind of the teacher (see Vavrus & Cole, 2002).

Anxiety addressing racial difference and conflict. Within the managing race pattern, participants generally described anxiety in dealing with conflicts related to difference and displayed fears that with difference comes potentially explosive conflict. In Libby's case, even before sharing the narrative about John, in the very introductory session to the course, she demonstrates this anxiety. In responding to Richard's post, "How do you get teachers to [be] more sensitive to these issues [of inequity]? I believe more discussion like that facilitated by this course will be helpful," Libby writes,

Richard, today in fact was a time when I could have used some background on the Jewish community. I am not sure what they are sensitive to other than the Holocaust and being stereotyped as having money.

I was asked today by a Jewish boy who was having a conversation with an African American boy, which group was more abused or suffered the most? I stated that they both suffered greatly.

The Jewish boy *was very upset and wanted to start an argument* taking the stance that they suffered much more than the African Americans. *I was lucky that the bell rang to end the class and this discussion was concluded.* I honestly am not sure if either suffered more than the other. I myself, other than what I was taught in school, do not know more and cannot put more weight on one. Is it however fair to do so? [Emphasis added.]

In this particular story the classroom management issue—an argument—is averted only by the sounding of the school bell. But, as with the other managing race stories, the potential moment of conflict arises when students from different racial backgrounds discuss difference—and oppression in this case. Unlike the other stories presented thus far, neither student in this narrative is described as consistently behaving inappropriately. Instead, in this story Libby illustrates that the way novice teachers construct issues of race and classroom management may be impacted by teachers' comfort with ambiguity or taking an inquiry or learning stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Gadsden, 2005) alongside their students, that is, remaining open to questioning and learning, when questions are asked for which the teacher does not have the answer—indeed, questions for which there might be no discernable answer.

As Libby demonstrates when she writes, "I myself, other than what I was taught in school," negotiating the ambiguity related to racial difference can be a particular challenge for White teachers who have limited experience with systemic oppression. Thus a potential "teachable moment" is

described as a conflict to be avoided. For instance, a teacher viewing this exchange as a teachable moment might complicate the problem and steer students away from a fruitless debate on who was more oppressed—referred to as the “Oppression Olympics” (Martinez, 1993). Instead, they might help students think through the differences in these cases to come to a deeper understanding of historical and social dynamics. Yet, as breaking the silence about race and talking about race is presented as problematic in managing race stories, that opportunity is precluded.

Colorblindness and compliance as resolutions. Another key feature of the managing race pattern is that colorblindness (or “colormuteness” (Pollock, 2004)) is often offered as the preferred resolution to the escalating conflict and attention is paid to how well students comply with classroom rules after the conflict. That is, when teachers told managing race narratives, they suggested that the preferred solution to the classroom management challenge they had presented was inculcating a sense of “we are all the same” regardless of racial difference in their students and getting students to adhere to their classroom rules. In fact, colorblindness and compliance to classroom rules were intertwined in the narratives’ resolutions.

Libby’s story about John illustrates this pattern. The story concludes with Libby noting shifts in John’s behavior in terms of being more compliant with classroom rules (i.e. less of a management problem) and stating her desire that in the future John begins to recognize that “we are all the same” regardless of race (i.e. a colorblind stance). She writes, “Since this [incident with the African American girl and his subsequent school administrator referral] occurred [John] is much more pleasant to have in the class. He is not a joy, but he is quieter and he doesn't speak to anyone but his four friends in the class.” John becoming more pleasant in class is related to his not speaking and being “quieter,” a change that does not obviously relate to race, but does relate to how his behavior might impact Libby’s

classroom management. In describing how Libby would like to see John move forward from this incident, she writes that she wants him to “see that we are all the *same*” [emphasis added]. Libby also says of herself in describing her relationship to the class in which this incident happened, “...I do not seem to have a problem with these so called trouble makers because I treat them all the *same* and try to be as fair as I can respectfully” [emphasis added]. Here Libby demonstrates a key aspect of managing race stories. Saying that she treats students “the same” and that she wants John to also see that “we are all the same” suggests a colorblind ideal, wherein race is not discussed nor explicitly taken into account in interactions.

In Libby’s story, noting race and racial difference is connected with undesirable outcomes, here a loss of control/breach in classroom management for her. The last line of Libby’s story confirms this, “I am hoping this [“race issues”] doesn’t happen so blatantly again, but I am feeling that it will in just another form.” Libby qualifies her desire of not having “race issues” come to the fore in her class with the word “blatantly.” Therefore, it is not the race issues, per se, that are the problem, but the outward grappling with race in her classroom that is. When difference is noticed, the act of noticing is equated with trouble. And, Libby’s ultimate desire for John is for him to see the “same”ness in others.

Similarly, Kim’s solution in the “Racial Discomfort” narrative is to require her students to learn each other’s names. She writes, “I am not sure if it makes a difference, but they know her as a person now instead of as the Native American girl commonly referred to as ‘Pocahontas.’” Kim attaches her students’ use of each other’s names to her colorblind ideology by contrasting it to the use of a “stereotypical,” racialized name. Without knowing if Kim only has her students learn each other’s names without learning anything else about each other, this move also seems like a quick-fix classroom management solution that does not necessarily require the students to learn anything about each

other's cultural backgrounds or about systemic racism (see May & Sleeter, 2010 for a discussion of difference between superficial and critical ways of addressing multiculturalism in schools). Again, like Libby's story, Kim's is a cautionary tale about the potential divisiveness of publicly recognizing racial difference. Kim's story works to minimize recognition of difference and thus takes a "colorblind" and "colormute" (Pollock, 2004) perspective. Kim's approach suggests that "to be color-blind is to be fair, impartial, and objective because to see color is to see defects and inferiority" (Nieto, 2004, p. 145). This is not to say Kim herself is colorblind. As explored in the discussion section, Kim seems to be hyperaware of racial difference at times. Even within this narrative, she paradoxically attributes her own obliviousness to racial difference to her multicultural heritage: "Coming from a multicultural background myself, I tend to remain ignorant of diversity until it is pointed out." Kim demonstrates tentativeness in her own racial identity and unease with acknowledging race, and takes up colorblindness as a "safe" response to a racially charged incident. Kim's story suggests the need for educators to manage race through minimizing explicit notice or mention of racial difference in classrooms. This is a perspective that has been critiqued in the multicultural education literature for rendering students "invisible" by refusing to recognize aspects of their identity that make them who they are and impacts how they experience the world (Nieto, 2004).

Race as invisible, yet volatile. A final salient feature of managing race is that race is paradoxically and simultaneously treated as invisible (or as though it should be invisible, as though colorblindness is preferable) and yet volatile. Libby's and Kim's stories demonstrate this pattern to some extent in the way they obscure the race of the antagonists. Similarly, stories shared by two other participants, Gladys and Sheila, epitomize this point and illustrate just how deeply novice teachers may intertwine issues of race and classroom management.

In response to a course prompt that asked participants to “relate an incident involving race, class, or gender from your teaching career that stands out for you as a particularly important moment...” Gladys shares two stories. The first narrative describes the misbehavior of “a young student who loves attention and is very charming.” She notes that having had “polite conversation” with this student on many occasions that she is “shocked” when, “One morning I happened to walk into the main office and heard him talk in a very discourteous manner to the Principal.” She reprimands the student, only to be disappointed by his response of, “You aren’t my mamma to tell me how I should behave.” As Gladys recounts additional vignettes, she continues to discuss students’ misbehavior and her reaction to that misbehavior. In a second narrative, for example, she describes approaching a student who remains in the school cafeteria for an unauthorized three lunch periods one day. The student tells her he is helping sell homecoming dance tickets, which the teacher coordinating homecoming says is not the case. Gladys confronts the student in front of the homecoming teacher only to be “disappointed” by the student’s response, “Leave me alone, I don’t know who you are,” and the teacher’s nonresponse to what Gladys describes as “disregard.”

The resolution to Gladys’s story focuses on having teachers consistently enforce the rules and monitor students so that, “students will know that they can’t get away with breaking the rules.” She again describes how her authority as a teacher is affronted when teachers do not share in rule enforcement, “...many a time someone or other either turns a blind eye or makes concessions for some of the students based on their familiarity with that student. As a result, when I, a support teacher, try to admonish a student for breaking the basic moral code, I am totally disregarded, and am at a loss on what step to take next with that student.” This conclusion reinforces the classroom management theme,

and also works to position Gladys as morally good as someone who “tr[ies] to admonish a student for breaking the basic moral code.”

As Gladys, tells these stories, she never once mentions race or class, though the course prompt asked for this. While she does note gender, using masculine pronouns to describe the antagonistic students and relating that one student uses the gendered term “mama” to talk back to her, she focuses more on her institutional role as a “support teacher,” which comes up multiple times, and which she suggests students and other teachers do not respect. This is further implied in her opening to the series of vignettes when she writes, “I am a Literacy Coach and since I don’t work with students directly, I am at a loss on how to approach students *when they behave in an inappropriate manner*” [my emphasis]. Such a focus is illuminating in considering how novice teachers conflate issues of racial difference and classroom management given that prior research has found that teachers may be likelier to punish students of color for being defiant of their authority, as discussed above (Vavrus & Cole, 2002; see also Kitzmiller, 2013) and given CRT’s assertion that race is at play even when it is not discussed and that silence is one means of perpetuating racism and racist institutions (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Stovall, 2006).

What makes Gladys’s omission of discussing race in these vignettes even more salient is that elsewhere in the course, she describes the impact of racial difference on her practice as an educator. Early on, for example, Gladys writes, “I would like to learn how to interact with students from various cultures without getting them all worked up or upset at the way I interact with them,” and goes on to describe herself, “I come from a different culture [South Asian Indian].” She further describes feeling alienated at her school because of her background: “I am stuck in the middle in terms of the color of my skin, neither white nor black.” By not specifically mentioning race or class, or discussing the salience of

gender in these stories that are so clearly focused on classroom management scenarios, Gladys leaves the reader to conclude that issues of race, class, and gender and classroom management issues may be one and the same. However, it is not clear from this story if Gladys believes hers or the students' race, class, and/or gender contributes to the problems she identifies.

Unlike participants' responses to Libby omitting John's race, no one questions Gladys's choice to leave out demographic information in her stories. Instead, other participants share their own classroom management challenge stories in response, including Sheila, a White teacher, who writes, "I believe that the problem you have explained is one that most of us have faced at one time or another, especially at the high school level." Sheila goes on to talk about a rule at her school of "no hats, no rags, headbands, scarves, etc"—headgear often associated with communities of color (see Morris, 2005 for a discussion of the relationship between Black and Latino boys' popular clothing styles and school punishment), which Sheila does not mention. Like Gladys, Sheila attempts to intervene when she sees students breaking this rule, only to be disregarded, "It is a real problem when they [the students] have just walked past one or more other staff members and no one says anything. I have also gotten a curt 'Who are you?' from the students." Sheila finds support from school security guards: "Sometimes, the students do this in front of security. I have been lucky, since security will usually tell the student to listen." Sheila's response reveals insights on the recently documented trend of school personnel abdicating responsibility for school discipline to the legal or penal system (Wadhwa, 2016), represented by school security in this case. Though Sheila doesn't mention punitive interactions between school security and students, she does note that she relies on them to "tell the student to listen," in cases when she feels she cannot effectively manage behavior. In more serious instances like those documented by Wadhwa (2016), involving school security in classroom management can contribute to the school-to-

prison pipeline phenomenon in which involvement in the school disciplinary system is linked to involvement in the youth and/or U.S. penal system.

In these stories, difference is perceived as needing management, even if difference is not specifically named as a precipitating factor, as in Gladys's post and Sheila's response. Indeed, for these educators, a well-managed classroom seems to be a classroom in which categories of difference remain invisible or unspoken. This focus on management is unsurprising given that prior research has shown beginning teachers' identities are often wrapped-up in their perceptions of themselves as classroom managers (Stoughton, 2007). Even with experienced teachers, the fear of conflict with students and behavioral problems motivates teacher actions (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985). Nonetheless, focusing on management as such may have negative outcomes for both teachers and students.

Race-ing Management

While within the race-ing management pattern, stories still related race to classroom management, these stories exposed systemic issues that influence student treatment. The race-ing management pattern was characterized by identifying racial difference as a cause of conflict *because of ignorance and racism* with systemic racism identified as a factor. Racial-consciousness raising, community building, and educating about difference were, consequently, the resolutions teachers offered for the conflicts presented in these narratives.

Racial difference as a cause of conflict because of ignorance and racism. Race-ing management stories position ignorance and racism as being at the root of racial difference-related conflict. Participants describe both self-ignorance, or lack of awareness of one's own cultural background, and ignorance of others as issues in this dynamic. Oftentimes, participants in taking up race-ing management addressed both issues.

Joan's story takes place at the start of and during a middle school Ojibwe⁶ language class that Joan taught prior to her participation in this professional development program. In this story, she locates ignorance of others as a key issue. In the narrative, D---, described as being on his way to class, is stopped before entering the library where the class takes place by another teacher who Joan recalls as saying, "You are not in this class, you are not an Indian," after "look[ing] at the student's red hair and green eyes." Joan, who identifies as American Indian, addresses the teacher—who is identified as not being Native American—by challenging her accusation, "Oh yes, D--- is in my class. He's Oneida—from a very well-known family. D--- is one of my best students," after which Joan says, "The teacher backed down."

Judy, an African American teacher, laments racial ignorance by school staff and among African American students of their own heritage and indicts such ignorance as a precipitating factor in school fights and other misbehavior. In two separate stories that she connects within course posts, Judy first discusses students' use of the word "n*gger," and subsequently "b*tch," relating both to students' lack of understanding of African American history and larger social contexts. In the first story about students' use of "n*gger," Judy says students behave inappropriately, using this word because they have not been properly taught the history of the word by the largely White teaching population, of which, she says, "The ignorance of historical things that relate to African Americans, among White teachers is truly shocking." Because White teachers comprise the majority of the teaching force, Judy claims, "The students are taught within a racial neutral school system that takes no time to let the students know of their history beyond Martin Luther King." She also explicitly names institutional racism as being at play in this situation: "I know that so much institutional racism has clouded the educational system and the teachers just flow with the status quo." Similarly, in continuing her discussion of African American

students' lack of historical knowledge, she says this leads female students to call each other "b*tch" because they hear rappers using the terminology. She engages students about this, "I ask them why they like the rappers so much that refer to females as b*tches. The students just pick the time to have an emotional reaction [fight] and with whom." Again, she cites ignorance as a mitigating factor, "Students can tell you the life story of one of their rapper icons but have no knowledge of the African American icons that are responsible for so many everyday things that are in their lives."

Systemic racism identified as a factor. Unlike the managing race pattern, in which teachers positioned commenting on race as problematic for violating basic rules of comportment (i.e. noticing difference is rude or amoral), within race-ing management commenting on race (e.g. Joan's story), or using racially-loaded language (e.g. Judy's stories), is connected with systemic racism, and thus framed as problematic. Systemic racism is racism that is embedded into the fabric of social institutions, "encompass[ing] a broad range of racialized dimensions [including]...racist framing, racist ideology, stereotyped attitudes, racist emotions, [and] discriminatory habits and actions..." (Feagin, 2006, p. xii). Whereas Judy explicitly names systemic racism as an issue as noted above, this interplay is illustrated more subtly in Joan's narrative in several ways, of which the title is a prominent example.

"The True Red Man," title of Joan's story calls attention to issues of systemic racism by invoking a racialized (and gendered, though gender is never explicitly discussed in the story) image of a Native American man. This phrasing not only plays on and conjures stereotypical images, as the term "Red Man" has been used derogatively, but also invokes Indian pride and cultural heritage by reappropriating a term used negatively by others for self-identification. This title further assumes that the "Red Man" is a widely—perhaps the most widely—available image of American Indians, being the image and name for a brand of tobacco, as well as the image of a number of sports teams' mascots. Thus, Joan's choice of title

immediately calls into question the place/belonging of American Indians in “mainstream” society given that the most prominent image of American Indians is one that “others” them; the archetypal “Red Man” is juxtaposed with the archetypal “White Man” as representing “real” Americans. In a way the title also serves as a reminder that Native Americans still exist, a pushback against the critique that American social studies and history classes teach about Native Americans as an extinct group (Loewen, 2007).

While Joan does not explicitly make the connections described above between the title of her story and classroom management, in titling the story “The True Red Man,” Joan nonetheless implicates the antagonist in participating in perpetuating systemic racism and stereotyped views when accusing D-- of not belonging in the Ojibwe class and not being an American Indian based on a skewed physical image alone. Whereas in the managing race stories teachers sought to minimize explicit commenting on racial difference, in Joan’s and other race-ing management stories, teachers seek to engage race directly in order to make visible and confront systemic racism. It is when students and teachers act with limited understanding of systemic issues related to race that problems arise in race-ing management stories.

Racial-consciousness raising, community building, and educating about difference as resolutions. The final distinctive feature of race-ing management is the incorporation of racial-consciousness raising, community building, and educating about difference as resolutions to conflict. Again, this contrasts with managing race, which largely suggests teaching students that “we are all the same” as the preferred means of addressing racial difference in the classroom. Joan uses D---’s story as an example arguing for the need to inculcate a sense of racial-consciousness raising and community building among students and educating both teachers and students alike about the nuances of different racial and cultural backgrounds and societal experiences.

Joan describes specifically how she addresses the societal implications of race with her students.

She writes, “We discussed the incident [involving D--- and the teacher in the hallway] with the other students. You can’t tell who is Indian by how you look. So what does it mean to be an American Indian in today’s world? The students had a sense that it is connection to culture.” Further illustrating this point, after D---’s Indian-ness is questioned, Joan shows that his response is to become more involved with the Indian community, “After the incident, D--- became my greatest supporter...He worked hard even though Ojibwe was not his tribal language. He did get involved in pow wows and other events in the Indian community.” Thus, a challenge to D---’s ethno-racial belonging prompted him to create his own sense of belonging with others of similar cultural backgrounds. Therefore, a pervasive theme in Joan’s story is that of the need for American Indians to build a sense of belonging by becoming involved with and learning about their cultural community and heritage.

Similarly, when Joan later confronts the instigating teacher about the incident, she uses that as another opportunity to educate about culture. She writes, “I spoke to the teacher later and told her that I realized that she was trying to keep traffic under control, but not to assume that you can know who is an American Indian by appearance. She said that she had meant no offense.” Instead of attempting to quell notice of difference, Joan urges her colleague to be more mindful of difference and related assumptions. Joan further stresses the need for education and consideration of racial difference in describing her conversation with this teacher: “I sensed that she had a rather well-developed view of American Indians. That is as far as it went. This school has many in-services on American Indians, so I felt that I had done what I could to influence her ideas.”

In this exchange, Joan turns a managing race scenario—with the teacher in the hallway—into a race-ing management situation, in which she attempts to educate her colleague, and eventually her students on American Indian cultural heritage. She doesn’t attempt to force anyone to take a colorblind

perspective, quite the opposite. The resolution Joan attempts is color-conscious, as evidenced by her exchange with the other teacher and also with her students, with whom she uses the incident as a teachable moment to discuss American Indian identity. Also invoking the political, she places this incident in the context of controversy over Indian language classes in her district: “If a connection to cultural identity helps American Indian students; reducing or eliminating these services [such as this Ojibwe language class] will hurt D--- and his peers. The [hallway] teacher’s stereotypical comment helped D---- form a connection with the culture. I hope I can continue to be part of positive change” (see Hermes, Bang, & Marin, 2012 for more on Ojibwe language revitalization and community-building).

Judy’s message of directly confronting race and educating teachers and students aligns with Joan’s. This is evidenced in her descriptions of leading students in discussions about their use of both “n*gger” and “b*tch.” She further describes imploring teachers to learn about—not assume they know—African American history and then teach students. She writes, “I just want teachers to really understand and truly teach history that will make a difference to the students and maybe in some of their behavior and not shy away from someone speaking candidly about the need of the students to know their history even more than math or English.” She suggests teachers might avoid confronting issues of race out of fear that in bringing up “some of the atrocities that [African American students’] ancestors have been a part of,” that students will become angry. Finally, she notes her own efforts on this front, “I work daily in my classroom to provide my students with historical information and give information to my colleagues of relevance. I tell the White teachers don’t be afraid to address the historical problems of being African American. The students are more interested in the information than they are of who is giving it to them.”

In general, race-ing management focused on relationship building, getting to know students as

individuals—individuals *with* racial and ethnic identities—and on exposing the status quo as disenfranchising students and teachers of color. This is just as Joan describes discussing culture as a step in making “positive change.” In this way, these narratives provided counter-examples and counter-stories to the managing race narratives.

Discussion

The findings of this study contribute to theory building about why Black students might be disproportionately disciplined (see Ferguson, 2001; Noguera, 2008a, 2008b) through the apparent tension between managing race and race-ing management. That is, there is a discrepancy between whether or not the teachers discussing issues of race framed their stories as being about classroom management issues or as issues of injustice. Those who managed race framed race/ethno-racial difference as being at the core of conflicts in their classrooms and to some extent as inherently problematic. Those who raced management took a more critical stance and questioned how a student’s ethno-racial background contributed to disciplinary actions that students experienced or impacted the opportunities they had to learn, and specifically to learn about their cultural heritage. Even Joan’s story in which D--- is mistaken for being White highlights this dynamic in that misperceptions about race and ethnicity are central to the conflict described.

Furthermore, the backgrounds of the teachers generally aligned with whether or not they told stories that managed race or raced management, with teachers who expressed a strong minority racial identity tending to focus on race-ing management, and those who expressed a more tenuous racial identity, who considered themselves to be racially “different,” or who described themselves as being from the dominant (White) group tending to focus on managing race. Libby and Kim, for example, are racial outsiders in schools with largely African American student populations. At various points

throughout the online PD, Libby mentions her White race. For instance, in response to Judy's stories about African American students not knowing their history, Libby writes, "I understand your frustration because I being an Italian-American do not know much of my history other than Italian-Fest." Similarly, Kim talks about being biracial, but often being perceived as White. For instance, about one month into the program, Kim describes her racial background and others' perceptions of it:

As a "white" teacher I struggle with students' understanding that I am uncomfortable with prejudice and racism. Many of my students take me for the suburban white yuppie and do not realize that I am a biracial kid from the projects just like them.

Unfortunately, my teaching peers and my student peers throughout my life have considered my fair-complexion to be a bonus in my favor. I find it more difficult to express my discomfort with prejudice and racism because I am fair in complexion. I want to know how to have students realize that life is just as twisted no matter what side of the color spectrum you are on.

Further demonstrating her conflicted relationship with racial categories, near the end of the course, unprompted and outside of the regular course sessions, Kim asks other participants for advice on a personal incident. In this case, Kim has to leave the Black History assembly early for a doctor's appointment and overhears a Black colleague say she is just like the other "white b*tches" at her school.

Interestingly, the conflict in both Kim's and Libby's stories is resolved by getting students to accept a colorblind ideology and/or seeking support elsewhere, as from a racial insider—the Black school administrator to whom she refers John in Libby's case. Further, both of these stories reveal privilege at play. On the basis of their fair skin or White identity, Kim and Libby can choose to downplay issues of systemic racism for their own purposes.

On the other hand, the teachers who raced management were largely those who self-identified

ethno-racially with their students—a minority of the United States’ teaching force, which in 2011 was 84% White, 7% Black, 6% Hispanic, and 4% “other” (Feistritz, 2011, p. 11; Ingersoll et al., 2014). Joan, for instance, identifies as Native American and resolves the conflict in her story by community-building among Native students in her class and educating her non-Native colleagues. Just as much as Kim talks about not fitting in racially, Joan makes proud claims to her heritage. In fact, Joan is the only person in the very first introductory post—before participants met in person—to name her ethno-racial heritage, with everyone else simply identifying what and where they teach. In that post, Joan writes, “My name is Joan. I am a Special Education teacher at [name] HS in [city]. I have American Indian heritage and have studied and taught American Indian studies and Ojibwe language. // *Boozhoo* (Hello) *Gigawaabaamin* (see you later).” Similarly, Judy, the other participant to focus on race-ing management described above, identifies as African American. Both of these teachers had language for *critically* addressing ethnic/racial incidents from the beginning of the course.

These teachers recognized the political underpinnings of management. For example, in Joan’s story, when a teacher colleague reprimands one of Joan’s students, Joan sees the political underpinnings of this management choice; Joan infers that the student is reprimanded because of the other teacher’s biased notion about who true Native Americans are. Conversely, the teachers who managed race described incidents as being largely about transgressions of how to appropriately behave in a classroom. Rather than critically calling into question how a student’s ethno-racial background might (unfairly) contribute to the disciplinary action they experience in schools, these teachers emphasized the need for appropriate behavior above all else. Kim’s story is an example of this. In her story, the non-Native American students who refer to her Native American student as “Pocahontas” are simply taught to learn the names of other students in the classroom rather than being taught, for

example, about Disney's commodification of the Pocahontas story (Ono & Beushcer, 2001), or the historical relationship of solidarity between African Americans and Native Americans, whose communities at times in the past took in escaped enslaved Blacks (Katz, 1986). Such context might do more to build community in the classroom than just having students learn each other's names.

Thus, this study confirms what others (such as Bell, 2003) have found that educators' backgrounds inform the stories they tell about equity and difference. Teachers from dominant backgrounds, benefitting from White privilege, may view issues of difference as individual (as opposed to systemic) and resolvable through liberal multicultural practices, such as teaching students "we are all the same" beneath the skin (May & Sleeter, 2010). Such a framing obscures the systemic issues at play that impact student actions and outcomes. On the other hand, teachers who take a race-ing management approach, may do so because of their own personal experience with issues of systemic racism. They encourage students and teachers to learn and critically engage issues of difference and to do so as an alternative to immediately punishing students. Therefore, this research deepens our understanding of how perceptions of racial difference might work specifically with regard to teachers' conceptions of classroom management and punishment by illustrating everyday processes and moves through which inequality is produced (Pollock, 2008b) in schools.

Implications and Conclusion

Given the impact of novice teachers' daily work with students, we must innovatively support these teachers in reversing insidious trends. First, whether led by the district, by principals at individual schools, or by outside professional development organizations, new teachers need structured opportunities for critical reflection on management through the lens of identity so they can analyze the implicit beliefs at work in their understandings. Scholars suggest that bringing bias into conscious

awareness is the first step in changing the unintentional perpetuation of racial inequalities (e.g. King, 1991). Structure and guidance are key, as we cannot expect new teachers to engage issues of power and difference in critical ways if such a reflective approach has never been modelled for them in their training or experienced in their own schooling. Structured opportunities might involve having novice teachers write and analyze their own narratives from multiple perspectives. They might do so alongside those supporting them in these endeavors (e.g. principals, professional developers) by, for example, drawing on “life texts pedagogy,” which helps participants “make connections between their lived experiences and race/racism through (1) critically examining their own narratives; (2) engaging family/peers; and (3) co-investigating dilemmas [facilitators] share from their practice” (Author, 2016). Facilitators and novice teachers must shift dominant discourses to make space to consider how each actor’s background may have influenced the situation as part of respectful dialogue. Skillful facilitation would be key in moving new teachers past silencing and defensive reactions that could continue to minimize the influence of systemic factors in racialized school practices.

Furthermore, school leaders and other professional development facilitators must make clear to novice teachers that their competence is not being questioned when we ask them to engage in critical reflection. Data from this study has also shown that new teachers may react defensively when asked to make themselves vulnerable in considering challenges and dilemmas in their practice, which shuts down inquiry and learning (see Author, 2015). Instead, school leaders and professional developers must create cultures in which novice teachers willingly consider difficult truths about their own perspectives and development as professionals. Again, development of a reflective culture may be achievable by having more experienced educator facilitators sharing their own stories to dispel the notion that challenges or dilemmas in teaching are a sign of weakness. Institutionalizing such an

approach may go a long way in supporting novice teachers' positive interactions with marginalized students, and in helping new teachers persist in the profession.

Finally, in general, more research must be done to understand how difference is actively negotiated in educational settings. University-based researchers might consider partnering with practicing teachers to explore these phenomena. Such partnerships can prioritize teacher voice and concerns as key levers for change. If we intend to support the success of all students within the current educational system, then we must seek to understand how opportunities for some are systematically limited by their identities and backgrounds and work in partnership with classroom teachers in order to bring about meaningful change.

Notes

1. See also Peguero and Shekarkhar (2011) and Skiba and colleagues (2011) for a discussion of Latino students' over-represented in the school discipline system in middle and high school.
2. Further, recent research shows this trend of disproportionately suspending Black boys begins in preschool (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014).
3. All names, including course title, are pseudonyms.
4. University-based faculty who designed the course did not play a role in the ongoing management and facilitation of the online course given that the focus was to create a research-based professional learning opportunity that could be sustained within the local context of the school district.
5. A complete analysis of all of the topics and themes taken up in the 51 stories is beyond the scope of the paper. However, through the initial analysis, a number of interesting patterns became apparent. For example, many of the narratives shared were preoccupied with relating "ethno-racial" incidents, with "ethno-racial" signifying some participants' choice to focus on a combination of race—

related to group status based on perceived phenotype—and ethnicity—related to shared cultural ancestry (Randolph, 2013). While some (Marx, 2006; Randolph, 2013) would argue that ethnicity is simply another, perhaps “safer,” way to discuss race.

6. Ojibwe is also known as Chippewa, Ojibwa, or Anishinabe (see <http://www.native-languages.org/ojibwe.htm> for more information).

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Table 1. Chart of Participants and Management Narratives

Name	Grade Level During the Course	Subject(s) Taught During the Course	Race/Ethnicity*	Gender	Number of Management Narratives (n=51)
Joan	High School	Special Education	Native American	Female	11
Libby	High School	Math	Caucasian	Female	9
Judy	Middle School	Special Education	African American	Female	2
Sheila	High School	Special Education	Caucasian	Female	6
Kim	High School	English	Multi-racial	Female	5
Gladys	High School, Coach	Literacy Coach	(Asian) Indian	Female	11
Richard	High School	Math and Science	African American	Male	7

*Racial and ethnic categorizations are self-identified by the participants. As much as possible, I try to use the same wording that participants used to describe themselves.

Appendix A. Chart of Summarized Weekly Course Session Prompts

Course Session	Prompt*
Unit 1.1	Critical incidents in practice: Post a “critical autobiographical incident” involving race, class, or gender. (See Appendix B.)
Unit 1.2	Role of emotion in critical incidents: Describe the role of emotions in the incident provided for Unit 1.1 prompt.
Unit 1.3	Identity and agency in critical issues: Create an “I-poem” about a time you felt confident in working with a student from a different racial or ethnic background than your own.
Unit 2.1	“It only hurts you in the end”: Watch a video about (dis)respect in the classroom and analyze it from the lens of student resistance.
Unit 2.2	Reframing resistance: Read excerpts from Wendy Luttrell’s <i>Pregnant Bodies, Fertile Minds</i> (pp. 103-106, “Racial Socialization”), and “School Rules” from Janie Ward’s <i>The Skin We’re In</i> . Reflect on barriers to respect desired by teachers and students.
Unit 2.3	Resistance narratives: Write a personal narrative of resistance, addressing issues of respect as well.
Unit 2.4	School field trip (case study): Read a case study about a school field trip on which issues of youth culture play a prominent role. Consider how dress and talk are interpreted by students and by teachers in the school community.
Unit 3.1	Multiple perspectives on the “N-word”: Read the following articles and watch a video from Listenup.org on the use of the n-word: Coleman, Candace, “Mis-education about the N-word,” Willoughby, Brian, “Considering the N word,” Brown, J. Clinton, “In defense of the N-Word,” Thompson, Gail, “Can they call each other the N-word?,” Akom, A.A., “The House that Race Built.” Write about an incident involving student use of racialized language that raises a question or dilemma for you.
Unit 3.2	Observing students’ use of language: Observe the use of racialized language in your own school and reflect on a particular instance you notice.
Unit 3.3	Formulating a “stance” (action plan): Formulate a deliberate strategy for addressing students’ use of the “N-word.”

*For each weekly session, participants were asked to reply to each other’s prompts, in addition to posting their responses.

Appendix B. Critical Autobiographical Incident Prompt

Critical Autobiographical Incident Unit 1, Session 1

We would like to begin by gathering examples from each member of the group of an incident that you observed or were involved in that called for you to intervene or speak up in some way – on behalf of a student, on behalf of a colleague, or on your own behalf. In keeping with the focus of the course, please choose an incident that involves some issue of race, class, or gender.

Here are some general guidelines for what to include in the narrative.

- Begin by giving a brief description of the situation
- Identity the “issue” as you saw it
- Describe what kind of intervention was needed
- Describe what you did and why
- Summarize and evaluate the outcome of the incident
- Give your incident a title

This incident can involve any aspect of your work as a teacher. We are interested in learning about the kinds of situations you face, what issues you consider important, and how you understand and interpret particular incidents. In this first recounting of the incident, you should imagine that you are speaking to a fellow teacher, explaining the story as you would in conversation. After we have collected incidents from everyone, we will use these examples as the starting point for conversations. For this assignment, a couple of pages will be sufficient (approximately 500 words).

You may want to begin by speaking your narrative into a tape recorder, so that you can let the ideas and incidents emerge as they occur to you. If you choose to record your story, you will then need to transcribe it so that you can post it to the discussion board. Alternatively, you can begin by handwriting your story in the style of free-writing, trying to put the incident into words with a similar sense of spontaneity. If you choose this option, you will also have to transcribe the story for posting. If you are comfortable, you can also compose the story at the keyboard. We want to provide alternatives that allow you the greatest latitude in choosing the process by which to create this narrative so that the story is told in your voice, from your point of view.

We do not expect these stories to be polished narratives – they are intended to be a starting point for discussion, reflection, and further writing.

Appendix C. Matrix of Structural Elements in Sample of Narratives from Unit 1, Session 1

	Self-identity Claims¹	Title / Narrative Summary	Overview Narrative Structure	Imagery/ Metaphors	Coda
Joan	<p>1: American Indian</p> <p>2: "I am a woman with a tapestry of cultural identity."</p>	<p>"The True Red Man" / Joan's story takes place during an Ojibwe, American Indian language, class that she used to teach. In the narrative, Joan recounts an incident involving one of her students, whom she refers to as "D---." D--- is on his way to her class, but is stopped before entering the library, where the class takes place, by another teacher who Joan recalls as saying, "You are not in this class, you are not an Indian." Joan later confronts this other, unnamed teacher, about the incident and uses the incident as a teachable moment with her students to discuss American Indian identity.</p>	<p>Lines 2-23 seem to encompass the incident narrative (described to the left). Lines 24-44 comprise an epilogue to the incident narrative. In this section (lines 24-28) Joan goes back to the offending teacher and then synthesizes her lessons learned from the whole overall incident. She says because the school has in-service days on American Indians and because she "sensed" this teacher had a "well-developed view of American Indians" she didn't feel the need to go further in addressing the incident by saying, "I felt</p>	<p>The title of this story "The True Red Man" invokes a racialized and gendered image of a Native American man. This expression/choice seems to be playing on/invoking stereotypes, as the term "Red Man" has been used derogatively. While the title encompasses race and gender, the story comes to be more focused race.</p>	<p>"This brings us back (things to move in a circle) to the incident with D---. If a connection to cultural identity helps American Indian students; reducing or eliminating these services will hurt D-- - and his peers. The teacher's stereotypical comment helped D-- - form a connection with the culture. I hope I can continue to be part of positive change."</p>

¹ Line 1 represents claims made elsewhere in the data. Line 2 represents claims made in this particular narrative.

			<p>that I had done what I could to influence her ideas.” In lines 29-31 Joan notes that despite everything that this incident happened was “positive” for her students in terms of learning opportunity. Joan makes it clear that this story is not just about the student she calls D---, but also about herself and her connection/need to connect with American Indian culture (lines 32-37). In this concluding section (lines 38-44) of the coda Joan ties the original incident narrative to present-day context to make an argument for the need to help American Indian students connect with their cultural heritage. She also reinforces that a connection to cultural heritage for D--- was the</p>		
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			outcome of this incident of stereotyping.		
Libby	1: Italian-American 2: N/A	“Hour 4/5” / Libby’s narrative is about an incident with a student she refers to as “John” in a class she teaches while participating in ASSERT. In the story John, after getting into a verbal argument with another student in the class, is assigned to a different sit along with other students. John, however, Libby writes, “moved back to his friends thinking I didn't see.” In the process of moving back to his new seat after being asked, Libby writes he drops a pencils, and “went back to get his pencil, faced the front of the room, adjusted his pants and proceeded to moon the entire class when he bent over.” Libby writes up the incident and later meets who the administrator who has met with John and his parents.	Lines 2-21 provide an orientation to the incident narrative. In these lines, Libby provides the demographics of the class: “...made up of mostly repeater students. This means that the majority of the students have failed this course before for various reasons such as poor attendance or laziness. In this class there is a mix of African-American and White with some African-Americans being quite out-spoken.” She also sets up the antagonist in the story in lines 10-21: “He is disrespectful to me and others by pushing ‘the limit...’” Lines 22-39 encompass the incident (described to the left). Lines 40-54 are an epilogue wherein Libby first discusses the administrator’s reaction	N/A	“Since this occurred he is much more pleasant to have in the class. He is not a joy, but he is quieter and he doesn't speak to anyone but his four friends in the class. Needless, to say there has not been any race issues since. I am hoping this doesn't happen so blatantly again, but I am feeling that it will in just another form.”

			and then synthesizes her thoughts. She notes that the administrator “is an African American.” She then says she thinks the problems stem from John’s “racism” and that she thinks “he has something against women.”		
Sheila	2: “I wondered if the teacher would have listened to me and recognized the value of my concerns if I had been male.”	“A Fearful Factor” / Sheila recounts a story about a time when she was a students’ aid in a health class where another teacher was the main instructor. In Sheila’s story, the boys in the health class “became increasingly out of control” while watching an episode of the television program <i>Fear Factor</i> , in which contestants are made to eat grilled animal penises. Sheila identifies the students’ behavior as sexual harassment and asks the lead instructor to speak with them about this behavior. However, Sheila feels her concerns are dismissed by the teacher, who tells	Lines 2-15 orient the story. Sheila explains that the incident takes place in a class “taught by a male teacher” and comprised primarily “male” students. Lines 16-22 are dedicated to the description of the incident—where the boys are shown the video and react. Lines 23-53 describe Sheila’s response to the incident. She is “embarrassed” by what happened. She questions her actions. She is pointed to the school district’s sexual harassment policy	This title of “A Fearful Factor” is a pun where Sheila both invokes the name of the television programs that prompts the main incident she describes and illustrates how she felt about an aspect of the incident or other teacher.	“In hindsight, I now realize that I should have voiced my concerns during the incident. As I think about the experience, I know that I was afraid to do so. I understand that since I did not speak up for myself at the time, I did not model the importance for students to stand up for themselves if they are uncomfortable in a situation. As a teacher, I will not

		the students, "He said to the students, 'I didn't have any problem with how you behaved on Friday, but this lady did.'"	and names the incident as such. She goes back to the teacher and ultimately feels that her claims were dismissed. Lines 54-62 serve as the coda (shown right). Here Sheila questions her own actions in hindsight.		stand silent when I see students of either gender behaving or speaking to each other inappropriately. I know it is important for all students - regardless of race, culture, or gender - to feel that the staff of their school will not only teach them, but also protect them from mental or physical harassment. This experience has cemented within me, the importance of modeling and teaching students to respect one another and our differences."
Gladys	1: (Asian) ² Indian	"My dilemma!" / Gladys' recounts two stories, one serves as more of a set-up for the second, extended	[While Gladys mostly follows the prompt instructions, it's not	N/A	"I believe that if there is consistency in the rules and how

² Gladys does not refer to herself as "Asian Indian," but I use this terminology to distinguish her heritage from Joan's.

	<p>2: "I am a Literacy Coach and since I don't work with students directly, I am at a loss on how to approach students when they behave in an inappropriate manner."</p>	<p>story. In the first story, Gladys tells of an incident where she reprimands a student for speaking in a manner that "wasn't very civil." The student responds with, 'you aren't my mamma to tell me how I should behave'. In the second, extended story Gladys discusses a incident where she notices one student staying in the cafeteria for several lunch periods. She approaches him and he says he is "sell[ing] tickets for the homecoming dance." She finds out this isn't true and approaches him again in front of another teacher. He responds, "leave me alone, I don't know who you are." And, the other teacher does nothing.</p>	<p>immediately clear how she's connecting this incident to race, class, or gender.]</p> <p>In lines 2-3 Gladys orients her story with a disclaimer about her work as a literacy coach leaving her at a loss of how to approach students when they misbehave. Lines 4-11 is the set-up narrative (see explanation to left). Lines 12-20 contain the extended narrative (also described left). In lines 21-22, Gladys explains why she approached the student described in the extended narrative twice. Lines 23-29 wrap up the story and serve as the coda (shown right). Here Gladys makes a claim for the need of consistency in enforcing school rules</p>		<p>students are monitored then everybody can be on the same page and students will know that they can't get away with breaking the rules. But, many a time someone or other either turns a blind eye or makes concessions for some of the students based on their familiarity with that student. As a result, when I, a support teacher try to admonish a student for breaking the basic moral code, I am totally disregarded, and am at a loss on what step to take next with that student."</p>
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			and blames the lack of consistency for why students dismiss her when she tries to “admonish a student for breaking the basic moral code.”		
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