WHITE CORPORATE TRAINERS IN RACIALLY DIVERSE ORGANIZATIONS: THE ROLE OF RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE CREATION OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the racial identity development of White corporate trainers who deliver training in racially diverse organizations. The purpose of this study was to acquire an understanding about the various factors that affect the racial identity development of White trainers as well as to distinguish ways in which racially diverse organizations support the creation of culturally responsive training. The study sought to identify aspects that affect White trainers' identity and the role of the organizations in defining, or impacting, competencies related to culturally responsive training.

A basic qualitative design guided the study and data was collected through two face-to-face interviews and a written reflection in response to their own completed interview transcripts. The participants included six White females and one male and were employed in organizations in the areas of oil and gas, real estate, retail, and consulting. The participants were identified by their connection to Texas A&M University students and faculty, the Academy of Human Resource Development, or the American Society for Training and Development.

The findings of the study indicated that White corporate trainers develop their racial identity through a variety of experiences in their personal and professional environments. The White trainers' perceptions of racial identity were impacted through environmental influences and their construction of Whiteness. Their racial consciousness was further developed through their work within racially diverse organizations and cultural diversity within the training environment exposed the trainers to their

weaknesses and areas for growth. The process of becoming more culturally responsive trainers was a constant evolution that took place through self-reflection and the acknowledgment of race as an important component related to identity and their work.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my daughter who arrived during this process and has been my inspiration to keep moving forward. Her presence fills me with hope and also serves as a constant reminder that these issues are alive within each of us. May her spirit be challenged, humbled, affirmed and made vulnerable, as mine continues to be, along this journey.

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NOMENCLATURE

AHRD	Academy of Human Resource Development
ASTD	American Society for Training and Development
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
HRD	Human Resource Development

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The field of Human Resource Development (HRD) has emerged as an area that focuses on helping organizations act dynamically through the maximization of training and development, organization development and career development interventions (McLagan, 1989). One area that has continued to affect many organizations is the culturally and racially diverse backgrounds of employees. The nature of racial diversity in the workplace has gone through changes over the course of U.S. history which has impacted the ways that employees of color and White employees experience the workplace. For many people of color, race is a salient part of identity (Tatum, 2003). However, for many White Americans, their own race is not considered a relevant aspect of identity because they epistemologically view the world from the lens of the dominant racial group (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

White cultural norms and actions are often embedded within the organization's structure and repeatedly acted out by White employees because a dominant racial identity and the associated privileges often go unrecognized by White employees (Bonilla-Silva, 2009; Feagin, 2006). Simultaneously, many White employees serve as trainers in racially diverse organizations, a job which requires them to pass along organization norms and learning (Noe, 2008) while creating an inclusive adult learning environment. Research regarding the intersection of White identity development for

White corporate trainers can offer deeper insight into the ways that trainers understand and behave in association with their own racial identity.

Background of the Problem

While some scholars would argue that racism in America no longer exists (D'Souza, 1995), the literature continues to show that racism in the workplace is still an ongoing problem that organizations cannot ignore in an increasingly multicultural environment (Bonilla-Silva, 2009; Brooks & Clunis, 2007; Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Evans & Chun, 2007; Feagin, 2006; O'Brien, 2009). Additionally, policy changes in the workplace that claim to create diversity and inclusiveness do not guarantee individual employees and organization leaders will implement these policies as intended (Guba, 1984). For example, an organization may have a public diversity statement outlining their commitment to equal opportunity hiring practices, but the racial demographics of the organization may not reflect that statement. The effects of ongoing racial inequality in the workplace have caused challenges for people of color, but White employees have benefited from institutional racism (Evans & Chun, 2007). This racial privilege for White employees has manifested in the workplace through additional opportunities to advance (Evans & Chun, 2007), possessing a sense of entitlement to better jobs and salaries (Rains, 1998), and frequently selecting organization leaders who share their racial background (Evans & Chun, 2007).

In 2009, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) reported U.S. job patterns for men and women of various racial backgrounds in private industry and found that the number of first/mid-level managers represented over 3.4 million White

Americans while only 863,174 Americans of color held such job titles, including Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, Hawaiian, and biracial respondents (U. S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, 2009). Additionally, women represented only 37% of White mid-level managers and 41.9% of mid-level managers of color (U. S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, 2009). The EEOC data suggests that even with laws in place to encourage diversity in the workplace, there continues to be an underrepresentation of women and people of color in management level positions.

The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) reported that in 2011 $156 billion were spent by companies on learning and development initiatives for their employees (ASTD, 2012). The literature in the field of HRD did not establish the percentage of trainers in the field by racial background and the ASTD State of the Industry Report also left out this same information. However, the national labor statistics reported an overabundance of White workers in the workforce in managerial positions at 10.9% compared to 6.4% Black workers, 5.8% Hispanic or Latino workers, and 10.1% Asian workers (United States Census Bureau, 2011). The EEOC data and U.S. Census Bureau data reported more White workers are in the workforce in total and that White workers are more frequently represented in management positions than workers of color. Together, these findings suggest there are likely more White trainers in the workforce than trainers from any other racial background.

The excessive representation of White Americans at upper levels of the workforce can also be seen within the context of adult education (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). According to Amstutz (1994), the majority of adult educators are

middle class, White, unaware of their own biases and assumptions, and have little to no prior relationships or interactions with people of color. The field of adult education is focused on facilitating learning experiences for adults from a variety of cultural, ethnic and racial backgrounds and yet the people most often assigned the job of "educator" are representative of only a small portion of the population (Merriam et al.., 2007).

This noted inequality in workplace demographics across contexts as well as in adult education specifically, has been born out of a long history of racial inequality that began much earlier than the twenty-first century. This history of how White Americans claimed power over time included the killing of Native Americans and theft of North American land through colonization (Hall, Fenelon & Champagne, 2009), the enslavement of African Americans (Feagin, 2006; Kendell, 2006) followed by the post-slavery era Jim Crow laws that continued to oppress African Americans (Feagin, 2006; Kendell, 2006). Additionally, immigration laws were used to limit entry of people of color into the U.S. at different points in time (Bacon, 2008), but even after entry many people were often subjected to extreme discrimination such as the internment of Japanese Americans (Kendall, 2006). Historically, people of color have experienced *legal* exclusion from access to certain jobs and networks until the Civil Rights Era (Feagin, 2006). Literature has also discussed how the definition of what it means to be racially White has changed to include and exclude various groups of people at different times as was witnessed with treatment of Irish and Italian immigrants to the U.S. (Ignatiev, 2008; Roediger, 2006).

The effects of such numerous historical instances of oppression and racial inequality can also be seen in the day-to-day injustices that currently take place at the hands of White Americans, such as housing discrimination (Alexander, 2010), racism in the media, and racism in the workplace (Evans & Chun, 2007; Pierce, 2003). At the same time, the history of racial privilege for White Americans has created a system of dominance in which White individuals are privileged in many settings, including work organizations, because of their racial identity that has been shaped by history (McIntosh, 1990; Tatum, 2003).

White privilege and the dominant Eurocentric viewpoints held by many White employees in the workplace context have led to the identification of additional problems for consideration within this setting. This dominant way of thinking often spills into the workplace because White employees frequently hold jobs that require knowledge of their own racial identity as well as the culturally diverse backgrounds of all employees. White employees who are responsible for delivering training to racially diverse audiences are especially in need of a highly developed racial identity in order to move beyond a dominant paradigm. According to Helms (1990), a highly developed White racial identity would be shown by an articulated understanding about what it means to be White in today's culture, recognition of the negative effects of racism for people of color and racism as a production of White privilege, a personal acceptance of White privilege, and by engaging in ongoing personal reflection and action to take on an anti-racist identity. While Helms' model of White racial identity development offered a basic

framework for understanding White racial identity development, individuals may explain how race is a part of their identity from many different vantage points.

Depending on their level of racial identity development, the way White trainers facilitate learning and incorporate diverse perspectives into the curriculum may be impacted. A key element to how White trainers understand, explain and act on their racial identity can be understood as a function of self-reflection and learning. According to Alfred (2002), a culturally inclusive and "democratic adult education environment is one in which a multiplicity of cultures and worldviews coexists and indeed thrives" (p. 90). It is the trainer then who has a primary role in the creation of an adult learning environment that respects and includes many worldviews within the learning context (Guy, 1999). Additionally, the creation of a learning environment within the specific context of corporate culture may influence how White trainers manage a variety of viewpoints.

Problem Statement

The initial literature associated with the intersection of White racial identity development with privileges that can appear in a workplace context has presented an argument for the further study of how such identity development impacts the ways that White trainers navigate their job responsibilities. Specifically, understanding how racial identity impacts employees' perceptions about their work roles can help uncover how White trainers are impacting the culture of their organizations through learning activities. The self-reflection process associated with White racial identity development can provide insights into the learning process of adult educators in training positions. If

organizations are geared towards incorporating learning through training efforts, then deeper investigation into learning associated with issues of identity can further inform the process.

Additionally, the nature of changing racial demographics in the U.S. requires organizations to move beyond a dominant discourse to a more socially just, and inclusive, framework for preparing trainers for work in multicultural environments (Alfred, 2002). Often times, White employees send informal messages that issues of race and diversity are centered on employees of color (Pierce, 2003) when the focus should also include how racial identity impacts the experience of White employees in the workplace. The main purpose for considering how White trainers view their racial identity stems from the historical implications which associate being White with unearned privileges. Racial privilege as one form of racism is rarely recognized by White individuals (McIntosh, 1990; Tatum, 2003), which can cause major problems in a multicultural and racially diverse organization. It is the combination of personal and structural occurrences of White privilege that foster institutional racism over time (Feagin, 2006; Shome, 2003). White employees who do not recognize the privileges, biases, and assumptions that accompany their race and racial attitudes will likely be unable to contribute effectively to an inclusive workplace climate.

Bonilla-Silva (2009) explained when White people cite race as an irrelevant factor of daily experience the reality that racism is still a current problem in American society is undermined. This level of unconsciousness about the impact of race on daily life is interwoven into the foundational viewpoints that many White people use to

interpret the world. Doane and Bonilla-Silva (2003) expanded this idea and referred to the phenomenon as color-blind racism, which can directly impact organization goals associated with workplace diversity, equality and social justice. By choosing to ignore that race is still a relevant factor which influences identity, experiences and meaning making, color-blind racism contributes to inequality through omission (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003). The combination of racial identity development, White privilege, color-blind racism and the overrepresentation of White employees in management and leadership positions presents many issues that may be affecting learning and development in organizations. Therefore, research needs to be conducted to investigate how White trainers think about their own racial identity and how these perceptions affect the way they negotiate their own learning and the facilitation of a culturally inclusive adult education environment.

The purpose of this study was to explore the racial identity development of White corporate trainers and the work they do in racially and culturally diverse organizations. The nature of identity development is one of personal cognition (Helms, 1990) that can be influenced by events and happenings that take place in daily life. It is through the combination of experiences and reflection that the racial identity development process takes place. According to the ASTD Competency Model (Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell, 2004), demonstrating adaptability and modeling personal development are key training competencies. The developmental processes and other forces that influence trainers' racial identity development and work experiences are critical to understanding how such competencies are shaped and reshaped. Without a deeper investigation into the ways that

White trainers grapple with racial identity and their roles in a multiracial environment, a risk exists that unexamined dominant racial attitudes and views may be allowed to persist in the field of training and development. For this intent, the various paths White trainers take to think about and make meaning of their racial identity are contributing factors to the dialogue.

In an empirical study of thirty North American White anti-racists, O'Brien (2001) argued three possible triggering events may have caused participants to take on an anti-racists stance which included the following:

1. Involvement in activist networks that focused on another discriminatory practice (such as religion), and then later joined a group focused on anti-racism.
2. Through the development of empathy for people of color and their experiences with racism.
3. Experiences that marked a "turning point" in their understanding about race and racism. (p. 18)

O'Brien's (2001) findings highlight the significance of experiences and events that may lead White people to work towards equality and anti-racism as a part of their definition of self. As White trainers work in racially diverse organizations, their perception of their racial identity and their impact as conduits of learning may offer insights for the field of HRD. This study will specifically investigate how White trainers describe the meaning of their own race and the sometimes reciprocal relationship between their work and self.

Conceptual Framework

Bronfenbrenner (1977) proposed that all of the environments that make up a person's experience should be viewed as interconnected to one another because they all converge to influence overall identity. For example, a White female corporate trainer as a participant in a research study cannot be considered separate from all the personal roles that influence her fluctuating definition of self. This could include the home environment where she may be a mother or partner in her familial roles, her work setting where she is responsible for the expectations and norms of that environment, and her racial identity which has been informed by both large societal norms and daily reinforcements of such ideologies (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Bronfenbrenner referred this idea as the ecology of human development which later became the more refined ecological model of human development seen in Figure 1.

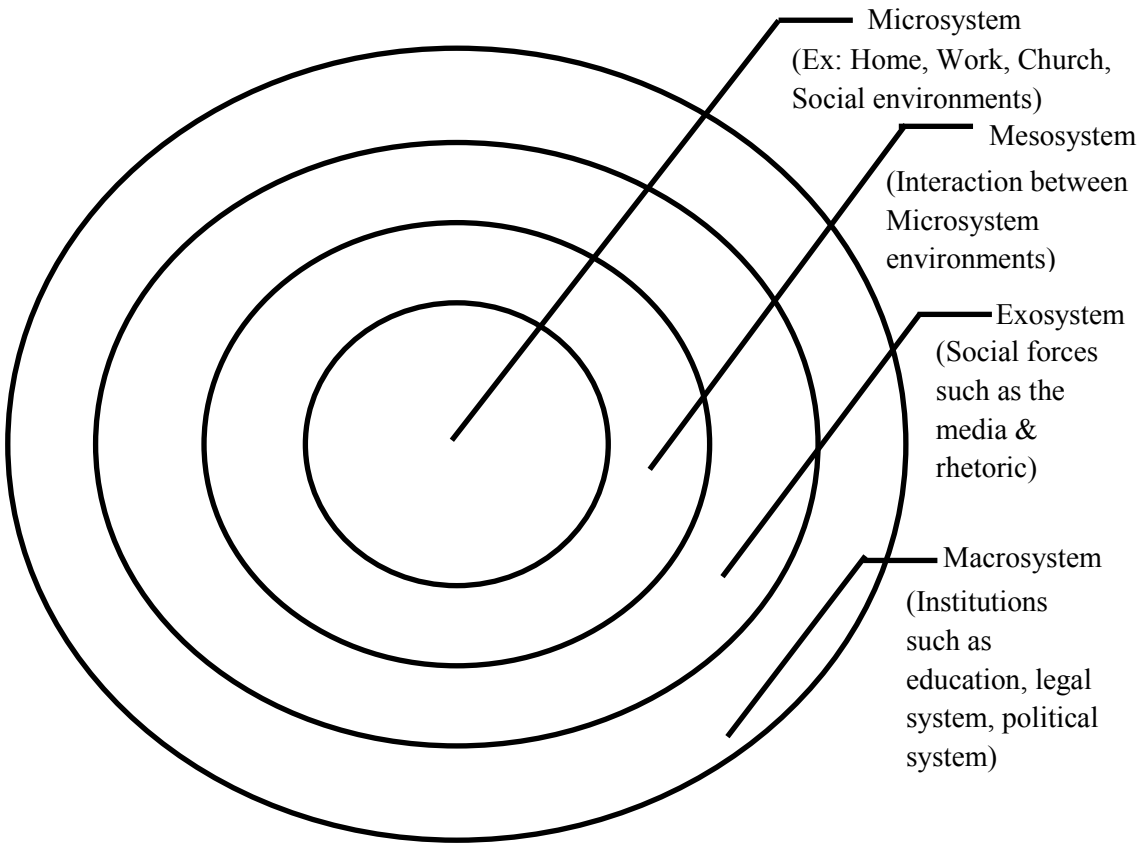

Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Human Development, 1977

The ecological model of human development outlined four categories to explain the various environments that impact human experience which included the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The microsystem referred to the environments that are directly part of our daily lives such as home, work or church. This level of the system could affect White trainers through the relationships and belief systems they ascribe to as part of their membership in such groups. Bronfenbrenner termed the mesosystem as the way that those environments interact with one another to influence the overall effect for an individual. For example,

the accepted social norms of the microsystem settings, such as language and dialogue in their familial environment, could potentially impact the way a White trainer interprets a situation at work as the overlap is highlighted. The exosystem included "social structures" that have an impact on the ways that people experience the microsystem and mesosystem, which can be forces such as media and other forms of discourse (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 514). The macrosystem was defined as "institutional patterns of the culture or subculture, such as the economic, social, educational, legal and political systems, of which micro-, meso-, and exosystems are the concrete manifestations" (p. 515). White trainers may experience the macrosystem of Whiteness, or the structural manifestations of operational White privilege that is built into the framework of American society. The interconnection between the various environmental factors that influence a person's identity served as a guide to interpret the connections between racial identity development and the environment of work for White trainers. In order to more deeply understand the component of White racial identity, Helms' (1990) model was also used to guide the study.

Helms' White Racial Identity Model (1990) outlined six stages of identity development that racially White people can encounter during their lifetime. Her model emerged as a corresponding model to Cross' (1978) theory of Black racial identity development, or Theory of Nigrescence, which outlined the stages of racial identity development for African Americans. Her model also grew out of Hardimen's (1982) White Identity Development Process Model, which gave more focus to the disrupting events that caused a White person to change his or her outlook on racial identity.

Helms' psychologically based model contains six stages of identity development that can be experienced in a linear or nonlinear fashion by White people as they acknowledge the implications of their own racial identity (Helms, 1990; Tatum, 1994). The stages of the model include the *contact stage, disintegration stage, reintegration stage, pseudo-independent stage, immersion/emersion,* and *autonomy* (Helms, 1990) and are represented in Figure 2. Tatum (1994) pointed out that the process of White racial identity development happens in two main periods with the first being focused on the more individual aspects of racism and the second being more outwardly focused on the large scale impact of racism. While some individuals may move sequentially through the stages, others may move forward and backward numerous times or experience elements from multiple stages at once (Tatum, 2003). Helms' (1995) ultimately called the stages *statuses* as a move towards a more fluid model.

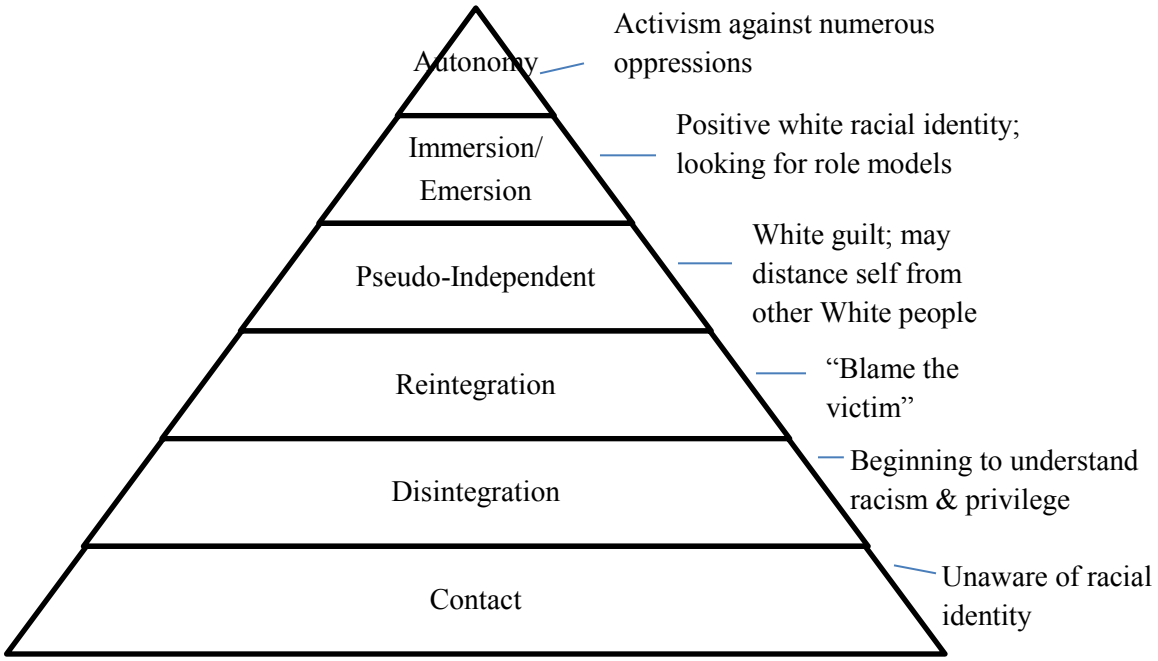

Figure 2. Helms' Model of White Racial Identity Development, 1990; 1995

The first three statuses of Helms' White Identity Model focused primarily on the individual's movement towards dispelling their own personal racist beliefs and actions and included the contact status, disintegration status and reintegration status (Helms, 1990; Tatum, 1994). The contact status is characterized by a White person with little or no recognition of their own race, often referring to themselves as the racial norm, and would have no acknowledgement of the systemic racism, or racial privileges for Whites, that exist around them (Helms, 1990; Helms, 1992; Tatum, 1994; Tatum, 2003). The disintegration status begins when the White person experiences an event that propels them into recognizing that racism has had a major impact on shaping their own life and the lives of people of color in the U.S. (Helms, 1990; Helms, 1992; Tatum, 1994; Tatum, 2003). This status can also involve taking a mental inventory of the racist experiences

with the individuals' social circle and family members, often resulting in an array of new realizations about their upbringing (Tatum, 1994; Tatum, 2003). At the next status, reintegration, Whites may choose to regress back to a "blame the victim" mentality in favor of the discomfort associated with addressing their own racism and societal racism at a deeper level (Helms, 1990; Helms, 1992; Tatum, 1994; Tatum, 2003).

The second three statuses of Helms' White Identity Model, the pseudo-independent stage, immersion/emersion, and autonomy, are targeted towards the White person's ability to address the institutional and systemic racism while continuing to dispel their own racist attitudes and behaviors (Helms, 1990; Helms, 1992; Tatum, 1994; Tatum, 2003). The pseudo-independent status is described by an increased understanding of racism as a system beyond directly negative actions towards people of color (Helms, 1990; Helms, 1992; Tatum, 1994; Tatum, 2000). The literature on White privilege outlined that racism, as an operating system of dominance, creates built-in benefits for people who fall within the dominant group (Kendell, 2006; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; McIntosh, 1990; Rains, 1998). In the U.S., the dominant racial group refers to people who are racially White. A White person at this status of Helms' model might also utilize avoidance of their Whiteness and associated privileges by distancing themselves from other Whites or trying to build relationships with people of color (Tatum, 1994). The intersection of White privilege and racial identity development serve as the lens to understand how White trainers operate in a racially diverse training setting.

The next status of development, immersion/emersion, begins when the White person fully accepts their Whiteness and White privilege and decides to seek out

examples of White role models to create a positive White identity (Helms, 1990; Helms, 1992; Helms, 1995; Tatum, 1994; Tatum, 2000). Autonomy, the last status of Helms' model, is characterized by a full acceptance of Whiteness as part of their identity and the ongoing pursuit to identify, and fight against, other forms of social injustice (Helms, 1990; Tatum, 1994). Helms' (1990) model of White Identity Development provided a framework for the literature review as well as the structure for synthesis of related sub-topics and data analysis. The level of White racial identity development was used as a key focus in interpreting the data in the study.

Helms' (1990) model offered a unique way to view racial identity development within the context of adult education specifically in relation to fostering a culturally inclusive setting. By gaining a better understanding of the alignment between how a White trainer explains his or her identity development, his or her experiences can be compared to Helms' description of the process. An in-depth analysis about the manner in which they perceive and describe beliefs and actions within a diverse organization as associated with their identity development can provide greater insight into how racial identity may be a factor impacting learning and development. When Helms (1995) revised the model, she described that earlier statuses in the model, such as pseudo-independence, could be utilized by a White person at the same time she or he are operating at a higher status of the model, such as immersion/emersion. In essence, a White person could be experiencing elements of two different statuses at one time due to the context of the situation and the complexity of identity (Helms, 1995). Even while

two statuses might be used at once, she argued that one status will likely be more dominant than the other (Helms, 1995).

While Helms' model worked to articulate how White people may experience learning about their racial identity, Bronfenbrenner's model does not account for any specific behaviors or thoughts that would be associated with any one system. Additionally, the nature of the two theories offered both a systems perspective on racial identity in the workplace and room to consider the personal nature of identity. Through use of the two theories the study uncovered new linkages between the racial identity development of White trainers who facilitate training in racially and culturally diverse organizations. The intersection between the cognitive definition of self and the forces that affect that definition offered a more complex understanding about racial identity for White trainers.

Research Questions

The study was designed using the following overarching research questions as a basis for the research. The research questions that informed the study included:

1. How do White corporate trainers who work in racially diverse organizations experience and describe their racial identity in connection with the work they do as trainers?
2. How does the organization support the development of competencies related to culturally responsive training?

Definition of Terms

Several terms in the literature were used to create a shared understanding of particular areas key to the research. These terms included:

Racial identity – Racial identity refers to the race of an individual or group of people. For example, the racial identity of the participants in this study will be White.

Racial attitudes – Racial attitudes are those beliefs and actions that are associated with a person's current status of racial identity development as based on Helms' model. For example, a person operating in the Contact status may act out their racial attitude by espousing that race does not matter, or by completely omitting thoughts or discussions about race.

Racial identity development – Racial identity development "refers to the process of defining for oneself the personal significance and social meaning of belonging to a particular racial group" (Tatum, 2003, p. 16). In this study, the term will refer explicitly to the process and statuses as outlined by Helms (1995) White Racial Identity Development Model.

Racism – Based on Tatum's (2003) definition, racism will refer to "not only a personal ideology based on racial prejudice, but a *system* involving cultural messages and institutional policies and practices as well as the beliefs and actions of individuals" (p. 7).

Training – Training activities are organizational events and processes in which employee learning is facilitated on a range of topics and is typically delivered by one or more trainers (Noe, 2008).

Training competencies – Training competencies will refer to the list of competencies set forth by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) for successful training practices (Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell, 2004).

Whiteness – Whiteness refers to the system of inequality at the structural level that is acted out through White people ultimately resulting in tangible unearned privileges for White people such as economic advantages and access to power socially and politically (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995; Feagin, 2006).

White privilege – White privilege has been referred to as the structural and personal outcomes of racism which benefit White people in a variety of contexts and settings and has tangible outputs and often operates at a completely pervasive level (McIntosh, 1990). For example, a White person can walk into almost any workplace organization in the United States and find that there are people of the same race represented in leadership positions.

White trainer – A White trainer is a person who is White and works as a trainer in a professional setting.

Significance of the Study

The significance of research focused on the racial identity development of corporate trainers offers new information to the field of HRD and Adult Education. First, the literature base of HRD includes very little research specifically devoted to issues of race in the workplace (Alfred & Chlup, 2010) in favor of studies on general concepts of diversity or multiculturalism (Mavin & Girling, 2000) as well as performance (Hatcher & Bowles, 2006). Similarly, the 1990's and early part of the

following decade portrayed a heavy focus on diversity training in corporate organizations (Pierce, 2003). Other fields of research such as sociology, K-12 education, higher education and adult education have maintained an ongoing discussion about the impact of racism in the workplace indicating that much can still be learned from studying issues of race. The theoretical base of both HRD and Adult Education could be expanded by considering how racial identity development of White trainers impacts the creation of culturally responsive training environments.

The Adult Education literature has given attention to the role that race has played in shaping the field of adult education and recommendations have been made to move beyond a mere discussion of the power imbalances (Alfred, 2002; Merriam et al.., 2007). By directly studying how members of the dominant racial group interact with issues of White privilege, racism and cultural awareness may offer new insights for theorizing such behavior. The process of making sense of racial identity development in the context of an adult learning environment may lead to new and innovative discussions about how to break down racial inequalities in education and in the workplace.

The practical implications of studying the intersection of racial identity development of White corporate trainers who work in racially diverse organizations can be multifaceted and complex. Because much of the practical HRD literature has focused on diversity training and initiatives (Arredondo, 1996; Cox, 2001; Gilbert & Ivancevich, 2000; Hite & McDonald, 2006; Mavin & Girling, 2000; Miller, 1995), this study focused on racial identity development as a way to provide new insights into the ways that White trainers move away from ethnocentric perspectives onto more anti-racist and socially

just frameworks. The ability for trainers as adult educators to impact the way that learning takes place in an organization is linked to the way that they see the world from their own distinct viewpoint. Trainers may also explain how they manage their racial identity within the workplace, which could offer new insights into the practical issues associated with race and training competencies.

The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) created a model to represent the main competencies training professionals should possess in order to be successful in their work (Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell, 2004). The model accounted for three basic competency areas which included interpersonal, business and management, and personal competencies and are said to be the building blocks for the upper levels of the model (Davis, Naughton, & Rothwell, 2004). Davis, Naughton and Rothwell noted three competency areas that can guide trainers in their efforts to be successful trainers and included the following:

1. Interpersonal – Building trust, communicating effectively, influencing stakeholders, leveraging diversity, and networking and partnering
2. Business/Management – Analyzing needs and proposing solutions, applying business acumen, driving results, planning and implementing assignments, and thinking strategically
3. Personal – Demonstrating adaptability and modeling personal development (p. 29).

The relevance of studying the racial identity development of White trainers who work in racially diverse organizations served as a potential site for innovation and critical information related to the discourse associated with training competencies.

Additionally, the study sought to offer new implications for policy makers by uncovering the informal and formal ways that learning is affected in the workplace in relation to racial identity. As trainers explore their perceptions about racial identity and their role as adult educators there was an opportunity to describe experiential information about how policy could be better suited to create culturally inclusive workplaces. Organization leaders, professional development organizations and other adult educators could further benefit from the research because it will bring new and relevant information about how White privilege may operate within organization structures even when diversity is said to be valued. Policies geared towards creating workplaces that hope to rebuild structures that do not privilege White employees can also be informed through the research.

Summary

The field of HRD has a variety of literature relating to managing diversity, diversity trainers, and international HRD, but the field lacks a body of literature that focuses on the role of race (Alfred & Chlup, 2010). Organization leaders continue to claim diversity as a foundational component to their missions and goals, but the national EEOC data highlighted that White employees continue to be promoted at much higher rates than Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, Hawaiian, and biracial Americans (U. S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, 2009). The recent data regarding

hiring trends accompanied by qualitative research accounts that racism continues to plague the workplace (Evans & Chun, 2007; Pierce, 2003; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001) presented a case for the further study of how White privilege operates in the workplace.

Additionally, adult educators are most often White and middle-class (Amstutz, 1994; Merriam et al.., 2007), which poses problems for organizations that are racially and culturally diverse environments precisely because most White Americans do not have to think about their race at all. The historical path that White Americans used to gain power continues to be relevant through structural racism and the ongoing privileging of White employees even when those privileges are not being discussed openly or challenged. White trainers are in positions of authority by constructing and facilitating learning for employees from a variety of racial backgrounds and research was needed to explore their perceptions of racial identity development in the context of their work roles. Utilization of Helms' (1995) model of White Racial Identity Development and Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Model of Human Development provided a lens through which to interpret the perceptions and experiences of White corporate trainers.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding the racial identity development of White corporate trainers who deliver training in racially diverse corporate organizations was the underlying force that guided this literature review. Taking into consideration that most workplaces employ people from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, it is imperative that White corporate trainers have a solid understanding of their own racial identity within the context of their job role. The experiences of these trainers are inevitably shaped to some extent by the characteristics that make up their identity, which includes race. The scholarly argument regarding the significance of race as an ongoing factor in the daily experiences of many Americans has greatly informed this literature review. By analyzing the literature related to race and the workplace, this literature review sought to further inform the need for more research regarding the racial identity development of White corporate trainers.

A review of relevant research has been organized by focusing on a) a brief history of race and racism, b) contemporary views on race and racism, c) work roles, adult learning and race, d) White racial identity and White privilege, and e) corporate organizations and diversity. The literature review opens with a history on the development of racism in the United States because historical implications inform the continued relevance of race as a defining factor in influencing our everyday experiences. The historical path of racism in the U.S. has led to a debate among scholars about the

contemporary manifestation of race and racism, which provides insight into the current racial realities of the twenty-first century. As matters of race and racism are shown to be part of a current reality for many Americans, the literature review segues into a discussion about the implications within the context of the workplace and adult learning environments. The specific problems associated with White privilege and the connection to White racial identity development are explored in the fourth section, which provides insight into the importance of studying White corporate trainers. Finally, the literature review brings into focus the debate about corporate organizations and the role of diversity and training with the for-profit sector.

The selected pieces of scholarly research highlight the connection between racial identity development and possible implications for future studies that deal directly with White corporate trainers. While much research has been conducted regarding the impact of race and racism on students (Heinze, 2008; Sciarra, 2010; Tatum, 2003), educational entities (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Sleeter, 2008; Vaught & Castagro, 2008), and in settings dealing with the general concept of diversity (De Meuse & Hostager, 2001; Hite & McDonald, 2006), limited attention has been paid to the experiences of White corporate trainers with specific consideration to racial identity development and its impact on their work and self-perceptions. The importance of studying the role of racial identity development for a racially dominant group in the context of a for-profit environment can lead to an increased understanding about how these concepts operate in a different setting. Each of these concepts is directly related to the historical events related to race and racism.

A Brief History of Race and Racism

Understanding the history of race in the United States is critical in order to recognize the ingrained forms of racism that still exist in the current systems and structures in use in our daily lives. White corporate trainers who deliver training for racially diverse groups of employees function within the current systems that have been formed around race. *Racism* has often been viewed as negative comments or actions towards people of color, but the term also refers to large scale systemic issues that perpetuate inequality by creating a privileged status for one racial group (Feagin, 2006; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; McDermott & Samson, 2005; Tatum, 2000; Tatum, 2003). Since its inception, the United States has been a place wrought with racism, inequality, and oppression for people of color rather than the vision of blanketed democracy that has been painted by some (Feagin, 2000; Feagin, 2010; Loewen, 2007). Loewen (2007) argued that the history of the United States has been tailored to present a predominantly favorable impression of White people by greatly limiting, or omitting, actual events tied to the country's founding and the institution of slavery and other forms of oppression and violence towards people of color. The recreation of history, primarily by powerful White people, has helped maintain a system of dominance by denying the oppressive past of the country as well as denying that White people have benefited from the existence of such structures (Feagin, 2006; Kendell, 2006; Loewen, 2007). The role of the nation's history is a critical component to making sense of the current racial realities in the U.S., which are often present within places of employment.

Systemic Forms of White privilege

Beginning with the creation of the Constitution, one of the most long-standing legal documents in United States history, White people have created systems to provide themselves privileges that were not given to African Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans (Feagin, 2000; Feagin, 2006; Kendell, 2006). Some of these privileges included the right to own land, to vote, to become U.S. citizens and to be legally recognized as human beings (Feagin, 2006). The three-fifths compromise of 1783 was an example of White leaders using the law to ingrain that African Americans were to be counted only as three-fifths of one whole person, whereas White people counted as an entire person for tax purposes (Kendell, 2006). The law ultimately benefited White slave owners by allowing them to minimize the monetary expenditures associated with keeping people as slaves. Later, the 1857 *Dred Scott v. Sandford* case in the U.S. Supreme Court outlined that people of African descent could not receive citizenship at all (Kendell, 2006). U.S. history also included time periods of forcing Japanese Americans into isolated internment camps coinciding with the effects of World War II (Kendall, 2006). The history of using the law to discriminate and oppress people of color was at the forefront of creating an unjust system. While people of color were being limited in rights and status by the law, racially White citizens were being afforded great privileges by the same laws.

Over time, White people continued to gain access to wealth, status, and power through the enactment of laws that privileged White people while African Americans could make no progress towards these same aims under the institution of slavery

(Feagin, 2000; Feagin, 2006). Wise (2007) emphasized that his current experience as a privileged White male could be considered from a historical perspective, because his great-grandparents were able to achieve modest homeownership and access to jobs at a time when these same rights were not available to African American. Wise noted the result could still be felt in his life today because his family had the long term benefit of making gains towards wealth and access, even at times when those gains were incremental at best. Racial privilege for White people has been an ongoing force that continues to impact daily experience because the dynamic has been engrained into the fabric of the country (Feagin, 2006; McIntosh, 1990).

The long term systemic effects of racial privilege for White people can also be seen after the legal end to slavery, which was immediately replaced by Jim Crow laws and legal segregation (Alexander, 2010; Feagin, 2000; Feagin, 2006). This era in U.S. history was characterized by continued inequality in rights for African Americans, which was enacted through violence (Alexander, 2010), commonplace racial slurs (Feagin, 2006), housing discrimination, disparate educational opportunities, and job segregation (Alexander, 2010; Feagin, 2006). The lives of African Americans continued to be negatively impacted by the legal ramifications of Jim Crow laws as well as the daily acts of racism by White people. The connection to historical forms of racism helps inform the modern informal and formal systems that are carried out within the workplace. One example of the historical role of racism in shaping current realities can be understood through an examination of the path of immigration policies.

Historical Perspectives on Immigration and Discrimination

The United States has a history of discriminating against people of color through the use of immigration laws which targeted immigrants from European, South American and Asian countries at different points in time (Bacon, 2008; Chou & Feagin, 2008). During the 1800s, Chinese Americans immigrated to the U.S. in large numbers after initially being sought out by the government to assist in construction of the railroad system because there was a shortage in White workers due to the Civil War (Bacon, 2008; Feagin, 2006). The invitation to the U.S. drew interest from Chinese immigrants who began coming into the U.S. in larger numbers than was initially expected by White political leaders. By the late 1800s, the U.S. government, led by White men, wanted to limit the number of Chinese immigrants who could enter the country by making it illegal for them to come to the U.S. through the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act which lasted from 1885 to 1943 (Bacon, 2008; Feagin, 2006). Kendell (2006) argued that the consistent use of the legal system to perpetuate racism in the U.S. has been a primary force in creating and maintaining a system of privilege for White Americans.

Many immigrants from European countries were also not initially considered racially White and were discriminated against when they arrived to the U.S. (Bacon, 2008; Feagin, 2006; Kendell, 2006). Such is the case for Italian and Irish immigrants, who were not considered racially White, when they began immigrating into the U.S. during the late 1800s and early 1900s and experienced job and housing discrimination among other inequalities (Bacon, 2008; Feagin, 2006; Kendell, 2006). However, an important component to the history of race in the U.S. is the ability for White people to

change the definition of Whiteness over time in order to maintain power or meet certain needs (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Feagin, 2006; Feagin, 2010; Frankenburg, 1997; Kendell, 2006). Eventually, Irish and Italian Americans began to be considered White after separating themselves from African Americans through labor unions (Feagin, 2010; Kendell, 2006) and through participation in World War I when stationed with White soldiers (Feagin, 2010; Kendell, 2006). In multiple historical instances there is evidence of powerful Whites using the law, and other mechanisms, to create a race-based system to govern the country. The repetitive nature of U.S. history can also be examined by considering the recurring ways that White dominated systems and perspectives have been used to make large scale national decisions over time.

Historical Patterns of Racial Inequality

Klinker and Smith (1999) posited that Americans should not blindly accept that progress towards racial equality has taken place "inevitably" over the course of history, but should be considered from the context in which those changes take place. Klinker and Smith further argued that the major national changes tied to racial equality, such as the end of slavery and the Civil Rights movement, all took place when some combination of three criteria occurred. These criteria included U.S. presence in war which would require more soldiers or assistance with related economic needs, when war-time politics called for a reminder that the U.S. is an inclusive and egalitarian country, and when civil unrest regarding racial inequality was organized through activist groups or movements (Klinker & Smith, 1999). Their hypothesis essentially extended a concept

presented earlier by Derrick Bell (1980), which provided a model for how legal race-based decisions come to fruition.

Bell gave life to an idea he termed *interest-convergence*, which was spurred as a reaction to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to desegregate public schools (Bell, 1980). He observed that the *Brown v. Board* decision was only able to pass when the core interest of the African American community and White community overlapped enough to come to an agreement on school desegregation (Bell, 1980). Bell went on to suggest that while the interests of the African American community and the White community aligned on some level at the time the law was passed, the future would likely show a deviation of the two groups' interests from the original intent. Over time, laws that are passed under the assumption that goals for all the stakeholders are aligned may bring unanticipated results when those goals are revealed to be quite different in nature. If two parties agree to a process, but ultimately hold vastly different motivations for agreeing in the first place, the groups will likely reach a divide when trying to establish the intended goals of the original decision.

The H2-A Temporary Agriculture Program provides a contemporary example of one groups' interests being made priority over another. The program was created to provide temporary work visas to individuals who do not hold United States citizenship (United States Department of Labor, 2010). Bell's interest convergence principle is illustrated by the overlapping interests of corporate stakeholders who benefit from agriculture production and inexpensive labor costs and the desire for a work visa by individuals without U.S. citizenship. Both groups appear to benefit on some level by the

law, which allows workers to receive a temporary work visa to enter the U.S. for work purposes. After a designated portion of time, the visa will expire and the agricultural worker will be required to discontinue their employment. However, the temporary agreement that was formed by the workers and the companies seeking laborers may later collapse when the interests of both parties are revealed to be different than originally anticipated. Agriculture workers may be seeking a path to citizenship through the work or trying to escape poor economic conditions in the country of their citizenship while U.S. organizations may only be seeking an inexpensive and capitalistic method for managing their businesses. Ultimately, the law serves very different interests than were explicitly stated upon the law's creation.

The combined impact of racial history in the U.S. continues to support White privilege while maintaining systems of domination and has been depicted in the many historical examples of racism and race related issues. The perpetuation of a dominant White racial discourse has also been seen throughout U.S. history with the changing nature of Whiteness to include, or exclude, different groups of people at different times in history (Feagin, 2010; Kendell, 2006). However, even with the numerous documented accounts of institutionalized racism and historical significance of White supremacist policies, some scholars continue to maintain that we have entered into a "post-racial" era, or a time when issues of race are no longer significant (D'Souza, 1995). The role of race and racism in the present culture significantly impacts the ways organizations and systems are shaped and the experiences by individual employees. By focusing on the more contemporary forms of race and racism, a connection can be made to the

importance of studying racial identity within the workplace context and how the connection shapes an individual's perception of self.

Contemporary Views on Race & Racism

While the racial history of the United States points towards the long term effects of racism on current realities, some scholars argue that America has entered into an era where race and racial politics should no longer dictate national policy or discussions (Bork, 1996; 1996; D'Souza, 1995; Herrnstein & Murray, 1996). The literature that claimed America is no longer shaped by racism appears primarily in non-scholarly works and opinion pieces, but claims a place in the national discussion on race. Scholars such as D'Souza argue that the business and political realms have become increasingly racially diverse and that the law no longer prohibits Americans of color from achieving equality. As the boundaries of business and capitalism have been decreased through the increased nature of globalization, the argument about race relevance has been continually argued.

Additionally, it has also been claimed that globalization has played only a positive role in job creation and increased opportunities around the world and Human Resource Development scholars that disagree have been tagged as overly emotional and irrational (Marquardt, 2005). While these authors make the argument that liberal ideals and attention to race have ruined America and are the root cause of any national problems that arise in reference to social class, immigration, or achievement gaps, their arguments do not take into account the consistent accounts of racism that continue to appear on a daily basis. It is these daily experiences of racism which counter the

arguments that race is no longer a factor in the lives of Americans and directly informs the need to study racial identity development in the corporate workplace.

Countless pieces of literature have documented how the ongoing experiences of racism have shaped citizens' lives and make the argument that racism remains a problem in America (Beharry & Crozier, 2008; Chou & Feagin, 2008; Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Leonardo, 2002; Liang, Alvarez, Juang, & Liang, 2007; Shapiro, 2005; Thompson-Miller & Feagin, 2007; Williams, 2000). In many instances, the case for a "post-racial America" focused on large scale policies or laws that have been created to bring about equality in civil rights (D'Souza, 1995). However, the claim does not focus on the continued inequalities that are seen at nearly every level of American society ranging from an overrepresentation of African American men in the prison system (Alexander, 2010) to an overwhelmingly unequal wealth distribution for White Americans when compared to the African American or Hispanic population (Alexander, 2010; Feagin, 2006). While policies are in place to ensure equal rights by the law, enforcement depends on the individuals who are in positions to implement the policies at every level of daily life (Guba, 1984). The reality is that individuals can still choose to remain biased in their personal actions and may continue to act out such biases, often with no formal repercussions.

Even in what Brooks (2009) termed a "post-Civil Rights era," he posited that the race argument is still present in the literature and in public rhetoric. Brooks (2009) noted four different frames for understanding what is happening with race in America, which included traditionalism, reformism, limited separation, and Critical Race Theory.

The traditionalism stance is most often used by political conservatives and calls forth a type of "blame the victim" mentality for any continued inequalities that exist, such as less wealth attainment for African Americans when compared to White Americans (Brooks, 2009). The traditionalism perspective aligned with the idea that oppression is a concept from the past with no influence over current situations. The problematic element of traditionalism arises from the lack of acknowledgement that race still shapes our daily experiences even in the presence of the colorblind argument (Bonilla-Silva, 2009). In essence, traditionalism is an arm of the colorblind argument, which assumes a race-neutral position. The constantly changing racial demographics of the U.S. require that organizations pay attention to different cultures and backgrounds of employees rather than perpetuate one dominant ideology (Warmington, 2009).

Brooks (2009) also highlighted three other points of view about race in the post-Civil Rights era that offered the viewpoint that race remains a contemporary social issue. He used the term reformism to refer to the present-day functional form of racism as an institutionalized issue (Brooks, 2009). While his description did not fully capture that institutionalized racism as a system of oppression coincides with daily experiences of personal racism, the reformism angle acknowledged racism as a current and operating structure in the United States. Likewise, Critical Race Theory focused on the systemic effects of racism, often from a legal standpoint, that operate as an effect of built-in privileges for White Americans (Brooks, 2009). The final framework Brooks (2009) discussed was limited separation, which was a standpoint sometimes utilized by African Americans to create and maintain social networks among the African American

community without interference from Whites. He noted that limited separation was one method for promoting African American culture, businesses, and education by choosing to separate from the oppressive forces of a White dominated community (Brooks, 2009).

Brooks' illustration of the contemporary schools of thought for understanding racism and race in current times is significant because he underscored that America is not in a "post-racial" era regardless of laws that promise equality. Because the country's history has been wrought with racism and racial oppression, the continued effects of dominance and privilege for White Americans remains a problem in modern times (Feagin, 2006; Kaplan, 2011; Wise, 2010). Organizations are smaller systems that operate with many of the same cultural norms present in broader societal discourse and discussions on race and racism are still relevant topics for future research, especially when considering the impact within a workplace context. The ways that racial identity informs the daily experiences of employees can be affected by a variety of inputs including their job function and learning that takes place on the job.

Connecting Racial Identity with Work Roles and Adult Learning

The association between race, adult learning and work roles come into play when considering the ways that White corporate trainers experience racial identity development. The work environment is often a place where employees connect their previous experiences and beliefs to new learning (Fenwick, 2001). Because employees do not operate in isolation from the influences of society, they likely incorporate personal and cultural norms into their workplace roles. Organization employees who are responsible for delivering training to other employees are in a position to consider who

is in their audience in order to move beyond their own personal beliefs and culture (Pesch, 2006). Alfred (2002) pointed out that when adult learning is meant to take place, inclusion of various perspectives and cultural backgrounds of the participants should be integrated. Marchisani and Adams (1992) argued that adult educators must understand how their own cultural beliefs affect the way they facilitate learning activities and how that identity can impact the adult learners they serve.

Teaching and Learning with Adult Students

The literature has shown that a multicultural perspective and inclusion of diverse perspectives is critical for teaching and learning with adult students (Alfred, 2002; Amstutz, 1999; Fenwick, 2001; Guy, 1999; Sheared, 1994). Bierema (2002) took this idea a step further and suggested the formulation of a workforce pedagogy to address the need for specific ways of teaching and learning in the work environment (Bierema, 2002; Bierema, Bing, & Carter, 2002; Bierema & D'Abundo, 2004), which is increasingly important as globalization impacts the workplace. The idea of creating a workplace setting that is not blind to race or cultural experiences is increasingly important for organizations as the population continues to grow more racially diverse (Bierema & D'Abundo, 2004; Sleeter, 2008). The role of identity informs many of the interactions and experiences that take place in a work context and employees responsible for training initiatives can benefit from further examination of their own identity and the identities of their audiences.

In situations where new learning material is being presented, studies have shown that the race of the presenter can play a role in the perceptions participants form about

them (Housee, 2008; Pesch, 2006). The role of the trainer becomes increasingly important to the learning process (Jacobs & Park, 2009), because organizations are often using training to enhance performance (Gorelick & Tantawy-Monsou, 2005). This dynamic is particularly important when considering whether the trainer has considered their own identity in reference to the audience. Pesch (2006) found that among a group of ten trainers which included eight racially White trainers, all participants agreed that their race impacted the way they were perceived in the training environment. This finding suggests that one's own racial identity is an important factor for White trainers to consider when they are leading training in a diverse setting, although the study defined diversity in broader terms which included cultural background, race, and ethnicity (Pesch, 2006). Additionally, their level of racial identity development as defined by Helms' (1995) Model of White Racial Identity Development can further inform the training literature because racial identity was not part of the conceptual framework of Pesch's study. As White trainers are asked to reflect on their own racial identity, the intersection of their racial identity and work role can provide deeper insight into the dynamics of the training setting with a diverse audience.

Training with Diverse Audiences

Pesch (2006) identified five themes that trainers from a variety of racial backgrounds utilized when preparing training for diverse audiences. These included global perspective, learning style, facilitation style, training preparation for culturally diverse groups, and culturally sensitive training materials (Pesch, 2006). The majority of participants in the study had training experience in multiple countries and had gained an

outlook that considered a global perspective. In many instances, the participants relied on a global context to situate the experiences and nuances of training for diverse audiences. Lamsa and Sintonen (2006) also theorized that diverse audiences provided a wealth of perspectives that interact to inform the training experience. The role of a global perspective in informing the training process is a key factor for White trainers who work with racially diverse audiences because many backgrounds and experiences will continue to be represented in the training setting. As the process of globalization continues to increase the number of people who come in contact with one another for work, trainers must continue to reflect on methods for giving voice to their audiences.

The study also revealed that the trainers' facilitation styles emerged as a theme when considering training for diverse audiences. The global perspectives of the trainers informed their facilitation style as they identified language barriers and overall differences in audience communication styles (Pesch, 2006). Pesch's (2006) description of the facilitation style theme focused primarily on how the diverse nature of the audience impacted the trainers' methods for communicating with the group. Alternatively, Kumar and Lightner (2007) found that, in a comparison survey between 45 corporate trainers and 62 college faculty members, facilitation style was most heavily influenced by the individual's temperament. However, the researchers noted that certain disciplines may also be constrained by the norms of the field which might also affect why certain stylistic preferences are drawn to these particular careers (Kumar & Lightner, 2007).

Pesch's (2006) findings and the findings from Kumar and Lightner's (2007) study indicate that there are a variety of reasons, some related to identity and some related to the job role itself, that influence how individuals in a training position enact their job responsibilities. These contradictory findings indicate that further research is needed in the corporate sector to determine what elements of racial identity and other environmental pressures impact a White trainer's facilitation technique. The question of whether their training methods tied to an element of their racial and cultural identity, the influences of their career role, or a combination of both comes to the forefront. The two different findings about motivations for facilitation style may be directly impacted when trainers are asked to consider the diverse nature of the audience and their own racial identity as a component to their work.

For example, Jane (1998) discussed the difficulties experienced in one instance where the training program involved implementing a "western" management theory in Pakistan (Jane, 1998). The use of a predominantly western paradigm for an audience situation in a Middle Eastern context affected the success of the training intervention and was likely impacted by the identity of the individuals responsible for delivering the training. The interaction of the trainers' facilitation style, along with the perspectives inherently incorporated into the course material, presented an opportunity to further investigate the phenomenon.

Chen and Starosta (2005) argued that modifications to training content to include culturally relevant materials, as well as customary habits, have been identified as important aspects to training preparation for culturally diverse groups. This suggestion

aligns closely with previous suggestions for creating a culturally inclusive environment for adult learners (Alfred, 2002; Amstutz, 1999; Fenwick, 2001; Guy, 1999; Sheared, 1994). While the context of the adult learning literature does not always focus on a corporate setting, the literature base has included critical discussions of race and culture in the adult learning environment.

Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2009) described culturally responsive learning environments as those settings where incorporating the background and perspectives of the learners is foundational to the success of the training. Likewise, the way trainers see the world through the lens of their own racial identity could inform the way that training sessions are created, delivered, and analyzed. The quality of the trainer's facilitation has been found to impact the preparation of trainees (Russ-Eft, Dickison, & Levine, 2005), and the racial identity development of the trainer becomes an important consideration when factoring in racially diverse audiences. Trainers are often responsible for the delivery of new information to other employees, and this creates an opportunity to either maintain, or oppose, norms found within the organization. For this reason, trainers should be considered as possible conduits of White racial norms, or as individuals who work against hegemonic assumptions and values.

Perpetuating Dominant Views in Adult Learning Settings

Hatcher and Bowles (2006) argued that the field of HRD has historically overrepresented research that is rational and based on performance while adult learning has taken a more critical approach. However, training and development is an arm of HRD that should be considered as a potential area for critical examination. Trainers are

positioned in a type of leadership role in relation to trainees, which ultimately creates an inherent level of positional power. While the individual trainer may view oneself more as a facilitator than an expert, training participants will experience the training as a result of the methods used by the trainer to deliver content. Due to the intrinsic power created for trainers within the framework of training sessions, trainers have an obligation to consider how they may be perpetuating dominant viewpoints as part of the training experience. The ethical issues involved in training are also key components to the argument for recognizing how racial identity might impact trainers' experiences.

Beugre (2009) identified that organizational justice and perceptions of fairness are often tied to a "triggering event" (p. 132). When individuals experience a significant event in the workplace, they are forced into a reaction to that event (Beurge, 2009). According to Beurge (2009), this event ultimately causes the individual to decide if they view the event as fair or unfair and the decision process is guided through "two types of brain areas, cognitive-inducing neural structures and emotion-inducing neural structures" (p.132). The cognitive function referred to the process of thinking through the event from a purely informational standpoint whereas the emotional function referred to the emotions associated with the event (Beugre, 2009). These judgments are made through the individual's unique lens, which ultimately suggests that each trainer's identity plays a part in how they interpret their experiences and how they project ideas onto training participants.

Additionally, trainers may also be forming these ethical judgments based on the organization culture which they subscribe to as part of their professional function

(Burke, 2008). Research has also suggested that ethical training experiences are vital to improving one's ethical decision making abilities and competencies (Rottig & Heischmidt, 2007). These findings link to Beugre's notion that there are informational *and* emotional aspects to workplace decisions of fairness and justice. Trainers are positioned within the organization to preserve the dominant culture and ideas, but also have a responsibility to consider the ethical nature of their authority and the messages they send to training participants. In addition to the organizational norms that trainers perpetuate, consideration should also be given to ways culturally responsive learning environments are characterized in the literature.

Culturally Responsive Learning Environments

Gay (2010) defined culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 31). While this definition focused on learning in the context of a pedagogical approach, the definition aligns with Guy's (1999) outlook on culturally relevant adult education. According to Guy (1999), "the particular sociocultural context in which learners exist and act strongly influences the motivations, needs, goals, and perspectives that learners bring to the learning environment" (p. 94). The learning environment for adults can become culturally responsive when trainers create a learning space where multiple cultural perspectives are foundational to the training.

Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2009) argued that there are many alternative viewpoints that learners hold as they interact in an educational environment. They

discussed the importance of recognizing culture as a component of everyday life, but contended that many people norm their own cultural experiences. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) previously posited that learning activities will likely produce varied responses from learners of different cultures. Particularly, they discussed that one learner may enjoy an activity while another learner may find the task out of line with their expectations, which are reactions that ultimately align with the culture of the individual (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

Wright and Noe (1996) proposed five different cultural dimensions that can impact the training environment, which included individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity (or competitiveness/helpfulness), power distance, and time orientation. The model focused on professional cultural tendencies by country of nationality and highlighted that stylistic preferences may vary. While the preferences of individuals within a training setting may vary beyond Wright and Noe's (1996) model, their argument served as one way to consider many of the various cultural perspectives that may impact a training environment.

Similarly, Alfred (2002) argued that culturally inclusive, or responsive, learning environments can only become a reality as a result of self-reflection and awareness on the part of facilitators. She discussed:

> Before we can create an inclusive environment, we must acknowledge our own sociocultural histories, identities, biases, assumptions, and recognize how they influence our worldview and our interaction with members of a diverse community. Such awareness results from intense personal reflection and critical analysis of our work as practitioner or scholar. (p. 90)

From this vantage point, the creation of a culturally responsive learning environment must start with the self-reflection process of the trainers who desire to cultivate a learning space where multiple cultures have influenced the training experience. While trainers from multiple backgrounds benefit from the self-reflection process when working with diverse groups of people, White trainers may be at a particular risk of norming their racial identity.

White Racial Identity and White Privilege

Two factors that directly affect the way racially White people experience the world are rooted in their racial identity and the privileges associated with being White in America (Feagin, 2010; Kendell, 2006). These two elements serve as factors in the racial experiences of White Americans and point to a need to further understand how the concepts affect people on a daily basis, particularly when considering the workplace. The role of a corporate trainer is directly tied to a certain level of organizational norms that are passed along through the training material selected by the organization and the choices made by the trainer during each session. Cook (1994) contended that employees in a supervisor relationship, or positioned with greater authority in the organization, become one mode for furthering the norms for work behavior. This suggests that trainers are naturally situated to become carriers of organizational norms and procedures. The ability to pass on norms, or dominant ways of thinking, is increased when factoring in a dominant White racial identity.

McIntosh (1990) noted that there are multiple daily conveniences, or privileges, available for Whites that are often unacknowledged by many White people themselves.

When the positional power associated with the status of the trainer overlaps with the privileges associated with a dominant racial identity, there are additional concepts to consider that may impact the experiences of the trainer when working in a racially diverse setting. For example, the level of a White trainer's racial identity development may hold important implications about the way they function within a racially diverse training setting. As their own race becomes a more salient part of their identity, they may reframe how they conceptualize their own behavior and the diverse needs and perspectives of training participants.

Similar to Cross' Theory of Nigrescence (Worrell, Cross, & Vandiver, 2001), which focused on the staged racial identity development of African Americans, Helms' (1990) model of White racial identity development identified six stages of development including the *contact stage, disintegration stage, reintegration stage, pseudo-independent stage, immersion/emersion,* and *autonomy*. The model was originally represented in a linear fashion with the multiple stages White people may experience as they come to understand the meaning of their own racial identity, which range from the personal implications of being White to the institutionalized and historical significance of racism (Helms, 1990). Helms (1995) later adjusted to the term *statuses* to reflect each component of the model in an effort to portray the levels of the model as more flexible and fluid rather than fixed. Rowe (2006) explained that "statuses are identified as dynamic information processing strategies that individuals use to accommodate information about race" (p. 236). The switch was an attempt to address that racial

identity does not necessarily take place in a linear fashion and can take place differently based on that individual's environmental experience (Helms, 1995).

Rowe (2006) further contested that the validity of Helms' (1990) model was faulty because it was constructed as a response to the "White racial identity attitude scale" which was challenged for its validity (p. 235). The model has also been deemed problematic because it could not be empirically proven that the statuses of the model represented unique concepts (Rowe, 2006). However, some of the White racial identity statuses have been shown in other empirical studies (see Figure 2) to impact the level of consciousness about White privilege, which was higher when associated with those statuses of the model (Hays, Chang, & Havice, 2008). Hays, Chang and Havice (2008) conducted a study of 197 counseling trainees (157 women, 31 men, and 9 did not report gender) and found that Helms' "statuses of contact, reintegration, and immersion/emersion significantly predicted White privilege awareness" (p. 234). The researchers argued that while Helms' model has been criticized for the differentiation between statuses, the connection to recognizing White privilege is a foundational component to the model (Hays, Chang, & Havice, 2008).

Similarly, Gushue and Constantine (2007) conducted a study of White trainees in the field of clinical psychology. The participants selected for the study were composed of 80.8% female and 19.2% male. The researchers found that belief in a color-blind ideology, or claiming not to see race, was found to be associated with lower levels of White identity development (Gushue & Constantine, 2007). Gushue and Constantine (2007) further noted that participants who had a more salient racial identity were more

likely to acknowledge racism. Constantine, Warren and Miville (2005) conducted a study that investigated self-reported experiences of 50 pairs of White doctoral students and their White supervisors within a counseling context and used the White Racial Identity Development Attitude Scale (WRIAS), originally developed by Swim & Miller (1999), to first determine if the participants where in phase I or II of Helms' (1990) model. They found that the more advanced the pair's White racial identity development scores, the more capable the supervisors reported they felt in a multicultural counseling setting (Constantine, Warren, & Miville, 2005). In another use of the WRIAS, Sciarra (2010) conducted a study of 223 White undergraduate students with comparison to three measures of religious orientation and suggested that higher religious orientation may correspond with higher levels of White racial identity development.

Table 1. Summary of Selected Studies of White Racial Identity Development

Researcher	Sample	Methodology & Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework	Purpose of the Study	Summary of Findings
Constantine, Warren & Miville (2005)	50 pairs of White doctoral students and their White supervisors	Quantitative; WRIAS	To determine how the level of racial identity attitudes of supervisor & supervisee dyads affected "self-reported multicultural counseling competencies" (p. 490)	Supervisors who were part of pairs who had a combined higher level of White racial identity were more likely to self-report confidence working in a multicultural setting
Frankenberg (1997)	30 White women	Qualitative; Socialist feminism	To identify how the experiences of White women impact racism	Participants frequently discussed race and racism as separate from their personal identity; other responses indicated race and racism was a salient part of their lives
Gushue & Constantine (2007)	177 White counseling and clinical psychology trainees; 80.8% female and 19.2% male	Quantitative; WRIAS and Color-blind Attitude Scale	To identify "relationships between color-blind racial attitudes and White racial identity" (p. 321)	Color-blind viewpoint was linked with lower levels of White identity development

Table 1. continued

Researcher	Sample	Methodology & Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework	Purpose of the Study	Summary of Findings
Hays, Chang & Havis (2009)	197 White counseling trainees; 157 were female, 31 male, and 9 unreported	Quantitative; White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS) and White Racial Identity Development model	To identify any relationships between the levels of White racial identity development and awareness level of White privilege (p. 234)	Contact, reintegration and immersion/emersion statuses predicted White privilege awareness
Picower (2009)	8 White pre-service teachers; all ages between 20-29	Qualitative; No specific framework noted	To identify how the previous life experiences of teachers in a pre-job training program impacted their views on race and diversity (p. 197)	Participants used various strategies to deny White privilege; often thought of themselves as race neutral
Solomon, Portelli, Daniel & Campbell (2005)	200 teacher candidates; 140 were White	Qualitative; Critical democratic education and Whiteness	To explore how participants responded to Peggy McIntosh's article about White privilege and Whiteness (p. 147)	Participants resisted acknowledgement of White privilege through several strategies

These findings from several of the empirical studies related to White racial identity, and the similarly related construct of Whiteness, (see Table 1) suggest that trainers who work in a setting where racial identity development is higher overall may self-report having a more advanced understanding of racism and White privilege.

However, the idea has not been investigated in a corporate setting with White trainers. The impact of the environmental circumstances on their racial identity development may offer new and insightful ways to think about how racial identity development forms for White corporate trainers. Also interesting is that many of the studies about White racial identity development from the perspective of a counseling environment, and arguably education as well, have included an overrepresentation of female participants. The ratio of female to male participants may also have an impact on the findings of the study as it has been argued that White females may conceptualize racial identity in a different manner than their male counterparts (Cook, Heppner, O'Brien, 2005; Frankenburg, 1997).

As White individuals move among the statutes of racial identity development, they likely become more aware of racism as a daily problem and the role their own racial privilege plays in the oppression of people of color. The findings also suggest that an environment where White racial identity is discussed and acknowledged may cause, or support, the racial identity development of White people within that environment. However, many times White people do not acknowledge their own race and how being White impacts their experience as well as their role in racism.

White Racial Identity as Represented in the Context of Critical White Studies

The recent research on White racial identity largely connects with a body of literature referred to as critical White studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; McDermott & Samson, 2005). This compilation of research focused on the nature of Whiteness as an ongoing and pervasive social construct in America that privileges Whites in many arenas

while also assisting in the continuation of the institution of racism. An important contribution of critical White studies has been to remove the concealed nature of Whiteness and the associated advantages for a dominant racial group, in this case Whites. The idea of Whiteness essentially went unidentified or discussed until critical White studies emerged, with the exception of work by a few scholars such as W.E.B. Du Bois in the earlier part of the twentieth century (Du Bois, 2010). The body of critical White studies literature has led to a wealth of studies that further investigate how Whiteness as a social construct, or idea given meaning by society, continues to manifest as a negative social production of power.

Much of the most recent research on White racial identity has been studied from the perspective of White college students or through the educational experiences of teaching White students. Aveling (2006), Trainor (2005) and Heinze (2008) argued that teaching White students often involved working against their belief that they do not have a race, and that they believe they are not racists. Denevi and Pastan (2006) further discussed the use of a student group created to engage White college students in addressing White privilege and their role in anti-racism work, while Rozas and Miller (2009) proposed a framework for teaching White students about racism and anti-racism. Solomon et. al (2005) and Vaught & Castagno (2008) argued that the lack of acknowledgement of racism and White privilege by many teachers, or future teachers, should also be recognized as an important contributor to perpetuating racism. Similarly, the plethora of research of White racial identity development within an educational context may be tied to the nature of the setting, which is outside the scope of mainstream

for-profit organizations. The ability to challenge students and educators about the inherent racial privileges associated with being racially White may be more normative in the educational environment when compared to the for-profit sector. The question emerges as to why the research on White racial identity has not successfully integrated into the literature about corporate for-profit organizations.

White Racial Identity as a Contributing Factor to Work Environments

Organizations have an ethical obligation to consider the multiple identities employees bring into the work environment in order to create an inclusive corporate culture. Feagin (2010) pointed out that the *White racial frame* is a long-standing perspective by most Whites that portrays them as virtuous, hard-working, and entitled to opportunities while simultaneously positing negative views about people of color. If White trainers subscribe to ideals of the White racial frame whether knowingly or not, negative repercussions for the organization and employees become a distinct reality. By examining the White racial identity development of corporate trainers, the invisible nature of the White racial frame can be examined in the context of a corporate environment. Trainers who are less advanced in the development of their racial identity may be at risk of perpetuating the ideas attached to the White racial frame, ultimately creating a negative impact on the organization's ability to be inclusive and egalitarian.

McDermott and Samson (2005) cautioned that as the population becomes increasingly racially diverse, it is likely that "Whiteness" will continue to be associated with privilege and may take place at an increasing frequency and intensity. The often invisible, or unseen, nature of White privilege in the workplace creates an unfair

advantage for White employees and negative outcomes for employees of color. Additionally, as trainers take on the task of facilitating training sessions in a racially diverse organization, they may pass on their "normative" notions of Whiteness without recognizing they are doing so if they are unaware of the effects of their racial privilege. In a 2007 national study that asked participants to reflect on their race, only 37% of White respondents said their race is very important versus 72% of people of color (Croll, 2007). The vastly higher percentage of people of color that view their race as a salient, or very important, part of their identity implies that many Whites still do not acknowledge the function that their own race plays in their everyday life.

Feagin (2010) argued that many of the national studies that focus on racial identity are phone surveys that limit participants' response options often reducing the level of depth about racial identity. Overall, these surveys portray Whites as having very liberal and egalitarian views on racial topics, but qualitative studies that provide more open-ended and in-depth responses show that many Whites will stray from their initial liberal responses in favor of a more negative view of people of color (Feagin, 2010). Likewise, Jensen (2005) contended that racism is often maintained through the seemingly liberal White attitudes and rhetoric regarding race. The dynamics of the White racial frame may become intrinsic to the culture of an organization if measures are not taken to examine how the racial identity of the dominant racial group influences the workplace climate.

Constantine and Derald (2007) conducted a qualitative study with African American doctoral students to identify how they perceived their White supervisors and

found several themes of micro-aggressions that appeared in the data. The research was specific to a counseling setting where students were preparing to become certified psychologists, but the findings offer important considerations for corporate organizations. Three of the seven themes included invalidating racial-cultural issues, making stereotypic assumptions about Black supervisees, and resistance to give performance feedback for fear of being viewed as racist (Constantine & Derald, 2007). The supervisory relationship produced very specific frustrations for the students being supervised by White individuals who were not aware of the racist notions they carried into a work related setting.

The experiences of the African American students indicated racial identity served as a strong basis for interpreting experiences in the workplace, and also highlighted that the White supervisors had some awareness of their own race although it was not developed enough to create an egalitarian work culture (Constantine & Derald, 2007). The findings indicate that organizations are at risk of perpetuating racism in the workplace if there is no move towards identifying how racial privilege and an underdeveloped racial identity contribute to an unjust corporate environment. However, some scholars hypothesized that as supervisees begin to represent a more racially diverse group, it is likely that there will be more same race supervisory relationships for people of color (Jernigan, Green, Helms, Perez-Gualdron, & Henze, 2010). While this may be a true observation, the need for White employees to examine their own racial identity and experiences does not become less important. The importance of White racial identity development may actually become even more critical as the racial demographics of the

country continue to become more varied. Additionally, the increase in globalization and workplace diversity affects most corporate organizations by connecting employees to a variety of different cultures and workplace norms. The connection between diversity in the workplace and racial identity development are important for understanding how White corporate trainers are impacting the organization.

Corporate Organizations and Diversity Initiatives

The literature on race and ethnicity in the context of corporate organizations has been primarily studied from the perspective of diversity movements (Brooks & Clunis, 2007; Brooks, 2009; Kelly & Dobbin, 1998; Mease, 2009), or the evolution of affirmative action practices that highlight the differences among employees based on categories such as race, gender and sexuality (Ashcraft & Allen, 2003; Mirchandani, 2003; Woog, 2001). However, while much research has been done on identity differences that affect the variety of people employed by organizations, not much research has been conducted involving how organization change in a corporate setting is affected by employees of various racial and ethnic groups (Brooks & Clunis, 2007; Mease, 2009). This suggests that limited conclusions can be drawn about the ways that racial identity affects an employee's experience implementing change within a racially diverse organization setting. Trainers are frequently responsible for facilitating an organization's agenda for learning and desired change efforts, and this presents a need to further understand the effects of racial identity on trainers' ability to create successful and inclusive learning spaces.

Using Diversity Training as a Change Intervention

The literature within the context of workplace organizations frequently relies on the use of diversity training as a method for addressing change issues associated with race and multiculturalism (Mease, 2009). Hite and McDonald (2006) conducted a qualitative study of 10 organizations that included for-profit and non-profit entities, and interviewed a total of 11 employees from the organizations, to determine what the most common issues were associated with diversity training. Eight of the participants were female and three were male. The researchers found that while diversity training is often implemented as a strategy for creating positive organizational change, the problems that arise can represent a range of problems (Hite & McDonald, 2006). These issues fell into two main categories which included the phases of creating and delivering the training as well as structured support systems used over time (McDonald & Hite, 2005). Overall, the study was primarily focused on preparation for and results of the training process itself as opposed to deeper organizational issues related to racial identity and power. Additionally, there is no in-depth evaluation of the role the trainers themselves play as racialized beings who conduct diversity training even though the topic of race is skimmed over in the included participant responses.

Mease (2009) noted that previous research about diversity has not paid attention to the perspective of the individuals who are responsible for implementing diversity initiatives. The qualitative study focused on the strategies and experiences of corporate diversity consultants who were responsible for delivering diversity training to employees of various corporate organizations. The participants included both "men and women,

White, Black, Hispanic, gay and straight consultants" (Mease, 2009; p. 64). The researcher conducted interviews with each participant and then sorted the data to find any consistencies which emerged in their responses. The findings of the study included: tensions affect organizational change, the role of the business paradigm in affecting the outcome of diversity consultants' work, and ways that for-profit settings shape the construction of organizational components (Mease, 2009).

The tensions that arise in organization settings were found to impact the strategies diversity consultants used to establish desired messages with participants (Mease, 2009). This finding suggests that Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Model of Human Development may offer a unique perspective by which to view the work environment as an influencing factor in the way that racial identity impacts the work space. The unique ways that these forces connect for White corporate trainers may offer new insight into how racial identity is developed through the lens of the work role. The tensions that the diversity consultants experienced can also be considered from the perspective of formal and informal organization systems (Mease, 2009). Similarly, Tenbrushnel, Smith-Crowe, and Umphress (2003) contended that organizational infrastructure is directly influenced by the formal and informal systems that are entrenched in the organization's culture. The often conflicting nature of espoused organizational goals versus systemic norms can create challenges for organizations seeking to implement change. The tensions experienced by the participants in Mease's (2009) study offered one example of the ways that individuals responsible for implementing organizational change collide with the formal and informal structure of the

organization. As trainers encounter tensions and structural limitations, the intersection with racial identity may offer an even more in-depth perspective about organizational change efforts.

Research has also indicated that the paradigm of business organizations often involved restraints which dealt with issues of "bottom-line" mentality, or a central focus on profits and other related business processes above all else (Hite & McDonald, 2006; Mease, 2009). Mease (2009) found that in many instances, the nature of the diversity consultants' work conflicted with some of the elements associated with a for-profit business environment. For example, some of the participants experienced challenges associated with being employed by an organization to offer a preconceived notion of diversity training, which frequently conflicted with their desire to further challenge the norms of the organization (Mease, 2009). Simultaneously, the diversity consultants often attempted to maintain positive relationships with the organizations in order to remain employed or build their reputation in the consulting field. Similarly, Hite and McDonald (2006) noted that the limitations of budget, time and resources played a significant role in the nature of diversity training initiatives as noted by participants in both the for-profit and non-profit organizations. The dynamics of training in a corporate, for-profit, setting has not been deeply studied when considering how racial identity development might deepen the challenges trainers face in their job roles in relation to organizational constraints. Additionally, Chesler and Modenhauer-Salazar (1998) found that diversity is often framed in ways which overlook the importance of inequity, social justice and other forms of discrimination that ultimately impact the organizational system.

Ethics and Organizational Justice as Frequent Topics of Research in Corporate Organizations

In addition to literature about diversity training in corporate organizations, some studies also focused on the role of ethics and organizational justice practices (Foster, 2010; Tenbrunsel et al.., 2003; Van et al.., 2005). Such studies differ from the literature on diversity because the focus remains more on the overall concept of fairness practices, which the researchers may or may not connect to concepts of social differences such as race, gender, or sexuality. Many of the constructs tied to organizational justice deal with fairness perceptions associated with related organizational outcomes (Foster, 2010). The products associated with organizational justice would be highly important factors to consider from the perspective of racial identity development in the workplace. This could be especially important because White privilege often goes unacknowledged by White people which ultimately creates and maintains privileges for White employees. Intertwining research on racial identity development and corporate trainers may uncover new, and unique, perceptions about fairness and equality in the workplace.

Previous scholars have argued that issues of equity in the workplace are often tied to racism and experiences of racial inequality (Evans & Chun, 2007; O'Brien, 2001; O'Brien, 2009; Ospina & Foldy, 2009). However, the literature about corporate organizations does not sufficiently explore the role of personal racial identity development as a factor that influences work experiences. As Mease (2009) posited, this lack of research in a corporate context may be tied to the inherent business practices that are associated with for-profit organizations. Additionally, Colquitt et. al. (2001) noted

that much of the organizational justice research has been overly represented by a focus on areas such as performance. This finding also indicates that a business model focused on profit earnings may be less likely to prioritize issues of identity formation over those that directly result in increased earning potential or other organizational goals. Issues of injustice that arise due to White privilege and associated levels of White racial identity development have not been addressed fully in the literature with relevance to corporate organizations. To address this gap, the experiences of White corporate trainers will also be pursued from the lens of Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological model of human development in order to capture the other environmental factors that may affect identity.

The Ecological Model of Human Development

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological model of human development paid attention to the connection between all of the various environments that can affect the definition of self and the associated activities a person engages in during their lifetime. The model consisted of four categories of environments people operate within and that includes the microsystem (such as home and work), the mesosystem (the connected relationships between microsystems), the exosystem (societal forces), and the macrosystem (structural forces such as the government) (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). It is the interconnection between all of the environments a person experiences that can aid in understanding how racial identity is impacted by the work environment and vice versa.

Lin and Bates (2010) utilized Bronfenbrenner's model as a conceptual framework in a qualitative study aimed at discovering the effects of home visits on the perceptions of six family literacy teachers. All of the participants were female, two were

White and four were African American. Lin and Bates (2010) noted that all of the participants expressed an increased ability and desire to create lessons that would provide a culturally diverse perspective in the classroom setting specifically because they had interacted with students and families in their home environment. The study offered an interesting example of how a variety of cultural experiences, which are often connected to race, impact individuals who are in a teaching position.

Perhaps one of the criticisms of Bronfenbrenner's model is that it is not specific to any one context and studies have included topics such as the shootings on the Virginia Tech campus (Hong, Cho, & Lee, 2010), public health care initiatives (Bryans, Cornish, & McIntosh, 2009), and studies in a variety of academic disciplines. One of the most relevant studies that used Bronfenbrenner's model focused on the different career experiences that take place for African American and White women (Cook, Heppner, & O'Brien, 2005).

Cook, Heppner and O'Brien (2005) explained that aspects of career and job related behaviors for African American and White women can be understood from the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's model specifically because humans are influenced by many factors. They stated:

> By their very nature, humans live interactionally within a social environment. Even when they are alone, people are strongly influenced by the actions of others, whether indirectly (e.g., laws or social customs delineating their behavior) or intentionally (e.g., the nature of their self-concepts influenced by previous interactions with others). (p. 166)

The multiple environmental factors that influence the ways people think and behave are key components to the exploration of the experiences of White corporate trainers. It is

likely that a combination of personal, societal and organizational factors influence the way they think about their own racial identity in the context of their professional work. Bronfenbrenner's (1977) model offers an additional opening to consider these multiple pressures and influences.

Rice (2011) conducted a study of nine African American women engineers using the findings of both Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and Cook, Heppner, and O'Brien's (2005) findings regarding the various systemic forces that affect career development for African American women. Her findings included that the participants' career life histories were linked to experiences at the macrosystem and microsystem levels (Rice, 2011). Specifically, she noted that aspects of the participants' career experiences were influenced by their personal identity, such as gender and race, as well as factors from others such as support from teachers and social networks (Rice, 2011). The study explored in depth the various factors related to identity, such as race, and the connection among the other environmental systems that affect the ways that the participants experienced and reflected upon their career stories. Rice's (2011) use of Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological model of human development revealed that a more comprehensive view of career and identity can be grasped using this model.

However, while the model is flexible enough to accommodate a variety of settings and perspectives based on the notion of each person having their own environmental factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), this could potentially cause problems when looking for consistencies among study participants (Rice, 2011).The use of Helms' (1990) model of White racial identity development will balance Bronfenbrenner's

broader approach by providing an additional level of comparison among participant experiences. Despite the potential pitfalls, Bronfenbrenner's model provides a suitable viewpoint to consider how racial identity development, work roles, organization culture and larger societal racial issues impact the way White corporate trainers think about their own race.

Summary

The wide-ranging research about race, racism and racial identity formation provided a historical perspective on the ways these issues have impacted various structures and systems over time. While the ways that racism manifests on a day-to-day basis has changed to a more contemporary form of racism, which often remains unidentified and structurally "invisible" to many White people, various disciplines have continued to study the impact of race and racial identity as a current reality. The literature highlighted that critical White studies remain prominent in the areas of education, sociology and psychology, but are often absent or heavily underrepresented in the literature regarding corporate organizations. The need for a more in-depth examination of race and racial identity within the corporate sector provided a guide to develop this study.

The literature review revealed a gap with regard to the racial identity development of corporate trainers and its impact on their perceptions about their training experiences with racially diverse audiences. Prior studies have focused on the trainers perceptions about working with a diverse audience (Pesch, 2006) and with consulting on issues of diversity (Mease, 2009), but no current studies have bridged the gap between

perceptions of personal racial identity development for White trainers in the context of racially diverse corporate settings. Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Model of Human Development and Helms' (1990) offer a unique viewpoint for considering how White corporate trainers think about their own race in relation to the work environment. The frameworks also provide space to consider the various environmental and identity components that influence the ways individuals act out their job roles with consideration to the often conflicting worldviews they operate within.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to gain a deeper understanding about the racial identity development of White corporate trainers in connection to their professional roles in racially diverse work environments. The connections between the multiple forces that impact the way they think about, and act out, concepts related to their racial identity development guided the choice of research paradigm and methodology. The intricacies of identity which individuals enact on a daily basis are complex, sometimes contradictory, and can move and adjust over time (Helms, 1995). Due to the impermanence of identity as a construct, the type of research employed for this study was qualitative research.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described the qualitative approach as one that captures the multiple realities that are created throughout the research process. The interactions between individuals, in this case the researcher and participants, meet to create a unique experience as the research is conducted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These multiple perspectives come together to inform the outcomes that are generated, which may have turned out differently had the participants and researcher been different individuals. One way to understand the idea of constructed realities is by comparing the concept to the Hawthorne Effect, which referred to the idea that when individuals know they are being observed they are likely to react in some way simply because they are being studied (Mirvis, 2006). The interactions between researcher and participant inevitably create

circumstances that may not have been observed previously, or taken place at all, had the research not been conducted.

Distinctions of Qualitative Research

Erlandson, et al.. (1993) defined the qualitative paradigm by the acceptance that there are "multiple realities, with differences among them that cannot be resolved through rational processes or increased data" (p.14). Merriam (1998) added to this understanding and stated that the qualitative paradigm is "an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible" (p. 5). These explanations of the qualitative paradigm acknowledged that the ever-fluctuating human element of social phenomena can never be fully explained through a positivistic paradigm because "truth" is dependent upon human perspective (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Schram (2003) added that the role of voice can impact qualitative research and stated "the issue of voice is pivotal in qualitative inquiry in that it expresses one's stance relative to the distance and the relationship between researcher and researched, and between author and reader" (p. vii). In other words, the connection between how the researcher interprets a phenomenon is directly tied to their individual worldview.

At its core, the qualitative paradigm assumes that the researcher and research participants cannot be objective because humans are situated within their own worldviews, which Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to as "constructed realities" (p. 83). The qualitative paradigm does not attempt to uncover one reality, or truth, because of the elusive nature of individual perspectives which are constantly changing. Instead,

the paradigm accepts that there will be many ways that individual experience can be interpreted (Erlandson et al.., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). As a result, the researcher is not free from one's own perception at any stage of the process starting with the development of research questions and later, the interpretation of gathered data. Each element of the research process is directly impacted by the worldview of the researcher.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described that, "social reality is a construction based upon the actor's frame of reference within the setting" (p. 80). They further described the formation of constructed realities as being based on perspectives (p. 72). These constructed realities come together to form social realities, which are widely accepted societal assumptions or ideas (Erlandson et. al, 1993; Creswell, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). As the researcher interprets the responses of participants, certain perspectives are created and held by the researcher that influence the way one views the outcome of the study. Additionally, the social realities that have already been accepted prior to beginning the inquiry also inform the way the data is interpreted. A qualitative methodology allows the researcher to uniquely interpret the data along with the perspectives of the participants and the data is constantly being received within the boundaries of that perspective. The interpretive nature of qualitative inquiry allows the researcher and participants to construct their own set of perspectives about the information being revealed through the research process.

A qualitative methodology best suits this study because racial identity development is a process that is greatly influenced by the social realities that exist

around the concept of race (Feagin, 2010; Tatum, 2003). Feagin (2010) argued that the societal norms about racial identity greatly affect the frame through which White individuals view their world. A long group history of assigning meaning to a White racial identity has influenced the way many White people think about, or understand, the meaning of their own race within the context of a racially diverse world (Feagin, 2010). The way that individuals recognize and interpret their own racial identity may influence the way they interact in their workplace and the way they deliver training in a racially mixed environment. A qualitative methodology provided the space to deeply examine the constructed realities that participants held about their own racial identity development.

Five Axioms of Qualitative Research

To further understand the role of qualitative research as a path for studying the impact of racial identity development for White corporate trainers, five axioms of naturalistic inquiry were outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) that further explain the methodology. These axioms included *multiple reality, knower-known interaction, time and context dependence, mutual and simultaneous shaping,* and *value dependence* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The first axiom, multiple reality, refers to the concept that all ideas and objects are assigned meaning through their interaction with the world and are inextricably tied to that meaning (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Schram (2003) echoed this idea and described that the qualitative researcher must "acknowledge the quintessentially interactive and intersubjective nature of constructing knowledge" (p. 7). It is through the process of meaning making that qualitative data take shape, which is understood to be

subjective and situated within the specific circumstances of the study. In this study, White racial identity development for trainers will be situated within the context of their work role. The way they perceive their racial identity in relation to their work has specific meaning in that context.

Knower-known interaction, the second axiom, explains that the relationship between the researcher (knower) and the participant (known) ultimately affects the outcome of the study because they are both part of the interpretations that will be formed during the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While Merriam (1998) pointed out that qualitative researchers attempt to observe phenomena with as little interference as possible, the research process will still uncover data distinctive to the relationship between the researcher and research participant. This study will be affected by the second axiom because the researcher and participants will be of the same race which may impact what ideas the participants are willing to express.

Similarly, the third axiom, time and context dependence, referred to the systemic nature of qualitative research and the idea that reality cannot be separated into static pieces (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Identity and meaning construction are ongoing facets of life and for this reason the qualitative approach does not attempt to capture permanence. Rather, interpretations of a particular instance are accepted as only one view of an idea that has multiple meanings and connections to other experiences. The interactions between the researcher and research participants can cause dramatic changes to take place in belief structures and previously held notions of reality (Schram, 2003). In this same sense, one's interpretation of racial identity is not a stagnant, tangible element of

an individual's identity since it is constantly being revised and reinterpreted. Participants may express a range of contradictory ideas about their racial identity which are all operating simultaneously.

The constantly shifting elements of reality have specifically informed the way that qualitative research is structured. Mutual and simultaneous shaping, axiom number four, explained that the process of qualitative research accounts for a constant re-shaping of the system within which the inquiry is contained (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As the researcher and participant move forward in the research process ideas and interpretations can alter the direction of the research. Erlandson et al.. (1993) discussed that qualitative research cannot predetermine every aspect of the design specifically for this reason. The way the research process unfolds through the meaning making efforts of researcher and participant will guide the understanding of the phenomenon. Participants in this study may reveal explanations and perceptions about racial identity that had not been expected, which will dictate the next step in the research process.

The final axiom, value dependence, refers to the concept that the researcher's prior perceptions and world views will impact the way data is interpreted throughout the inquiry process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Similarly, Schram (2003) posited that "qualitative inquiry is fundamentally interpretive" (p. 9). The way that the researcher understands their own reality or worldview will impact the research questions that will be asked, how the data is interpreted and the implications that are drawn from the research. Due to the objective nature of qualitative research, each researcher should make known their background, values, biases and assumptions. However, the way that

the researcher chooses to approach their role in the study can vary. Schwandt (2007) described the following three styles of the researcher's position in the study:

1. Researcher as detached, objective, outside expert; researched as subjects, data sources, respondents.
2. Researcher as marginal participant (participant-observer); researched as informants.
3. Researcher as facilitator (helping the researched activate their own capacities for self-observation, critique, advocacy), critic, advocate, change agent, adversary to the established and powerful; researched as co-researchers, co-participants, collaborators. (p. 90)

The way that the researcher approaches the relationship with research participants will inevitably affect the outcomes of the study. This study utilized a combination of the researcher as marginal participant stance as well as researcher as facilitator. These techniques were combined in order to address the underlying assumptions participants help in relation to their racial identity, but had not previously given conscious attention to their description.

Overall, a qualitative paradigm best suited this study due to the unique nature of constructed realities that arose during the interview process between the researcher and participants. The methods of the study were specifically constructed with the goal of discovering how the process of developing a White racial identity shaped the experiences of White corporate trainers. The naturalistic methodology was chosen to provide participants with an opportunity provide an in-depth account of the ways they

thought about their own race in the context of their role as corporate trainers and how they perceived racial experiences from their own perspective. The methods of the study will be specifically tailored to allow participants to describe the ways race affects their training responsibilities in a corporate environment. The qualitative paradigm was best suited to the research questions and ultimately guided the construction of the research design.

Types of Qualitative Designs

This study employed a qualitative methodology in order to make distinctions about the research process. A variety in types of qualitative methodologies can be utilized in the construction of a study and those most often used in social science research include phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, case study and narrative (Creswell, 2003; Schwandt, 2007). Each type of qualitative approach can be used for research designs with different purposes and variations in the researcher and research participant relationship. Specifically, the type of qualitative approach guides a study in choices of methods, and a brief account of each design was provided to bring into focus the selected design for this study.

Ethnography. The use of ethnography as a qualitative approach to research primarily differs from phenomenology because the researcher would be studying a concept specific to a group's culture. According to Creswell (2008), "ethnographic designs are qualitative procedures for describing, analyzing, and interpreting a cultural group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time" (p. 61). The standout characteristic of an ethnography is the focus on the culture of a group

as opposed to a phenomenon as in phenomenology or narrative which does not necessarily take into account the impact of a cultural setting (Creswell, 2003). Grounded theory offers a stark contrast to the ethnographic approach and opts to compare findings over time to create a theory based on recurrent themes (Creswell, 2003).

Grounded theory. The grounded theory approach to qualitative research is primarily used as a means for constructing theory by identifying recurring themes regarding a specific topic (Schram, 2003). Participants may express ideas about a topic that can be grouped into categories called themes, which the researcher uses to describe a pattern in behavior, thinking, or processes (Creswell, 2008). Similarly, Schram (2003) explained that grounded theory is often used when a satisfactory theory does not already exist or a current theory needs to be expanded upon to address a specific need in the literature. Grounded theory uses several different approaches which include systematic, emerging, and constructivist (Schram, 2003). Overall, a study in which grounded theory is used would require the researcher to use constant comparison to revise meanings and associations as new information is gathered (Creswell, 2003). When the researcher believes that the basic theory has been formed, they would continue to check that theory using new data until they no longer find new information, also referred to as saturation (Schram, 2003). Grounded theory exists as a contrast to the narrative style, which provides more attention to storytelling (Riessman, 2008).

Narrative. The narrative approach to qualitative research has often been considered a type of storytelling whereby the research participant expresses an event, or multiple events, that have impacted some aspect of their life either currently or over the

course of their lifetime (Riessman, 2008). However, narrative can also refer to a variety of "stories" that are expressed through text, video, the media and other types of information portrayal that create a type of rhetoric about a topic (Riessman, 2008). According to Crotty (1998), narrative can appear as a discourse or type of argument which has appeared in a specific type of commentary. A narrative methodology can be used to gather a sense of a research participant's experience in story form or to identify if some sort of social story has appeared regarding a particular topic. For example, a personal narrative might emerge from a woman explaining her lifetime experiences about how she came to understand what it means to be female. A narrative in the media might be gathered from ongoing news coverage about an environmental crisis. The nature of a narrative methodology is aimed at capturing the subjective nature of stories, while the phenomenological approach is focused on gaining an underlying consistency to a certain phenomenon (Moustakas, 1990).

Phenomenology. Phenomenology is a research process "that portrays the qualities, meanings, and essences of universally unique experiences" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 13). The use of phenomenology in qualitative research is an effort geared towards identification of the unique ways that individuals may describe their experiences within the context of their particular life experiences (Creswell, 2003; Moustakas, 1990). At the core of phenomenology is the researcher's desire not to interject their own interpretations upon participants, but to instead use prolonged engagement as a way to identify the reoccurring themes and happenings that participants experience regarding a certain phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). Moustakas (1990) also noted that the

phenomenological method will cause the researcher to gain clarity into the phenomenon under investigation. While phenomenology seeks to discover the soul of a phenomenon, the case study method is utilized in a variety of settings when the topic of the study is confined to a particular time and context (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998).

Basic qualitative. Some studies, however, take a broader interpretive approach to the research process than described in other approaches. According to Merriam (1998), a basic qualitative study does the following:

> …typically draws from concepts, models, and theories in educational psychology, developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, and sociology. Data are collected through interviews, observations, or document analysis. Findings are a mix of description and analysis – an analysis that uses concepts from the theoretical framework of the study. (p. 11)

She went on to discuss that a basic interpretive approach may also search for themes that emerged in the data or acknowledge when a particular process has taken place (Merriam, 1998, p. 12). Erlandson, et al.. (1993) also discussed that a basic interpretive approach often adjusts according to the data collection process as the study moves forward. For this study, the basic interpretive method is most appropriate because the influence of racial identity development cannot fully be distinguished from other forces that might impact the way White trainers enact their job roles in multiracial organizations. This research served as an exploratory study to gain insight into the various environmental influences that shape White racial identity development and how those concepts function in a work setting. The foundational literature that informed the study was also rooted in psychology, education and sociology, which aligned with Merriam's description of a

basic qualitative approach. Additionally, as the research process unfolded additional inquiries into the experiences of the participants were necessary.

By employing the use of the associated methods, the study sought to identify more distinctions between the role of White racial identity development and Bronfonbrenner's (1977) various systems including the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. These systems can include the influence of forces such as a person's social network, pressures from work and societal forces, and the basic interpretive method helped identify distinctions that shaped and defined the ways that White corporate trainers thought about their own racial identity as a connected piece to their job role. Additionally, this research will included the use of various data collection procedures in order to capture "richly descriptive" information about the racial identity development of White trainers (Merriam, 1998, p. 8).

Research Methods

The use of a basic interpretive approach to the study guided the choices in methods as the design took shape. Racial identity development was considered as an element of constructed reality that each participant was asked to explain and reflect upon in the context of their professional training job. The data collection and subsequent analysis determined how White racial identity development impacted their job role in a racially diverse training environment with consideration to other environmental factors existed. With this description of the basic interpretive approach at the foundation of the research, participant selection served as the first step towards gathering information on the topic.

Data Collection

Participant and Site Selection

The design of a qualitative study is unique because it is most often characterized by purposive sampling, which means that the researcher targets a specific group of people to participate in the study since there is no need for later generalization of the data (Erlandson et al.., 1993; Creswell, 2003). The qualitative paradigm aligns with this type of sampling because the researcher enters into the research process with the understanding that they are not objective. Purposive sampling also fits with the purpose of the study because basic interpretive qualitative research requires the researcher to identify participants that fit within the specific phenomenon, or experience, that is to be studied (Creswell, 2003). The foundation of constructed realities in mind, the researcher can go on to identify participants who have knowledge, or experiences, in the focus area of the study and can provide the most in depth information (Creswell, 2003; Erlandson et al.., 1993; Patton, 1990). While the researcher does identify participants through purposive sampling, the full extent of information that will be revealed by the participants remains unknown prior to the collection of data. Snowball purpose sampling allows researchers to identify potential participants by asking current participants, or potential participants, to identify additional participant recommendations (Creswell 2008).

Along similar lines, the sample size for qualitative research is not necessarily predetermined as it would be in a quantitative design (Erlandson, et al.., 1993). According to Erlandson, et al.. (1993), the sample size in a qualitative study can be in

any number range and completely depends on the needs of the study and how much information is required to answer the research questions. The researcher may find that after completing the interviews they had planned, they need to interview more participants. As the research process continues, the qualitative paradigm allows for natural progression to take place in regards to data collection once the researcher has moved beyond the initial interview protocol.

Snowball purposive sampling was used to identify potential participants for the study and individuals were contacted through a combination of e-mail correspondence, phone contact, or face-to-face interaction. Initial recommendations for participation were made by dissertation committee members, and through the researcher's connections with other Texas A&M graduate students, AHRD members and ASTD members. Seven participants were identified. In order to be selected for the study, individuals were required to meet the following criteria:

1. Currently be working in a professional job role where they deliver training sessions to a racially diverse audience.
2. Be currently employed by a for-profit organization or employed as an internal or external trainer who works with for-profit organizations on a temporary or contract basis and reside in Texas. (Employees at public non-profit organizations or schools were not considered for the study because the goals of for-profit organizations versus not-for-profit organizations are often vastly different in scope and purpose.)

3. To self-identify as racially "White" and self-identify that their workplace is racially diverse.
4. Have a minimum of five years of training experience in a racially diverse organization(s).

The next step included determination of the racial diversity of the organizations where participants worked. A racially diverse organization was determined by the researcher to be an organization that employs people from a variety of racial backgrounds which could include employees who are African American, White, Asian, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, South Asian, Native American, or Hispanic. The presence of employees of color could be approximately one-third to one-half of all training audience members that the research participant interacted with during the scope of their job role. For the purposes of this study, participants were asked to self-identify their organization as racially diverse after reviewing the definition as proposed by the researcher. This method of self-identification was chosen because many private for-profit organizations are not required to release demographic data about employees to the public and determining exact numbers of employees may have been unattainable for the study.

Participant Interviews

Two semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted one-on-one with each participant using an interview protocol. This type of interview allowed participants to share their experiences in open-ended format (Creswell, 2008; Patton, 1990). The interview process was characterized by the researcher and the participant having a

discussion about the research topic which usually began through the open-ended interview questions from the interview protocol (Creswell, 2008; Erlandson et al.., 1993; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). The interview protocol for the first round of interviews was created in advance of the meetings with participants. After the first round of interviews was completed and data was analyzed, a second interview protocol was created for the second round of interviews. Due to the consistent decision to talk about culture instead of race, the second interview protocol was created in a manner that directly asked participants to define these terms up front. Additionally, the interview dialogue often required the researcher to ask questions beyond original protocol in order to gain insight into the participant's experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Roulston, 2010).

According to Roulston (2010), the interview should produce data that is in alignment with the research questions and should ultimately be guided by the foundational aspects of the methodology. To this end, the interview protocols were organized based on topic areas related to the research questions, which also provided a flow to the interview experience (Dexter, 1970). The topic areas included basic demographic information, experiences of working in a racially diverse organization, and evaluating how being White has influenced their experiences. The interviews were voice recorded and all of the participants agreed to have their interviews recorded. The interviews were then transcribed. The transcripts were then sent to each participant for a member check in order to make sure the participant felt comfortable with the responses

they provided during the interview (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The data from the second round of interviews followed the same process.

Written Reflections

The process of racial identity development is an ongoing and fluid process (Helms, 1990) and for this reason the participants were also asked to reflect on their interview transcriptions after reading their own responses. This process resulted in additional sets of data for five participants. Five of the seven participants supplied additional reflections in writing, while two of the participants did not have any additional thoughts to add. The addition of data in different forms has been noted to provide supplementary checkpoints for later interpretations (Yin, 2009). Each participant was asked to share their additional feedback in the form of written reflections submitted via email after reading their responses. The email prompt included a question intended to engage participants in reflection of their interview transcripts as a whole. As Riessman (2008) pointed out, verbal explanations of experiences are rarely, if ever, sufficient to explain significant life experiences. The inclusion of written reflection about their interview transcript was important for further understanding how each participant processed information about their racial identity and provided an alternative outlet for explanation. While the written reflections did pose the risk of participants providing formal and possibly watered down reflections, the way that each participant responded assisted in further determining how their racial identity development was being shaped and re-shaped during the course of the study.

Data Analysis

The process of content analysis was used to interpret the transcript data, researcher observations from the interviews as well as the written reflections. Content analysis is the process of breaking down the data into the smallest pieces of information, called units, that still contain meaning when standing alone (Erlandson et. al, 1993; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, the transcripts were read three to four times each to gather an overall sense of the data (Creswell, 2006). Next, the transcripts were broken down into individual units and printed on individual index cards so they could be easily sorted by common meaning. The index cards contained the participant's pseudonym, the page number from the transcript, and the sequence of the interview as first, second or written reflection. The unitized index cards were then sorted into categories based on the meaning of the information on the card and specifically sorted to answer the research questions identified for the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Units that were similar, or portrayed a consistent idea or concept, were grouped together. After the first round of interviews, a chart of themes was created to show the emerging themes up to that point. The cards, and chart, were resorted after the second interview coding and the written reflection coding. Themes that emerged later in the process were added and themes were also removed for redundancy (Creswell, 2006). This ongoing sorting process reduced the data into four main themes.

Trustworthiness

The use of the term trustworthiness in research refers to the extent to which research results can be considered both rigorous and truthful based on how the

researcher described their methods (Anderson & Herr, 1999; Berg, 2001; Yin, 2009). In order for trustworthiness to be present in a qualitative study, the researcher must openly acknowledge the research methods, address the researcher's perspective and acknowledge how the data was checked for accuracy (Creswell, 2003; Erlandson et al.., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness can be established through several methods, and this study employed the use of member checks and peer debriefing (Erlandson, et al.., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998).

The member check allowed each participant to review all of their transcribed interview data for accuracy and the post-interview written reflection. This provided an additional opportunity for participants to explain or edit their thoughts. Peer debriefing has been defined as the process of seeking out an individual who does not have a stake in the research, but who is both knowledgeable of the related literature and qualitative methods (Erlandson et al.., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Erlandson et al.. (1993), peer debriefing is a process by which the selected individual reviews portions of the data and goes through the analysis process to share opinions regarding the researcher's findings and point out any opposing viewpoints. The researcher is responsible for creating a written summary of the peer debriefing session which can be referenced in the study (Erlandson et al.., 1993). The researcher then considers the points produced through the debriefing session and makes judgments about the data based on questions or issues the peer debriefer may have exposed (Erlandson et al.., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The peer debriefer chosen to review this research was selected because she has in-depth knowledge about the related literature on White racial identity development and culturally responsive learning environments. She offered her perspective as an African American woman, and doctoral candidate, who has also conducted research in similar areas. The peer debriefer assisted in the understanding of the participants' racial identity development, particularly related to the invisibility of Whiteness. The use of member checks and peer debriefing helped establish trustworthiness, which is an important consideration in addition to other ethical issues related to the research.

Ethical Concerns

The process of qualitative data collection and analysis can be subject to potential ethical issues such as subjective interpretations and misreport by participants (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Creswell (2008) warned that one challenge to using interviews to collect data is that participants may respond differently than they would if they were not in the presence of the researcher and may not always explain their thoughts clearly. This issue was addressed through the use of two separate interviews as well as the member checks and written reflections. Likewise, if the researcher was unclear about something the participants expressed during an interview follow-up questions were used to gather a more reliable interpretation.

Another ethical issue is the topic of confidentiality for participants and their respective organizations (Creswell, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Schram, 2003). In order to maintain confidentiality, participants in the study were identified through the use of a pseudonym in order to protect their identity. They were described in terms of

gender and race in addition to other characteristics they choose to use as identifiers to their experience, which included number of years employed as a trainer, the type of organization where they are employed. The identity of the researcher was also an important factor to disclose in qualitative research because this can affect the purpose for selecting the research problem and the interpretation of data (Creswell, 2003; Creswell, 2008; Erlandson et. al, 1993; Merriam, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Researcher Perspective

I often find myself asking myself *"Who am I?"* on a daily basis and the answer is both multi-faceted and constantly impacted by my experiences. This question is particularly relevant on the heels of a turning point in my life when I, only too recently, was confronted with the fact that my racial identity plays an enormous role in all of my life experiences. Unfortunately and like many White people, I spent a large part of my life norming my own racial experience, which in turn has made me a contributor to racism. To say that I have experienced a paradigm shift since that time would be an understatement. I believe that only because I have had the privilege to work and study in educational environments, in both K-12 and higher education, where some colleagues understood and worked against personal and institutional racism (most of whom were colleagues of color) have I been challenged to think about my own racial identity. There is an ongoing effort to rebuild myself in order to see the world through my own reformulated perspective, to continue to develop empathy for the experiences of those with whom I interact, and also to see the ways that I must continue to grow and change. I acknowledge that I am constantly encountering new situations that require me to rethink

myself and my actions in relation to my racial identity. This research has served as part of my own process to keep "unlearning" Whiteness while simultaneously acknowledging my role within it. I hope that I can say my mindset and actions are somewhere within the immersion/emersion and the autonomy statuses of Helms' model on most days, but this does not leave me without much more personal work to do over my lifetime.

One of the issues noted in the literature about White researchers selecting topics related to White racial identity, or other similar topics about Whiteness, is that that discussion will again be focused on White people (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Frankenburg, 1997; Jackson, 1999; Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). However, the research under discussion is aimed at uncovering how conceptualizations and actions related to White racial identity continue to drive racism at the personal, organizational and systems level even in settings that are meant to be equitable learning environments. The process of understanding how my own racial identity impacts my life, and the lives of others on a daily basis, has served as the primary motivator for selecting a research topic that focuses on White racial identity development and how White trainers interpret its meaning in the work context. While I would argue that racial identity is important to consider in both racially diverse *and* racially homogenous organizations, those that are racially diverse are still frequently sites of racism and White privilege where White employees make up the majority. I also chose to interview White trainers specifically because racially White individuals are rarely, if ever, expected to think about the implications of their own racial identity, often choosing to exist as "race neutral"

(Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Bonilla-Silva, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Tatum, 2003). The topic is personal, but at the same time the associated issues go infinitely beyond just one person or any single interpretation, which highlights that the subject of this research may offer new and multi-level findings related to the experiences of White corporate trainers.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the racial identity development of White corporate trainers in connection to the work they perform in racially and culturally diverse organizations. The study sought to reveal the environments, experiences, relationships, social, work and other impacting factors that influence the construction of racial identity as explained by the participants. The data for this study was collected through two face-to-face interviews with participants followed by a written reflection in response to their interview transcripts. The data were then organized through the process of content analysis to group ideas into themes with common meanings.

The research questions that guided the exploration of racial identity development for the White corporate trainers participating in the study included:

1. How do White corporate trainers who work in racially diverse organizations experience and describe their racial identity in connection with the work they do as trainers?
2. How does the organization support the development of competencies related to culturally responsive training?

The data revealed that a variety of influences aid in the development of racial identity and four main themes were identified. These included a) perceptions of racial identity, b) developing racial consciousness, c) cultural diversity and training, and d) becoming

culturally responsive trainers. The main themes were further supported through the secondary themes (Elo & Kyngas, 2008).

The backgrounds and experiences of the participants created an initial starting place for the research findings. The background information provided by the participants included a variety of categories. The participant profiles were informed by the information participants provided about their race, age, gender, years working as a trainer, years in their current job roles, and the type of organizations where they worked during the study.

Participant Profiles

The participants in the study included seven corporate trainers who self-identified as racially White as a preliminary screening to participate in the study. Snowball sampling was used to identify the participants in the study through contacts suggested by dissertation committee members, participation in professional organizations like ASTD and AHRD, and through personal referrals from other Texas A&M University students, and each participant was required to reside in Texas and have a minimum of five years of work experience as a trainer in a racially diverse organization. The participants could also be independent contract trainers who are then contracted out directly by racially diverse organizations for their training services. Table 4 shows the participant profiles and includes demographic information about age, gender, years employed as a trainer, years working in their current job role, and the type of organization where they currently work.

The participant pool included six female, and one male, participants. While there were several potential male participants identified through the sampling process, they reported being unable to participate due to time constraints, worked in an educational organization, or provided no reason for responding 'no'. Six of the participants have facilitated training sessions internationally and five of the participants traveled on a regular basis. Three of the participants also have supervisory responsibilities managing other employees in addition to their other assignments. Additionally, four of the participants work in international oil and gas firms where they have had opportunities to offer training on a global scale and two other participants have worked occasionally in countries outside the U.S. Only one of the participants, Clarissa, has been limited to training experiences on a regional scale, which is representative of the scope of her current organization.

Table 2. Participant Profiles

Name	Race	Age Range	Gender	Years Working as a Trainer	Years in Current Job	Organization Type	Worked Inter-nationally
Angela	White	60-65	Female	20-25	4	Oil & Gas	Yes
Audra	White	30-35	Female	5	5	Real Estate	Yes
Cathy	White	60-65	Female	23	1	Oil & Gas	Yes
Clarissa	White	30-35	Female	10	2	Retail	No
Mark	White	50-55	Male	25	18	Self-employed	Yes
Renee	White	35-40	Female	17	1 ½	Oil & Gas	Yes
Sidney	White	50-55	Female	22	5 ½	Oil & Gas	Yes

The profiles of the participants in the study represent a wide range of professional and personal experiences, but similarities among their stories also emerged during the interview process. The participants were openly aware of the need to discuss the influences which have impacted their understanding of race and culture as it relates to their personal identity as well as the work they do within racially diverse organizations. The process of sharing these experiences and stories during the study revealed the ways that race continues to impact views of self, racism, relationships with family and co-workers, and organizational practices. The individual profiles provide a deeper understanding of the backgrounds and identities that serve as foundations for the actions and beliefs of each participant.

Individual Participant Profiles of the 7 Trainers

Angela

Angela is a 60 - 65 year old White female who was born during a time when racial segregation was still legal in the United States. Racial segregation was legally ended in the U.S. shortly before she entered the public school system and she described her first memory of realizing she was a White person as follows:

> When I was little, we lived in the railroad right-of-way in like a tenant house. There was a path toward the front of our house where all the kids who went to the [school] – because it was segregated before I started school. Once I started school, the schools were desegregated – but before I started, all the Black high school students would walk down this path to go home because we lived just on the edge of their community – one of the communities. They were Black and I was White. I noticed that skin color was different.

Her immediate family consists of two adult children and her husband. She went on to discuss her career path and originally worked as an elementary school teacher prior to entering corporate America. Her path to her current job in training included working as a receptionist, an executive assistant, product analyst, and eventually a trainer in the training department. She currently works in a global oil and gas firm where she oversees a staff of instructional designers whom she frequently observes as they facilitate training sessions within the organization. Her typical training facilitations are content and field specific, or involve training teams as they manage projects.

Angela's view on working in a racially and culturally diverse organization was apparent in her description of the experience as "terrific." She went on to describe her appreciation of an author who writes about a variety of aspects of diversity and stated:

> I love her [author's] book because she looks and she says people are very different and there are certain areas where they're visibly different: race, gender,

> mobility. But, we're also very different based on what your culture is, what your age is, whether you belong to a union, where you grew up, what your financial situation is, what your education is, the way you think, the way you communicate, the way you handle conflict. So there are all these different parts of an individual that you can't see on top of what you can see. Working in an organization where there's a lot of diversity, racial diversity, just adds a lot more complexity. You get a lot more options of different things to learn about.

Throughout the interviews, Angela shared examples of the experiences and relationships that have influenced her appreciation of working in a racially diverse organization as well as shaped her understanding of race. At times during the interview process, Angela distanced herself from her own identity as a White woman and said that she thought "being White in America is the same thing as being Asian in America or Black in America" and said she did not believe it was any easier to navigate daily life as a White person. However, she also discussed some of the instances where she had witnessed, and challenged, acts of racism enacted by other White people within her broader social network.

Audra

Among the participants, Audra was one of the youngest and is between the ages of 30-35. She is a White female and her path to becoming a training professional began with her work in real estate. She was ultimately promoted to a training role where she facilitates training for part-time staff, full-time staff and general managers on topics such as customer service and content specific training. In total, she has been working in training for five years at the same company. She frequently travels to facilitate training for employees across the United States and occasionally travels to Canada. She originally lived in the Southeastern corner of the U.S. and later moved to Texas, where

she now lives along with her husband. One of the defining relationships in Audra's life was with her close college friend and roommate who is an African American man. Many of the stories Audra shared about her understanding of race, racism and her own racial identity, were influenced by their friendship.

Out of all seven participants, Audra appeared to be the most comfortable discussing topics about race and racism. She openly acknowledged that people of color still experience acts of racism by White people and, in some instances, was also able to articulate that she believes White people are often trusted by other White people based on race alone. She shared the example of being at a pre-pay gas station pump where an African American customer was asked to pay first over the loud speaker, while the pump she and her husband were using was turned on without having to pre-pay.

Cathy

Cathy is a White female between the ages of 60 - 65 who has worked in training for a total of 23 years. Her professional work experience also began as a public school teacher in the K-12 sector, which she later left after the births of her four children. Fifteen years of her training career was spent as an independent contract trainer in addition to her time at other organizations. Out of the seven total participants, Cathy was the only person who had lived in another country for a substantial length of time. She spent 17 years living in Mexico for work and described that experience as one that allowed her to become fluent in the Spanish language. Much of her current training facilitation takes place in the oil field where employees work in manual labor roles for

the company. She provides training related to safety, leadership development and discussion of any occurrences that are currently affecting work being done at that site.

When asked to discuss the first time she remembered acknowledging that she was a White person, she discussed the following story: "It was definitely when I moved to Mexico and I saw that I was given reverse prejudice because people were catering to me in [positive] ways that I had never experienced." Cathy's description of her experience in the market, an example of White privilege, during her time living in Mexico took place when she was an adult and she did not discuss any memories of her racial identity as a child. Instead, many of her examples were tied to her experiences in work settings and through familial and social relationships as an older adult. Cathy also frequently interchanged the ideas of race and culture, although eventually stated that culture is more fluid while race is not. She also focused on the idea of individualism and often spoke of "Whites" as a separate group from herself and did not believe White people have access to any privileges because of race. However, this idea stood in contrast to her belief that there has been a historical presence of racism in the United States that did benefit White people.

Clarissa

Clarissa was also among the youngest participants and is a White female between 30-35 years old. She has lived in Texas all of her life and has worked in training for a total of 10 years in the retail field. She began her current role with the company two years ago after moving from another retail chain. Her company is regional, so she does not facilitate any trainings internationally. She currently supervises several employees

who serve in different capacities within the sales division of the company. She facilitates training for the staff she supervises in addition to other corporate level employees on topics related to store management procedures, operational issues, and technology usage. A typical day in Clarissa's job included working with employees on the proper protocol for managing a store in the company's portfolio.

She described one of her first memories of recognizing that she was White came when she was invited to spend the night at a friend's house who was African American. She described:

> When I was in grade school, I had this friend I wanted to go spend the night at her house, and I was told 'no' because she was Black…at that point, I realized that there was something different about me. I totally remember that day.

Among the other participants, Clarissa was one of the only two participants who maintains close, enduring friendships with people of color. However, she still talked about race in a disconnected way and stated that "it's [race is] an uncomfortable topic." She openly admitted that she believes White people are often afforded privileges because of race and believed that she had personally experienced this in her own life.

Mark

Mark was the only White male participant in the study and was between the age of 50 – 55. He has worked in the training field for a total of 25 years. He originally began his career in training after working as an adjunct faculty member at college. He realized at that time he wanted to expand his experiences working with adult learners and took a position as a trainer within the defense sector. After approximately six years as a trainer for that company, he opened up his own consulting firm specifically focused

on offering training and development interventions for a variety of organizations. He has now been in his current independent training role for 18 years. The content of his training typically focuses on leadership development, meeting facilitation as well as training specific to the research and development field. His work with racially diverse organizations came in the form of being contracted out to do training facilitation for other organizations and companies.

Originally from Oklahoma, Mark discussed that he was a "fourth generation Oklahoma pioneer" and that his earlier generation family members participated in the process of the "land rush." This term referred to settlement of the Oklahoma territory in the late 1800's after the Homestead Act was passed, which allowed White settlers and families to occupy the land that was already inhabited by several Native American groups. Although he shared the story of his family's background, he did not believe that he had access to any type of privileges as a result of being White that he could identify for certain. Mark discussed that he believed himself to be a "recovering racist" because he is in an ongoing process to unlearn the racism that has been a part of his upbringing. At multiple times during the interviews, he referenced family members' use of the "n" word, but also discussed times when he challenged other White people who were openly expressing racist views, beliefs, and language. He is married to a White woman who is originally from Europe and his ex-wife was Chilean.

Renee

Renee was among the four participants who worked with training and development in the oil and gas industry. She is a White female between the ages of 35 –

40 and began her training career through an unexpected path. After working in a customer service role in the financial securities sector for approximately nine months, she was offered an opportunity to be a trainer. She has worked in training and development for a total of 17 years and has been in her current role for 1 ½ years. She leads a large scale learning management effort that includes processes of instructional design, working with subject matter experts, leadership development and change management. She has worked internationally and also has supervisory responsibilities among her team.

When considering her first memories of understanding race and her racial identity, she discussed a story from her childhood when she went to a bank with her grandfather. She stated:

> He [grandfather] wouldn't, even though there was a teller open, he would not go to that teller. I remember, this was in California, I remember saying 'grandpa, her [window] is open.' I remember when we left I was like I don't understand. Why didn't you go to that one teller and not the other?" He said, "because the other teller was Black."

This story was one of her first memories of being taught about skin color and race. Renee also discussed that she was influenced by her marriage to her husband who is Puerto Rican. She mentioned she was worried that, as a White woman, she would not be accepted when they traveled to Puerto Rico for the first time and did not find that to be the case. At times during the interviews, Renee expressed conflicting ideas about race and racism. She discussed her agreement with an article which stated there were only three races: Caucasian, Black, and Asian. When asked to elaborate on the idea that someone may racially identify as Hispanic, she expressed her belief that someone would

be a descendant of "the Caucasian race." Though she was able to describe instances of racism for people of color, she was hesitant to acknowledge that White people do not experience the same types of discrimination based on race.

Sidney

Also from the oil gas sector, Sidney is a White female between the ages of 50 – 55 and grew up in Texas. She began her 24 year career in training and development in a law enforcement agency and later moved into the corporate training sector. She has been in her current position for an international oil and gas firm for the past 5 ½ years where she facilitates content specific training and works with subject matter experts to develop training courses. Her typical work day includes working with subject matter experts to design training programs for both face-to-face and virtual learning sessions. Sidney does not have any supervisory responsibilities in her current role, but often provides coaching and feedback to subject matter experts and trainers. As part of her job role, she has facilitated training sessions in both the United States and internationally.

Sidney also discussed her background growing up in the southern part of the United States and discussed that she thought her upbringing has had an impact on the way she thinks about race. One of the first times she realized that being a White person was part of her identity took place as a middle school student. Her family had recently moved to a more racially diverse area from a predominantly White area. As a result of the move, she felt out of place as a White person and did not receive any type of support from her family to process through the idea of how her Whiteness was part of her experience. Sidney also discussed the role church has played in her examination of being

White and currently worships in a very racially diverse church. While Sidney often expressed a desire to understand race and culture, she struggled to clearly identify the difference between the two ideas. She stated "I define race as different ethnic groups" and later expressed "I guess they [culture and race] sort of overlap." While she was able to describe instances of racism, she distanced herself from the idea of privilege on a personal level and could not identify racial privilege in her own life.

The participant profiles of the six women and one man provided a glimpse into the multifaceted experiences that have impacted an understanding of their own racial identity and the connection to their work in racially diverse organizations. Each participant expressed a variety of ideas, some contradictory, which ultimately informed the findings of the study. The participants' responses throughout the interviews depicted their desires to be competent about race and culture but also the invisibility of Whiteness within their personal and organizational experiences.

Presentation of Findings

The purpose of this study was to understand the development of racial identity for White corporate trainers who facilitate training and learning activities in racially diverse organizations. The study was designed to acquire an understanding about the various factors that affect the racial identity development of White trainers as well as to distinguish ways in which racially diverse organizations support the creation of culturally responsive training. The goal of the research was to specifically identify the aspects that affect White trainers' identity and the role of the organizations in defining, or impacting, competencies related to culturally responsive training.

The participants shared stories from their lives, personally and professionally, that have shaped the way they think about their own racial identity. In general, the participants adjusted their racial identity through a variety of processes, relationships and environments. The participants each expressed that they believed working in a racially diverse organization was a positive experience, but were also open to sharing stories that depicted the challenges they faced as part of the process. In general, the organizations where participants worked employed both effective and ineffective strategies for creating a culturally responsive environment. The participants consistently discussed culture interchangeably with the term race, or as a way to avoid talking about race directly. This substitution of terms was likely caused by their discomfort discussing race, which remained an uncomfortable topic for most of the participants throughout the interviews and reinforced the lack of attention to race as an important identity component for White trainers. However, the use of self-reflection was often used as a tool for personal change related to negative outcomes they had previously experienced or caused.

The four main themes that emerged from this data included a) perceptions of racial identity, b) developing racial consciousness, c) cultural diversity and training, and d) becoming culturally responsive. Perceptions of racial identity described the multiple environments, experiences and relationships that had influenced the ideas participants formed about their identity as White people. Developing racial consciousness included the impact of the participants' experiences working in racially diverse organizations on the formation of their understanding about race, identity, and difference. Cultural

diversity and training emerged as a theme in response to the experiences linked directly to delivering training for diverse audiences. The category of becoming culturally responsive trainers formed as the participants shared their reflections about the process of becoming better trainers. These findings provided insight into the many experiences White trainers encounter that influence their ideas about identity and work.

Perceptions of Racial Identity

The findings suggested that racial identity was developed through many different environments, relationships and situations that impacted the perceptions held by the White trainers in the study. The findings also revealed that ideas, behaviors and operational structures associated with the concept of Whiteness were present throughout the data. These ideas were further reinforced through the following categories: a) environmental influences on White racial identity development and b) constructing Whiteness. The environmental forces which affected the participants' identity development served as inputs while constructing Whiteness portrayed some of the outcomes of these forces in action.

Environmental Influences on Racial Identity

Several different environments and settings ultimately shaped the beliefs, behaviors and reflections which informed the participants' racial identity development. The environmental influences included: a) work influences as sites of racial identity development, b) familial relationships, c) social relationships that influence racial identity, d) learning about race through school, and e) "I think it's a culture of mixed

up." The participants discussed past experiences that have caused them to understand the socially constructed ideas associated with race and their own identity as White people.

Work influences as sites of racial identity development. The work environment was a place where all of the participants had interactions that influenced their ideas about race and racial identity, many of which involved interactions with other employees. The influence of work environments caused the participants to reformulate the ways that they interacted within a racially diverse organization as well as the ways they perceive themselves within that environment.

The stories that most of the participants related back to learning about or discussing race at work took place with co-workers of color. This was particularly interesting because this finding suggests that White employees often norm their own racial experience while expecting people of color to actively think about race. Renee discussed a conversation she had and stated:

> Actually, this is another conversation I had with one of my team members who is Black. We were actually talking about this. I'll say that there are some Black people who prefer to only do business with Black people and not White people. There are some even Hispanics or Latinos. They prefer to do business only with Hispanic and Latinos and not White people or Black people. I can't personally say I've ever experienced that but my observations are, through what I've heard through other people, I could say I've observed things and go, 'I wonder if that was a little prejudicial.' Like people saying hello to the same ethnicity or culture or race to which they belong or identify themselves, and not necessarily to another one. Was that bias?

Her initial statement focused on the idea that people of color may prefer to do business with people of the same race, but she did not say that the discussion included that White people may exhibit the same behavior by working more frequently with other White people. She further discussed that perhaps identity played a role in the ways that people

build relationships, but again did not explicitly discuss that identifying racially takes place for White people. Mark discussed an open forum for people to discuss their experiences at one of his previous company and shared the following:

> I remember there was a Black lady who, she said 'I remember when I first learned that White people went to church and I was surprised because I didn't see them in my churches.' And so there have been a few times where, there's another guy who just explained what it was like to go into a store and be watched that he was going to steal something…and so there have been a few experiences that I've had mostly within that open forum where people talked about what it was like to be Black or what it was like to be of their racial group.

Mark expressed that hearing his co-workers share their stories and experiences caused him to reflect on the idea that he does not personally experience racism. He went on to say that he "tried to put himself in that situation" and think about how the experience would affect him. Similarly, Angela explained:

> Then I started to realize that I needed to look at race from their [people of color] perspective rather than mine…but that was, remember when I said before I need to see it through their eyes, so I took…a more conscious effort to ask people what were they thinking? How were they looking at it?

She realized that she needed to open herself up to viewpoints that are shared by people of color.

The participants also discussed situations at work that took place as a result of the group dynamics within their organizations. Clarissa shared that when she worked with racially diverse teams, team members who are White and African American often felt the need to apologize for customers of the same race. She further described:

> And they'll say something like 'oh that's my people. Sorry, sometimes my people.' And it happens all the time and it happens with everybody. If you have a diverse group, they feel more able to say things like that with each other…and you know, only if it's a scenario where it's gone bad and they're like 'oh why?'

> [laughing] And it happens a lot. I think Caucasian and African Americans will do it the most.

Clarissa's explanation of the team dynamics seemed to portray a level of comfort discussing customers with the same racial identity as the team member making the observation. She described this dynamic as a positive one, but team members may also have been responding to stereotypes within the retail setting.

At different points in the interview, she expressed that she did not believe it was appropriate to perpetuate a stereotype about a racial group other than your own. She reflected that a White female employee had talked about "the profiles of what White people do," but admitted she did not "think it's funny when she does it about other races." She felt employees had developed a level of comfort with one another to discuss stereotypes, but she also believed that White employees should not perpetuate stereotypes about people of color even when team members of color were laughing at such comments. The line distinguishing what was considered open dialogue versus racism by White employees was an issue that Clarissa believed to be problematic in her own leadership.

Audra also discussed a situation at work that made her question her own language and level of comfort within a racially diverse work environment. She conducted a training session with a predominantly African American staff and had described a property in an impoverished area of town as "ghetto." Her use of the term was very negatively received and one participant had commented in the feedback that she should use different terminology. She reflected on her thought process after the training and stated:

> Said that [ghetto] in a training in Alabama, and there was a very different response because it was a largely African American group that I was teaching to and one of them, we do evaluations after the training, and one of them said "need to watch out how you say the word ghetto and be sensitive to your audience." And I was like, well no, what I was saying is I was actually talking about a ghetto like an impoverished area. It didn't mean, I didn't mean it's like Black or whatever, but that was very much how they took it and interpreted it. And so that was kind of interesting, it was probably the most like taken aback I've been by somebody. Because like anybody that knows me, knows that that's not how I look at things or whatever.

Audra responded to the participant's feedback reluctantly at first because she believed that she had used the term in a way that was not intended to be offensive. However, White people have often used the word "ghetto" to negatively refer to a community where people of color reside. She ultimately, later in her interview, acknowledged that trainees' perception of her language overrode her intent and that her use of the word had been offensive to the trainees. Additionally, she realized through this experience that she was perceived a certain way as a White woman and that part of her identity was important to her choice of language and behavior. The interactions and experiences that took place in the participants' work environments contrasted with the more informal experiences within their families.

Familial relationships. The participants' experiences learning about race and racial identity through their familial environments were much more informal than their experiences at work. For this reason, the findings in the family sub-theme presented many more instances of racism, perpetuated ideas about Whiteness, and the social construction of race. The participants shared family stories that dated back to their time as children and up through adulthood. Often times, these experiences were reflected upon as negative accounts of learning about race.

The role of family members in disseminating ideas about race and racial identity was especially apparent in five of the participants' stories. Sidney's mother was originally from Canada and moved to Texas when she was 17 and her father was originally from East Texas, and she stated "I was certainly raised in an environment of…bigotry." She provided an example from her childhood where her family decided to move because the community was becoming predominantly African American and she remembered this was the purpose for their move.

Sidney also expressed frustration when she tried to mix her family with some of her friends from church in her adult life. Her family responded with racist and homophobic comments about her friends, and she expressed that "as I've gotten older I guess I've gotten a little bit more diverse in my thinking from my family…sometimes it's a controversial issue." She ultimately told her family not to make such comments around her, but she did not seem convinced that they would stop in the future. Similarly, Mark called himself "a recovering racist" and described his grandfather as very racist. When he was a child, he often remembered his grandfather using racial epithets. He believed his own father "had less of it in him" than his grandfather and that being a recovering racist was about unlearning the racism passed down through the generations of his family.

Clarissa also had a negative family experience when she was in elementary school that reflected the negative messages about people of color that her parents had passed down. In recalling her experience not being allowed to spend the night with an African American friend, she realized that there was something different about her

because she was White. Her mother's role in perpetuating racism also came with no further explanation, which left Clarissa feeling angry at her parents.

Audra recounted a story about her half-brother's daughter (her niece) who had come to visit her back when her niece was about six years old. She had previously believed her half-brother was racist, but confirmed her thoughts after an incident that took place while her niece was watching an Aaliyah music video. She described:

> An Aaliyah video came on and she [niece] goes 'I don't like Aaliyah' and we were like 'oh you don't? What's wrong with her? This is a cool song?' She says 'I don't like Aaliyah because she's Black.'

She went on to say she and her sister discussed with her niece that one of her good friends is Black and they asked if she liked her friend. The niece responded that she did like her friend and Audra reflected "so the wheels are turning and you know when little kids say stuff like that, it's normally not something they thought of, it's something they heard." She also discussed that her mother and father started sharing their racist viewpoints as she has become an adult. Even though her opinions stand in contrast to her parents, she often does not challenge her father because she doesn't believe he will change his opinions.

Angela and Cathy spoke the least about their family experiences as children, but did offer brief stories from later in life. Angela took her son out shopping when he was about three years old, and he asked about skin color. She described:

> He said, 'Why is that man's skin Black?"…I said because some people have Black skin and some people have White skin and some people have – and he pointed out that my skin was not White [laughter]. Very helpful. Thank you [son's name].

Angela's story about her son showed that the idea of race as a social construct is a learned concept and also reflected that race is not easily defined by skin color alone, which was evident when her son pointed out that her skin was not White. Cathy initially only discussed her earlier family experiences through the lens of culture and discussed that she lived in a "very WASP kind of culture," but did not elaborate. She went on to share that her daughter's husband is Arabic and that she often spends time with their side of the family, and stated "I would have to admit that the comfort zone has become more a matter of ideologies that we share. I am more comfortable with those people who have the same ideology, regardless of race or culture." The family environment was a significant source of learning experiences related to race and racial identity. The participants also shared influences that emerged as a result of social interactions.

Social relationships that influence racial identity. The social environment was categorized by the many experiences with friends, acquaintances, and other social forces that impacted the participants' lives. Social interactions often functioned as conduits for understanding issues of race and their identities as White people. Sidney talked about building relationships at church with people of a variety of different racial backgrounds, which had been a positive experience for her. She believed that her church was extremely inclusive because they were in an urban setting, very racially diverse, and also extremely socioeconomically diverse. She also recalled an experience at work when she had become interested in dating an African American co-worker after they met at a volunteer event. She explained:

> I was certainly open to exploring what that could look like. But when I did that, I was also wondering what would it be like. I think, in Houston anyway, it is a bit

> of an anomaly. If an interracial couple is out they do get looked at. How would I feel to be in that situation? Meeting his family, or him meeting my family, what would that look like? I think it would be different.

As she processed through the idea of dating a man of color, she thought about how other people would interpret them if they had been a couple. She appeared to give more weight to the possible negative reactions than the positive possibilities of the relationship. Audra also expressed how people in the southern part of the U.S. often look at interracial couples negatively. She was out with her best friend and roommate in college, who is an African American man, and noticed this process taking place even though they were not in a dating relationship. She reflected:

> There were a few times when we went out to the movies or dinner or where older people would look at us, 'Oh gosh. That's not right." [laughter] That kind of look, or they'd just say something. I think I was more sensitive to it because I was with him, and I notice that. Whereas, I don't know if I would have noticed that if it was them doing it to someone else.

Audra realized that the fact that a White woman and an African American man were spending time together brought racist comments and looks from other people. She also reflected on the idea that she may not have noticed such behavior if it had been directed at someone else.

Mark also experienced negative social responses after he attempted to provide a positive outlook on Facebook after the 2012 presidential election. He further explained:

> I mean this is an example [of Facebook post]: 'I felt a real kind of purposeful need this week because I think the country is divided between Democrats and Republicans and it just seems like the country needs to come together.' And so I was saying this to him. He said 'What are you doing?' I said 'I'm bringing the country back together.' You know and those things…and I seemed to be the target of their anger [post-election]. And you know they laughed at me. 'What planet are you from?' 'Have you been drinking the Kool-aid?' You know all

> kinds of things. And I could have just deleted him and it would have been that easy, but that isn't who I wanted to be. I wanted to not get hooked by him.

Mark reflected on the fact that his on-line posts caused people to respond extremely negatively to him when he was viewed as supportive of President Obama's re-election. While the discussion was not directly related to race, Mark expressed that these reactions came from childhood friends he believed still harbored disrespectful and exclusive belief systems.

Clarissa's experiences were tied to her core friendships with a group of women that included herself, one other White woman, three African American women, and two Hispanic women. She believed that their close friendship allowed them to have open conversation about things that take place related to race. She explained:

> I think with speaking with them, they're more willing to tell me because I'm a friend, something that makes them mad, or why does this happen? [in relation to race] I take that to heart and I really think about it and try to use it in my everyday life. I'm like do I ever do that…so I think my friends have played a really big role in it.

Clarissa believed that her friends of color were more able to be direct with her about situations related to race, which had directly impacted the way she thought about herself. When they brought up topics that had frustrated them in the past, Clarissa would process through if that was a behavior she had exhibited.

Cathy discussed the most influential social aspects as directly related to her experiences while living in Mexico. She reflected on the fact that many of the Americans living there chose not to learn Spanish and "they would have lived there 20 years, some of them, and learned two or three words of Spanish." What was missing from her description was the race of the Americans and she seemed to talk around the idea that

the White people there did not want to integrate into the Hispanic culture. Her quote also highlighted the double-standards held by many White Americans, which expect immigrants to the U.S. to immediately assimilate to English speaking. The social relationships and experiences that informed participants' understanding about race and racial identity spanned a wide variety of social settings. The participants also shared examples from their educational experiences that influenced their ideas about racial identity.

Learning about race through school. Four of the participants specifically expressed instances from their own educational experiences that had shaped some of their early exposures to understanding race and racial identity. Audra described her high school as predominantly White, but there was also an international baccalaureate program (IB) that included most of the students of color who attended the school. She reflected:

> At the time, I didn't realize why they [students of color] were so angry, but it's they're being taken out of their neighborhood, away from their friends, and bussed into the school with all these upper middle class White kids…it was a tense weird thing. I think that was when I really realized it was part of my identity. That people would look at me and make assumptions about me, or think things about me because of my color or my race.

Audra realized as a young person that her racial identity was a big part of how people perceived her. She also began to understand the racism that was enacted by many of the White students in her school. Later, she had an interaction with a chorus teacher who was African American who had asked them about the substitute teachers they had the week she had been away. She further explained:

> She asked us to describe them [the substitutes] and I went through describing these three teachers we'd had in the course of like five days and she said 'did you realize you didn't describe the race of any of them except for the African American woman?' I was like 'is that bad?' She very much approached it like well that's a bad thing. I was like, but you don't think to self-identify like I would never describe myself to somebody as White.

Her interaction with her chorus teacher required her to think about the fact that she had allowed the White substitutes to be race neutral. At the time when this happened, Audra felt that it was a normal process for anyone to only describe the race of someone who had a different race than their own. She explained it in a way that seemed she would think people of color would also only use race as an identifier if they were talking about someone of another race.

Some of the older participants had memories from school that were somewhat different because they grew up during a time when schools were only recently desegregated. Mark described that his high school was very racially diverse, but "there was really a very clear separation between where the African American population and where everyone else lived." He also shared one example of an African American football teammate who would yell racial epithets out the window when Mark would drive him home, which was in a predominantly African American community. This made it appear to people in the community as though he had yelled the racial slur rather than his teammate. He believed that he had to unlearn some of his own racism that came as a result of some early negative experiences in his very segregated hometown. Similarly, Angela discussed noticing race as a result of living near the edge of a White neighborhood and an African American neighborhood when she would see "all the Black high school students walk down this path to go home because we lived just on the

edge of their community." She also discussed the fact that around this same time schools were still segregated, but they became desegregated by the time she began elementary school.

Sidney remembered a situation that took place on the school bus shortly after her family moved when she was about 12 years old. She described:

> I rode the bus for the first time. I saw that I was different, and really that I was the minority. There was a mixture of Hispanics and Blacks and Whites, but the Hispanics were in the majority, and then I'd say Blacks and Whites were sort of next. A couple of Hispanic girls who were making fun of me on the bus, and [I] didn't really have the skills at 12 to know how to handle it.

The situation marked a time in life when Sidney realized that being White was part of her identity. After her Dad was called into the principal's office about the event, he told her "you need to be more friendly." Interestingly, there was no further conversation between them about the incident. She believed she must have done, or said, something back to the girls in order to be called into the principal's office, but could not remember with certainty. The participants' stories about interactions in the educational environment made it clear that they began to notice race and to form their own racial identity through these interactions. As participants continued to explain their lives, the construction of their own culture was another environment that impacted racial identity.

I think it's a culture of "mixed up". The findings suggested that while the participants were overwhelmingly comfortable talking about culture in the broad sense, they sometimes struggled to clearly define their own culture. This resulted in a wide variety of cultural influences, which spanned from ethnicity, to nationality, and religion.

Renee explained that as she's gotten older she thinks "it's part of maturing and identifying really who I am as I get older. I think it's a culture of mixed up, I don't know." She discussed the variety of influences such as her Native American side of her family that she had begun to trace back as well as her role as a working female. She also discussed her socioeconomic status and said she is a "DINK," which stood for double income, no kids. Similarly, Cathy also discussed ethnicity as part of her culture and said:

> The DNA part of it is certainly – the Scots and the British. There are things about that culture that remain ingrained I think in our family customs, the food we choose to eat, some of the ways we celebrate. At the same time, because I've lived in other cultures and because now my family has become more intercultural with part of the family being Arab, it's taking on a whole combination of cultures.

She used the idea of DNA to replace ethnicity, but expressed some connection to continuing rituals she associated with her Scottish and British family ancestry. The combination of many different factors that make up culture was also apparent in Clarissa's discussion. She talked first about the culture of her family and explained:

> I think that we love unhealthy home food [laughter], you know what I mean? Southern comfort foods. I think that we can be a bit of loners.

She also mentioned that her generation might have influenced her culture especially with regard to technology usage. Audra also felt that her Southern background influenced her culture. She further described:

> When I moved out here, I realized I'm definitely a lot more southern than I thought I was. Definitely southern, and my family is Irish. There's a lot of traditional cultural things that our family does that I didn't notice were weird until I got a little older [laugher].

Audra felt connected to her family's Irish ethnicity and background and discussed she identified heavily with this part of her history. Sidney identified by growing up in America and stated:

> My culture is – I think of being an American. When I think of culture, I think of being a southerner. When I think of culture, I think of my family as a culture. I think of where I work has a culture or a personality.

Sidney may have identified as an American because she often works internationally, but she did not elaborate into any ethnic background or culture she affiliates herself with. Like Clarissa, she also touched briefly on the idea of work culture.

Angela discussed culture from the point of view of her childhood and explained:

> My own culture—I would say my own culture was selected because I grew up extremely poor with indifferent parents who thought if I could just maybe make a "C" in school, they'd be okay…Education to me was what unlocked the door because it didn't matter to me whether the person was Black or Asian or whatever if they were good. I just wanted to do better, so I went through and selected. It made me very comfortable. Most people end up in groups. I was never in a group. I was always the person that floated from group to group to group, and still do that because I'm looking for people who are interesting. I collected my culture. Now I'm sure it was influenced by where I grew up, which was the south—religious, Bible belt—but being judgmental is just abhorrent to me, so the Bible belt just turned me off.

Angela's description of culture touched on a variety of ideas. First, she talked about her family, then education, the idea of individualism, and finally the religious stereotypes sometimes present in the "Bible Belt" part of the United States. Her view of herself as disconnected from larger groups of people is a belief often expressed by White people.

The cultural influences the participants discussed combined many elements of their identity across ethnicity, religion, family history, geographical influences, and cultural ideals that may be related to beliefs and practices common for White people.

The power of these undertones was even more apparent as the participants discussed aspects of their lives that related to the practiced behaviors and beliefs of White people.

Constructing Whiteness

The construct of Whiteness refers to the structural manifestations of privilege for White people, which are created through enacted behaviors, beliefs and networks. This structure ultimately results in the construction and maintenance of racial privilege for White people. The construction of Whiteness emerged as a result of the participants' discussion about the ways that privilege and racism exist parallel to one another. The findings that supported the construction of Whiteness as a theme included: a) incidents of feeling White, b) examples of White privilege in action, c) understanding racism and oppression, and d) defining the idea of anti-racism.

Five of the seven participants frequently normalized the experiences of White people and often did not think about their own racial identity except in the presence of people of color, or situations from their past where another White person was passing along negative messages about race. They were able to provide examples of ways in which White privilege takes place either from themselves or as a result of negative experiences that they are not subjected to as White people. They further described their knowledge of racism and oppression through White people's racist actions against people of color. The participants also shared their ideas about the term anti-racism. The depiction of Whiteness as an operating system began through the participants' descriptions about times when they noticed their own race and attached some meaning to that knowledge.

Incidents of feeling White. The experience of being a White person was explained through personal experiences as well as ideas that were more detached and esoteric. Participants were asked to attach meaning to being a White person and their responses began to establish how they think about themselves as part of a racial group. Audra said:

> It's interesting. It's changing. I think it's a really interesting time to be watching sociology and all of that right now because it used to be the whole White is right mentality back in the day. That very much, if you were a White male, you were representative of the average American or whatever. That's so shifting with immigration, and with racial mixing. People being in mixed families and stuff like that. That's no longer the norm, and it's really interesting to see that as a group becoming more of a subgroup and not a—I mean, it's still a majority, but—

Audra was aware of the idea that as racial demographics of the U.S. population change, it has become even more important for White people to get away from norming the White experience. Cathy also discussed racial demographics and stated:

> At one time I think there was a huge advantage in being White. The country was based on a White Anglo-American, Saxon, Protestant ethic. Now as cultures change, the demographics are definitely changing. It will soon be that the Whites are a minority and not a majority. I think that it's very obvious to me that Whites have always had some advantages that were not extended to other races. That, I think, was always apparent. I think it's becoming more apparent as it's lessening, as it's beginning to change, because now Whites are realizing that, 'Oh, my gosh, we're not the majority.' I think that just like the last presidential election [2012] was a huge wake-up call to a lot of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants who thought that they could still carry forth their ideas without consideration of other cultures and other ways of thinking. It would be interesting to see how that changes.

Cathy's statement referenced privilege for White people, but she spoke about access to racial privilege from a disconnected point of view. The changing demographics would

not likely be important without the implied loss of White privilege. Mark also avoided direct admission of his connection to a larger racial group and said "I haven't spent much time distinguishing myself as a White person in America." He focused more on individualism, which highlighted the privilege afforded to White people to denounce any racial group membership. Angela stated:

> I think being White in America is the same as being Asian in America or Black in America. I think we need to all get our asses together because the country is not going to be the greatest country in the world if we don't start pulling together.

Angela initially overlooked the significance of racial identity as a factor in the experiences of anyone, although at other times she was clear that White people still committed acts of racism against people of color. Clarissa responded that she believed being a White person directly resulted in privileges. She explained:

> We don't go through probably any kind of stereotypes. I guess for the most part, White people in America always feel like they're the majority.

Clarissa also believed that in the retail sector, she often felt it was easier to get hired for a job as a White woman. Audra and Clarissa both expressed an understanding of some of the privileges and structural issues that contribute to the construction of Whiteness.

The participants further described some of the moments that prompted them to think about their racial identity, which often took place when they were in a setting where they were not part of the racial majority. Sidney discussed her experience going to a predominantly African American church that she had driven by on her way to and from work. She shared:

> So one Wednesday evening I decided I was going to go to church there and I drove my car in the back in the parking lot and there were many other cars there.

> I got out of the car and I started walking into the doors in the back and I realized this is a Black church and I was the only White person in the parking lot going into the church. I remember thinking get back in the car and go home. This is, you've messed up. And I got to thinking about when I was a little girl and the church that I went to there was a Black family and I thought of them and I thought what must it have been like to be them. So I decided to put on my big girl pants and experience the experience and see what it was all about.

Sidney's experience illustrated the realization of her race once she was no longer in a setting where she was part of the racial majority. The experience also caused her to think more in depth about the experience of being a person of color in an all-White environment. Similarly, Audra attended a service at a predominantly African American church with her best friend and college roommate because his uncle was the preacher. She described:

> So we go to his church service and again, I was the only White person in the entire church and we of course, we had to go stand up near the front because that's where my friend was and so it's walking pew, after pew, after pew of people staring at me and kind of wondering what I was doing there. And that was, you know, not a negative experience at all. It was more just kind of a mild feeling of alienation like I don't belong here but they were all very nice and very welcoming and it was still a fun church service and everything. But definitely, yeah, it was definitely a weird feeling you know, being kind of the only person in there.

Audra's experience stood out to her because she felt exposed in a space where she was not part of the racial majority. In contrast to Sidney, she had been invited to attend the service, which may also have accounted for her more positive experience. Angela shared an experience from many years ago when she was on her second date with her husband. She explained:

> We ended up in a Black community and we were the only two White people in the packed theater of Black people. It just didn't dawn on us until we were already there and sitting down.

Again, her racial identity became more obvious to her when she was in a situation where she was part of the racial minority in the theater. Clarissa discussed a time when she noticed her racial identity at work and said:

> I definitely think it was when I was training a whole team of African American people. I felt White. You know why? Because I am [laughing]. And it was real noticeable because everybody around me was African American and at one point they even asked me to stop calling them African American and just call them Black please. And I was like ok [laughing]….but I mean, that was an interesting scenario and I mean it was challenging. It was so challenging because I just wanted to make sure that I wasn't changing the way I do things because *I* felt uncomfortable.

Clarissa's candid discussion about her training experience also depicted her thought process about adjusting her training style in response to the trainees' feedback during the training.

Renee and Cathy shared slightly different experiences that took place when they had traveled outside of Texas. Renee's husband is Puerto Rican and they had a trip planned to go there and meet his family. She remembered:

> The first time we went down to Puerto Rico to visit his family, his family was down there, I was not terrified, but I was guarded, concerned. Because um, he's, he's fairly dark complected. I think he looks more Hispanic. His mother's a little bit lighter than him, but I thought I was going to stand out like a sore thumb being White. Quite the opposite when we got down there. Quite the opposite.

Renee's hesitation about traveling to her husband's hometown caused her to consider how she might be perceived because of her racial identity as a White woman. She was pleasantly surprised that people were very comfortable with racial diversity in Puerto Rico. Cathy's experience took place while she was living in Mexico and she stated:

> I would go to the market and they'd say güera. Güera means Whitey. Hey Whitey, do you want to buy this? Do you want to buy that? Yeah. In Mexico it was hard not to be reminded pretty frequently that you are White. At the same

> time they were a culture that's very open and inviting and friendly, but you're always reminded that you're different. Some people would say well yeah but that's a positive thing. I mean, they're holding you up. At the same time it has its negatives as well because it separates. It's a way of separating, keeping people separate so—

Cathy's experience in Mexico caused her to notice her racial identity, which also took place in the midst of a setting where she was not part of the racial majority. Her interpretation of the experience was that this position brought her privilege, but also separated her from people who were Hispanic. Simultaneously, there may also have been some intersection with class if the store owners believed she had money because she was White. The connection between attaching some meaning to their experiences as White people was also shown through examples of racial privilege.

Examples of White privilege in action. The findings suggested that the participants' were able to provide explanations of the multiple ways in which White people as a larger social group have access to racial privilege. All of the participants, except Angela, ultimately agreed there was some level of privilege afforded to White people, but they did not all make the connection that they personally had received White privilege. Mark did not believe that he had access to White privilege, but simultaneously discussed instances where White people have historically received special treatment. He went on to state:

> Occasionally, some White guy around the poker table will assume because he's racist, that because I'm White, I'm a racist. So he may express some hateful statement against Blacks and I'm sure he wouldn't say that if I was a Black man. So I guess you get told things by other White guys that you might not be told if they didn't see you as a kindred spirit because of the color or your skin.

Mark was able to identify that many White people assume a group racial identity when they are speaking to another White person. His comment highlighted that he is often viewed as a group member in terms of race, which worked negatively in this example, but could also produce outcomes of privilege. Similarly, Renee also expressed conflicting ideas about privilege and stated "I don't think I've ever been turned away, or allowed privilege because I'm White." She later stated "I think the fact that I was born and I am Caucasian is also a blessing because I did not have to go through some of the struggles I know people have gone through in the past." She conveyed both a denial of privilege and an acceptance of privilege.

Cathy and Sidney also expressed conflicting statements about White privilege. They each discussed the idea of privilege from a distance and spoke more about White people in general terms. Cathy stated:

> At one time I'm sure it [privilege] was education. Now, I think those doors have opened a lot more. I'm glad to see that. That's interesting. Nothing just pops in my mind although I'm sure – I'll have to think about that.

She did not believe that she had any differential access in her daily life due to her racial identity, but clearly discussed that in Mexico she was catered to because she was a White woman. Sidney expressed "Yeah. I'm sure there are [privileges] if I thought about it. Nothing comes to mind at the moment." She also discussed:

> In some respects I think there's some privilege that comes with it, sad to say. I'm hoping that things have changed and improved since the '60s when I was born...I'm hoping some things have improved. However, just because you're a certain race, because you're White doesn't mean that everything is easy, because there's certainly a lot of people of the White race who have a very difficult time of it. Generally speaking it's—for some reason it feels like it's easier in this culture, that you don't already have something that you're struggling against

Sidney was willing to discuss privilege from a general standpoint, but not at a very personal level. Audra also discussed "I think that, in certain situations, there's more trust given to White people by other…White people." She further referenced her experience at the gas station pre-pay pump when the White gas station attendant turned hers on, but required the African American customer to go inside and pay first. Clarissa was also able to relate privilege back to her own life and said:

> Just anything that has to do with probably something of – some sort of authority [is easier] I feel like being Caucasian, you already have your foot in the door and you don't have to fight as hard.

Clarissa and Audra were the only two participants that directly discussed how White privilege has functioned in their lives on a daily basis. Sidney, Mark, Renee, and Cathy acknowledged racial privilege, but were hesitant to claim such advantages are afforded to them personally, which ultimately contributes to the invisibility of Whiteness. Concurrently, the participants all shared examples of overt acts of racism.

Understanding racism and oppression. The construction of Whiteness as a system of privilege for White people also maintains a system of negative outcomes for many people of color. The participants primarily explained racism as negative acts against people of color enacted by White people, but rarely made the connection back to a large scale system or operating framework. For example, Angela shared an example of racism by two White mothers at her son's private elementary school towards an African American girl who was also in his class at school. She and her mother were out shopping and Renee recounted:

> Her little girl was in the private school uniform. Two of the [White] mothers from our school were talking in the next aisle and she [child's mother] could hear them. They said 'Oh can you believe we have – derogatory term – at our school?'

Angela told the story without repeating the racial epithet used by the mothers, but went on say they had used "the 'n' word." They ultimately had a school meeting where the other parents reprimanded the two mothers and forced them to acknowledge their racism and wrongdoing. However, Angela previously cited education as a way to prevent racism and privilege, but shared an example of how racism takes place within that system.

Renee and Cathy both discussed instances where they personally had exhibited racist, and prejudicial, beliefs about African Americans. Renee shared an experience from her time as a waitress in college when she held the belief that African American customers would not tip her as much as much as other customers. She elaborated:

> It was kind of a thing amongst learning how to wait tables that if you got a Black [customer] table that you wouldn't be tipped very well. That preconceived notion that was planted in my head was always there, always a concern.

She did not currently believe this stereotype at the time of the interviews, but her story highlighted the systemic passing along of a racist stereotype about African American customers. Cathy also discussed her thought process eight years ago while traveling back to the U.S. when she realized that she was viewing the African American travelers through a racist lens. She recalled:

> It's the cultural perceptions that we throw out on televisions and so much of our learning comes from the media that I looked around and I saw these very stern looking faces that don't smile automatically unless you smile at them. I thought, 'Oh, my gosh, I'm surrounded by criminals and drug addicts,' and—all of the perceptions of my upbringing were thrown out—came out. When I came back in the States I had this again where I'm put in the midst of African-American

> demographic that I'd never experienced. I found myself having to ask these questions, 'What am I afraid of? Why is this?' It's because it was unfamiliar to me. It was my own personal ignorance until, of course, I got acquainted with people and worked with people and was able to replace the programming that I had.

Her candid revelation pointed out that deep seeded racist stereotypes often guide the lens through which many White people perceive people of color. The individual acts of racism, or beliefs in racist stereotypes, cumulatively affect the larger social environment.

Renee also provided an example of how racism impacts system processes. She discussed an experience traveling through the airport with her husband after September 11th, 2001, the date of the attack on the Twin Towers and World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon, and several airplanes, which had resulted in racial profiling at airport security. She remembered:

> He looks more Middle Eastern than he does Hispanic. After 9/11 we were actually coming back from Puerto Rico, and they stopped him and they did a full—I mean everything. Asked him questions—'Your name is really this? You look like it should be something else than this name.' They interrogated him. I remember being more upset about it than he was.

Her experience traveling with her husband was one of direct racial profiling in response to the September 11, 2001 attacks that took place in connection with the terrorist organizations Al Qaeda and the Taliban. However, the experience highlighted that people of color were stereotyped as a result when White people were much less likely to be profiled purely due to skin color. She also discussed a Persian co-worker who was frequently profiled at the airport and ultimately changed his name to avoid further experiences. The system of authority afforded to airport security was something she

could directly relate to due to her husband's experience. Cathy described systemic racism as part of her experience in Mexico where she noticed:

> Just the racism going to the U.S. Embassy for people who had tried to get visas to come to the States, and how if you were a 'moneyed' Mexican, that process would be easy for you because you would get – you would pay your money to get to the front of the line. Those who didn't have the money or the resources were considered more of a threat to the United States.

Cathy provided an example of the systemic oppression for Hispanic people to get access to the United States from Mexico due to socioeconomic status. The numerous mentions of the intersection of race and class were critical, although there was not an opportunity to explore this strand of findings at length in the context of this study. While each participant discussed acts of racism they had witnessed or heard about from someone else, they did not consistently connect those ideas back to any covert privileges afforded to White people. However, the construction of Whiteness as an operating system of privilege and oppression was reinforced by these same stories. The findings also revealed that the participants could define anti-racism, but did not believe they were participating in any formal anti-racist behavior or work. They did share examples of some of the methods they used to challenge oppressive behavior by other people.

Defining the idea of anti-racism. The sub-theme of anti-racism illustrated the level of comfort the participants' expressed in relation to challenging people when they are perpetuating racism. Mark described an anti-racist as "a person who engages and takes it [racism] on and tries to encourage people towards fairness." None of the participants identified with the term anti-racism by Helm's (1995) explanation of this stage of White racial identity development as activist oriented. Renee captured this idea

when she stated "with that definition…no, because I'm not out there publically trying to stop stuff." Similarly, Sidney stated "It's [anti-racism] isn't a cause of mine." Six of the seven participants did agree that there were some environments within their lives where they did challenge racism.

Clarissa discussed her stance at work might be "hey, you need to stop this. I would interrupt it, even when it's people talking about their own race." She went on to say she would do this particularly if it was an offensive statement and said "I've had a lady be like 'Oh, well my people,' and I'm like, 'It's not just your people. It's just her.'" Her response was to interrupt when a general negative stereotype was being applied. Both Sidney and Renee discussed challenging family members who made racist comments. Sidney explained:

> Within my own family, anyway, I think I can make a difference and speak up. Just get them to think about, examine their thoughts and words, up against people who I've introduced them to who are friends of mine, and who they realize are just really good, solid people, and have gotten them to retract or at least stop the comments and talk about something else.

She believed that her relationship with family members might have caused some level of reflection to occur as a minimum reaction to her interruption. Renee discussed her husband's stepfather, a White man, who she would frequently challenge when he would make racist statements and generalizations. She used the example that he called her husband and herself "communists" because they were not opposed to President Obama's tenure as President of the United States. She expressed that he was unwilling to change his viewpoints, but that she continued to disagree with him when he would make such statements.

Mark discussed a time when he made a joke about a White man who was playing poker at the same establishment. He made fun of the man in front of the remaining players as a way of drawing the line for the type of discussion that would be permitted at the table, perhaps an indirect anti-racist maneuver. Mark went on to distinguish the metric he used to try and decide whether or not he would challenge someone after a racist remark. He explained:

> One of the criteria I like to use is what's my probability of success? I mean how well do I know this person? I don't argue with strangers. I don't engage somebody in the supermarket. I just will tend to kind of ignore it. If I'm at a poker table and I'm going to be there a significant part of the night, I don't really know them very well at all, but I'm going to be around them for a few hours I will sometimes make fun of them in some way. Sometimes for humor or something to kind of make light of it, but send the message and do it in some way.

He also discussed that "there's certain other people that maybe I've been friends with for quite some time and I feel more comfortable that a relationship can endure some open dialogue or open discussion." Mark acknowledged that he used his relationships with people as an entry point to challenge racist behaviors.

The participants' construction of Whiteness was formed through a compilation of work and personal experiences that dealt with acknowledging their racial identity as White people, examples of racial privilege, understanding of racism and oppression, and dialogue about the idea of anti-racism. Multiple situations and environments were found to impact the ongoing formation of the participants' identity development. The findings suggested that their racial consciousness was further developed through their experiences working in racially diverse organizations.

Developing Racial Consciousness

The findings highlighted that the White trainers in the study continued to develop their racial consciousness through their work in racially diverse organizations. This finding was supported through the following categories: a) White trainers in racially diverse organizations, b) "diversity is good", c) interchanging racial diversity and global and cultural diversity, and d) defining the terms of culture and race.

The participants' initial descriptions about their experiences working in racially diverse organizations presented these environments as positive. While each participant was pleased to be working in an organization that openly sought to maintain racial diversity among employees, they often explained the impact of the differences in negative ways. The findings also suggested that the participants who delivered training internationally often experienced unexpected situations related to the ways training was delivered or interpreted by trainees. Several of the participants continuously interchanged the notions of racial diversity and global diversity. The trainers who worked internationally also expressed that diversity was not just racial now because many organizations are working on a global scale. Five of the participants consistently interchanged the terms of race and culture, often favoring to talk first about culture because it seemed to remove the uncomfortable feelings associated with the discussion of race. This lead to the creation of the second interview protocol, which specifically asked the participants to define the terms culture and race to distinguish whether or not they could distinguish the ideas, or had been purposely defaulting to culture. The

participants' responses created a general overview of their experiences within their respective organizations.

White Trainers in Racially Diverse Organizations

The participants described their experiences of working in racially diverse organizations as generally positive and an organizational characteristic they had come to expect and find interesting. Renee stated:

> I think it's kind of interesting and I don't know if you're looking at personally or environmentally, or culturally, but personally I find it very interesting. Even though for most of my career I've worked in diverse companies, but I think in particular, the one I work for now…is probably the most diverse I've ever had. From a culture standpoint, from an ethnicity standpoint. You could argue not so much on the gender, but definitely culturally and racially and religious.

Similarly, Angela expressed that she believed working somewhere that was racially diverse was a positive experience and also discussed other elements of diversity in addition to race.

> Working in an organization where there's a lot of diversity, racial diversity, just adds a lot more complexity. You get a lot more options of different things to learn about. And so, it's *really, really* interesting because people bring very different mindsets and having to work with that and design for that and deliver to that, is terrific because it's just, it's a lot of variety.

She also elaborated on the idea that trainers have a responsibility to create a safe environment and noticed "it's challenging because it's easy to make mistakes. You want to be as cognizant as you can to avoid those kinds of things because the last thing you want to do is hurt someone's feelings or make them feel bad, because it's my job not to lose anybody." Sidney also expressed that working in a racially diverse organization had contributed to her pride in her organization and explained:

> I think it's fascinating. Here's where I'd like to explain what company I work for because I'm very proud of them, but I remember, it feels natural to me now, but I remember when I started 5 ½ years also working downtown thinking how intriguing and interesting it is to be in a facility that has so many different colors and ages and cultures and just feeling very proud to work in a company that is so culturally diverse.

The initial response that working in a diverse organization was interesting seemed to preface the idea that there were also many other layers to thinking about that experience.

Audra realized that, in addition to her overall experience, there were always moments where new ideas could be presented. Particularly important for Audra was that the ideas people of color expressed caused her to see beyond her own frame of reference as a White woman. She described:

> I think that we're always learning when you're able to have interactions with lots of different racial groups throughout a month, a year. You're always learning different things and having come from very different backgrounds throughout different points in my life, it's always very interesting to kind of see how different phrases affect people, how different words affect people.

She reflected on the idea that facilitating training in a racially diverse organization requires an ongoing ability to relate to a variety of training audiences. Similarly, Clarissa experienced that when training interracially, she believed the team was better able to cope with new challenges and stated:

> It feels more like a team because everybody brings something different to the, to the field. And so we work better with one another. We come up with solutions easier rather than, you don't want the same, I don't know, you wouldn't want all the same perspective on every situation. That we're all diverse…because we'll solve problems quicker as a team.

Both Audra and Clarissa viewed racial diversity as a key component to the dynamics of their organizations and were very clear about the fact that they directly believed race impacted the experiences of everyone.

However, Cathy presented a different perspective and was not immediately willing to distinguish race as a factor that influences the dynamics of her organization. She explained her beliefs as follows:

> I think all organizations are racially diverse whether we have different races or not. It's just we are all speaking different languages just in the way our minds and brains are developed that our race almost has little or nothing to do with it as I see it because we are all so very unique. I'm not sure. I've got to think about that.

Her explanation that an organization could be racially diverse in the absence of employees who are from a variety of racial backgrounds, seemed to imply some confusion about the definition of race. However, all of the participants discussed that diversity was a positive trait for an organization to possess among its employees when they considered the differences among employee identities.

"Diversity is Good"

The findings indicated that the participants' often described diversity in large scale and esoteric terms. While the participants all agreed that diversity is an important part of building a successful organization in terms of race, gender, culture and other factors, their comments in this theme were more big picture than personal. The participants used the term diversity as a "catch all" for differences and similarities in identity, as well as differences in ideas and contributions to the organization.

The idea that diversity was more about differences than similarities was highlighted when Mark expressed:

> I really believe that strength lies in our differences and if we're able to tap into that, and I accept that it creates misunderstandings. It creates communication challenges, but I mean once you work through that I think you have a more powerful product, a more powerful team, more powerful capabilities.

Mark often focused on the notion that disagreements in points of view can help an organization think through a variety of strategies that may otherwise not have been brought up at all. He also discussed that diversity was important when building the team of trainers. He explained his reasoning as followed:

> Well as a trainer I know they're also talking about trainers can also be training leaders in an organization. I just think it's important for you to have diversity among your training staff. So, if you happen to be the White male, just to look at do we have a good mix of thinking diversity, racial diversity, gender diversity?

Mark's comments about the various leadership positions trainers can have within the company gave additional support for the need to employ people from a variety of backgrounds. Specifically, trainers are employees who are often responsible for passing along organizational values and ideas and the people hired to be in such roles should reflect a variety of identities and backgrounds. Mark also made a point to acknowledge that as a White male it is important to make sure that the White male perspective is not the only one presented. Clarissa also expressed that diversity in employee backgrounds was important to the success of the organization. She stated:

> Since its retail…our client base is diverse [racially], so we need diversity. We need all different perceptions on what's going on. If it was not, it would not be successful. I think it's probably one of the most important things. It's fun. It's interesting. You learn new things. You learn different perspectives.

Clarissa discussed that the organization needs to employ a racially diverse staff in order to reflect the racial diversity in their client base. She noted that the company's performance would suffer if they chose not to employ a diverse group of employees. She also focused on her feelings that working among a diverse team was something that she found both necessary and fulfilling.

Renee discussed that diversity in team members' backgrounds in areas such as religion may result in differences of opinion and expressed:

> Diversity is good. I think the idea that it's okay – I don't agree with maybe some of the beliefs or behaviors, of the differences, but perhaps I should still respect the differences.

She acknowledged that disagreeing with one another in the workplace is acceptable when employees still maintain a level of respect for each other's beliefs and opinions. Angela also believed that sometimes "you have to just accept that things are different. You don't have to agree, and you agree to disagree." The participants reinforced that diversity in team member backgrounds will often result in a variety of opinions.

Audra also believed that diversity can also be defined by our experiences related to our identity and backgrounds. She was the most comfortable providing personal examples that reflected her willingness to challenge her own thinking and perceptions. She provided an example of one of the teams she worked with that included herself as a White woman, two student staff who were Hispanic, and three professional staff members who were African American. She noticed her own learning was affected as follows:

> Seeing how different people interact, because you've got 800 residents…and seeing how they [staff] interact with different groups I definitely think was helpful in this job because that just kind of makes it easier to understand just where the different people are coming from and kind of the experiences they may have had.

Audra's consideration of her experiences working as part of a racially diverse team helped her remain open-minded about everyone's style and experiences. She felt that being on the job was a process of discovery for her as a team member. All seven of the

participants agreed that experiential learning, which allows trainees to practice a skill, was a method they always included in some capacity. Audra explained:

> I think that an interactive environment is really important. From my experience its' a rare person who learns really well from kind of the lecture based type of learning.

She acknowledged that trainees with various learning styles are in the room and a lecture style format is not enough. Sidney agreed and stated "my philosophy is about getting the learner actively involved and engaged in the learning. Renee added:

> My philosophy is really learner focused, performance focused. In other words, it's not just about learning or teaching, it's really about educating people in what they immediately need to know and do and making sure it's more active and experiential as opposed to so much facilitator/teacher focused.

Angela and Cathy expressed larger philosophical ideas about teaching and learning. While Cathy believed that "everybody had an unlimited potential to learn," Angela talked about the institution of education. She stated:

> I believe that education is the deciding factor in people being able to move up in competency. It certainly was true for me, so I am a strong, strong supporter of helping to develop people.

Angela's initial comment upheld the idea that trainings are often used to address competencies within organizations and mirrored Renee's response about learner needs. The participants all believed that working in a racially diverse organization was a positive experience even as they hinted at challenges present within those experiences. While they each expressed the importance of working with a diverse group of co-workers or trainees, they also shared some negative examples of how differences have been utilized in various training environments.

Pointing out differences in identity. The participants expressed openly that diversity, in terms of similarities and differences, was a key component to making their organizations successful. However, the participants also elaborated on aspects of discussing differences that presented negative experiences at work for themselves or other employees, particularly surrounding race and gender.

Sidney discussed a training she attended as a trainee where the workshop was focused on use of technology, such as video equipment, as a facilitation tool. One of the men leading the training discussed the different lighting and camera techniques that would need to be adjusted as necessary. She further explained:

> He was talking about the lighting and the cameras and how all that worked and we were all standing around and we could see what he was doing, and ourselves, on the camera. He had one [White] girl sit in the chair and he was talking about how everything is accommodating him, to him, and his height. He had an African American guy sit down in the chair and talk about factors you should consider with lighting in a video conference if you have dark skin. I remember thinking how uncomfortable it is for somebody to point out your difference. But then again, I thought he is different and we're stating the obvious and you do need to make different considerations for a video conference and lighting and taking pictures for people who have darker skin than light. But it's what I was saying about inclusiveness versus appreciating the diversity without making the person feel uncomfortable.

Sidney expressed her belief that it was uncomfortable to have a difference pointed out when no one else in the training had been singled out. The situation seemed to norm "Whiteness" as the White trainees were not specifically asked to think about how their skin tone would affect adjustments for room lighting and photography. Instead, the man in the room who was African American was singled out. While the participants argued that diversity was a positive attribute of their work environments, they continued to interchange terms related to cultural diversity and racial diversity.

Interchanging Racial Diversity and Global and Cultural Diversity

The use of language and stories about global and cultural diversity instead of racial diversity was an ongoing theme throughout the findings. While Audra and Clarissa did not interchange the concepts, the remaining five participants often expressed that diversity on a global scale took precedence over racial diversity alone. For example, when asked to discuss racial diversity in the workplace, Cathy defaulted to the following statement:

> I think all organizations are racially diverse whether we have different races or not. It's just we are all speaking different languages just in the way our minds and brains are developed that our race almost has little or nothing to do with it as I see it because we are all so very unique. I'm not sure. [I've] got to think about that.

Her unwillingness to fully acknowledge the influence of race as a part of identity was supplemented by the idea of individualism, which has often been described as a strategy used by White people to distance themselves from topics about race and racism. Renee also discussed that she rarely thought about the racial makeup of her training sessions and stated:

> I think that's why I'm having a hard time because I never, I don't know what the right word is, but I've never made that such a focus that I identify 'oh my gosh, I've got, you know 8 Asian people, 2 Caucasians, and three Black people.' I don't think I've ever done that.

She further explained some of the lack of focus on racial diversity specifically as followed:

> I think that's part of their [her company] inherent culture and maybe their business has probably always been, or not always, but at least in the last 20 years, 30 years. And so culturally, racially, geographically diverse. Globally so diverse.

Her perceived identity of the company was focused primarily on the global scope of business and employees in lieu of the racial diversity that was also present.

The absence of discussion about racial diversity within the U.S. branches of participants' organizations was also expressed by Mark. At a time when he was doing contracted training work with an organization, he described a diversity training where the organization had brought in another consultant who was an African American woman. He explained the negative feedback from White males in the training and stated:

> If you were a White male attending it, you kind of felt like, you were the oppressor or there were certain attendees that felt like I'm responsible for you know, slavery, or I'm somehow the evil guy. It could have an adversarial feel.

While he was not directly a leader of the diversity training, he expressed his belief that discussing racial diversity in relation to oppression and racism in the U.S. was not necessary. Simultaneously, he acknowledged that some of the White men in the audience believed they were being accused of racism, which may have been an expression of how he personally felt as a White male in that setting. The lack of appreciation for training on this topic seemed to work in contradiction to his stance that racism is still a problem. The ability to personally connect to the history of racism, and its impact on the workplace, was missing from the explanation in this case.

Sidney also expressed that when she thinks about the concept of racial diversity she "typically thinks of other countries." She did delve further into that idea and stated:

> I mean we are, we're racially diverse here too, but I tend to think we are all U.S. citizens, so we've got that in common. There is diversity within our own culture as well that needs to be considered and I think it is in the organization where I work.

Sidney's honesty that she typically defaults to diversity on a global scale was followed by her acknowledgement that she recognized racial diversity is also present. The idea of intermixing the ideas of racial and global diversity was also expressed by Angela who asked if "racially different, does it have to be Black, White…or can it be Dutch?" Her question implied that there is some overlap in the ways that she thinks about diversity in race and country of residence, or ethnicity. In addition to talking around the idea of racial diversity, the participants also frequently overlapped, or interchanged, the terms culture and race.

Defining the Terms Culture and Race

The findings suggested that the participants often interchanged the ideas of culture and race. In order to gain a clearer understanding of the ways they differentiated these terms as a result of the data analysis after the first round interviews, they were asked specifically to define each term during the second interview. The explanations led to a variety of definitions and also highlighted that some participants were uncomfortable or unclear of how to distinguish between the two ideas.

The definition of race provided by two participants referenced the racial categories listed on formal questionnaires such as the U.S. Census. For example, Clarissa defined race as "more like when you go to the census and you put Asian, Caucasian." Mark provided a similar categorical description and discussed race can be "Asian, Caucasian, African American, African, and Native American." Similarly, Audra explained:

> Race, I just think of as someone's identity, like their – based on their heritage. If they identify as Hispanic, or African American, or Pacific Islander or more like what they'd put on a census.

Audra seemed to hint at the idea that race is socially constructed, although she explained it in different terms. She stated:

> I think that race, especially in America, can be such a personal thing. I know my boss, for instance, who's mixed, and she identifies very heavily with one – the race of one parent versus the other because she was raised by that parent. That's just how she identifies. I mean, it can be a very personal thing for people. Culture, I feel, is just more what you're exposed to as you're raised. I mean, it can have to do with your racial identity, but not necessarily. I mean, it can be a very different thing. A lot of times, it can be where you're raised geographically.

While she did differentiate that she believes race is more about a categorization of people, she also pointed out that the concept of identity is much more fluid and cannot be fully captured by a categorical system. Clarissa expressed comparable thoughts that race and culture "are different because you can be brought up in a culture…you could have a group of people that are all different races, but act in the same cultural manner."

Three of the participants defined race as having something to do with genetics, DNA, or skin color. Renee, Cathy, and Angela described similar ideas as they tried to define race. Angela questioned "how do you define race? Well, usually people – I think of race as color of skin, but I don't know if that's 100 percent true." She discussed that skin color is often used as a way to interpret someone's race, but also explained:

> I'm thinking about the Jewish community. I don't know if you define Jewish as a culture or a race. How can you tell a Jewish person from anybody else? How can you tell an African-American from anyone else? You do it by the color of their skin, but that may not necessarily be true. I would say race is the skin color that you associate yourself with, or how you identify yourself as a segment of humanity. Because you can be African American and look completely Caucasian – be Caucasian, be African American, so beats me.

Angela brought up the fact that the Jewish religion, which often draws people together culturally, was something she could not definitively place as race or culture. Her explanation also depicted a disconnect between her response that race is skin color because she went on to say that someone could "look" one race, but actually be another race. She later clarified that "race would have to be just another element of identification because Caucasians have different cultures." Along the same lines, Cathy defined race as follows:

> Race to me is more of a DNA issue. It's what you've been born into. I think that some of that DNA carries information about your past. I think it's all – the new investigation about DNA is pretty complex. I'm no expert on it, but I think that it does carry with it some of our ancestral history. I think that there's some link there. It to me must carry some sorts of cultural issues as well. Mostly it's whatever's packed in your DNA.

The idea that race has something to do with a person's DNA was not fully explained by Cathy, a myth that is frequently perpetuated by White people. She seemed uncertain about how specifically the genetic aspect of DNA would define race and also expressed her belief that culture is also connected to genetics. Renee also defined race as an outcome of genetics and described:

> What I've been educated on or have read, is that there's, from a human genetics standpoint, from where people originated are three races, which are Caucasian, Asian, and Black. I think the following question is then what about Hispanic people. When you get into that, it becomes about ethnicity or culture.

Renee's definition of race as three narrow categories was the most limited of the participant definitions and left out many of the racial categories that Audra and Clarissa believed many people identify with racially.

The participant that had the most difficulty deciding on a definition for race was Sidney who initially explained:

> It's not very concrete. They're not very concrete kind of words [race and culture] that you can say – a house is a structure that has four walls and a foundation. It's just a very nebulous thing. I'm coming up with nothing.

She also discussed that race could be "ethnicity, an ethnic group," which pointed out that there was some overlap with the ideas that the other participants more clearly relegated to culture. Sidney continued to think about how she would differentiate the two terms and further expressed:

> I guess they sort of overlap. I haven't really thought about it, about how they're similar and how they're different. I don't know. I think culture is something more broad and race is underneath it. They're really difficult words for me to get my head around and to explain or articulate.

Her statement showed that there are some concepts related to the ideas of culture that may be connected to racial identity, but not necessarily.

The other participants explained culture as primarily a broad set of practices, behaviors, and experiences that tie communities of people together in a variety of settings. Mark explained that "culture is the rules and regulations that where you grew up establishes." He viewed culture as a concept that was more fluid than someone's race and stated:

> I think that a person can be another race, but hold the cultural attributes of another race. Let's say someone could be of an Asian race, perhaps they were adopted or raised in an area where their cultural attributes are based on upbringing. So race tends to be something that is static and culture is something that people can either adapt to or take on those attributes. For example, when you think about culture from the role of men and women, the gifts you give at the holidays, the major holidays you celebrate, the religion that's predominant within that culture, the ways you greet each other, the respect that you give to either your elders or the young.

Similarly, Angela expressed that "culture is the way we do things around here, wherever here is." The other participants also defined culture by comparable definitions. Audra defined culture in other areas and stated:

> It's different, whether it's social interaction things. If it's traditions. I mean, it can be lots of different things from language, to dress, to mannerisms, to religious traditions, to anything like that.

The participants' definitions of culture were overwhelmingly similar compared to their definitions of race, which were much more abstract and dissimilar. The ease at which they defined culture suggested that the participants are more comfortable discussing culture and may do so much more frequently as part of their daily lives. The findings highlighted that it was much likelier that that the participants maintained a level of consciousness about culture that they could not duplicate for race. The role of cultural diversity in the training setting emerged as a main theme among the findings.

Cultural Diversity and Training

The theme of cultural diversity and training emerged as a finding which described training processes and experiences that arose in diverse training environments. There were five categories of data that informed the finding of cultural diversity and training. These included: a) training strategies in racially diverse organizations, b) delivering training on a global scale, c) ethnocentricity as a challenge to training globally, d) adjusting to cross-cultural communication styles of trainees, and e) culturally responsive training outcomes. The finding of training strategies in racially diverse organizations provided an overview of the procedures and techniques the trainers often used to engage trainees. Delivering training on a global scale was a finding that

emerged as a result of the work six of the trainers delivered internationally. The issue of ethnocentricity as a challenge to training globally was a dynamic that was found to be problematic for some of the participants while cross-cultural communication highlighted training experiences where the communication dynamics were impacted by trainees from a variety of cultures. The finding of culturally responsive training outcomes expressed some of the positive training results from the participants' experiences. First, the strategies they employ for training within their organizations provided an overview of these training processes and experiences.

Training Strategies in Racially Diverse Organizations

The espoused training strategies each participant used as they planned for and facilitated training sessions for racially diverse audiences and teams presented a large variety in processes and motivations. Overall, each participant discussed ways in which they attempted to engage all the participants in their training sessions and to present a variety of activities to connect training content across participant learning styles. This theme emerged as a result of the strategies that were often consistently used by participants for audiences of all racial and cultural backgrounds.

In order to engage participants in his training sessions, Mark shared the following story:

> Early on in my career, it was my goal to eventually be able to move in without a lot of structure and just be able to ask questions and give people exactly what they needed in the moment almost like improvisational 'just in time' teaching.

He further described "I try to treat everyone with dignity and respect, but at the same time I try to be humorous and playful. I try to pick up on clues by listening with my eyes

for feelings to see if I've insulted anyone in some way and move then to repair the relationship." Mark made a concerted effort throughout the duration of his training sessions to check that participants were able to experience the training in a way that fit with their needs. Similarly, Cathy expressed that one of her strategies when facilitating a training session is to consider the following:

> One of the ways…is to try to understand what are their motivators? What's motivating? What do they want in their life? What are the goals they have? Some of the younger guys do have things they want to achieve. They may be reaching out a little bit more. It's identifying first what's motivating them. In order to reach that goal or to achieve those things, what do they need to do to change? Just helping them kind of recognize that if I want a different role or a different position, if I want to move up in the company for example, what do I need to do that's going to help me get there? Then help them set some goals to do that. It's kind of like setting up some short-term goals that will help them move toward what they want.

Her explanation highlighted that she often attempted to identify motivating factors for the individuals in her training sessions as a strategy for addressing the variety of trainee outcomes that my come from any single facilitation.

In addition to using the motivating factors and trainees' needs, the participants also discussed the types of activities they built into their facilitation as strategies for engaging everyone in the training session. Renee explained:

> I think through the active experiential. Actually making sure people are doing stuff, real stuff, in the class. If I see that somebody is not comfortable, I try to look at them, or I try to be very attentive towards body language, facial expressions, and participation. If I see that someone is struggling or someone is quiet, or somebody is monopolizing the class, I try to engage others whether I would use the Socratic method really targeting this person. Or, if they are doing activities, paying attention to the conversations when they happen and pick up on things that are very interesting that might come out of it.

Renee outlined the multiple ways in which she targeted trainees in order to make sure they were engaged in the learning environment. Angela also described some of her strategies for engaging trainees who may not have enjoyed a particular activity and stated "then we allow that person to do what works for him, or her." She also added "It's my job to find out what they need. It's not their job to fit into my way of thinking." The ability to move away from the strategies that may fit with her style, but not all of the trainees, was a guiding force for Angela. Sidney also expressed similar thoughts and stated:

> I'm a big proponent of interactive engaging and learning, and I've found that plays well in all of those cultures [in U.S. and internationally]. Sometimes there's this concern that it won't. Sometimes you do have to be concerned about a supervisor or manager being present in the room if you're asking people to open up and speak up and talk. That could be an issue, but it seems like everyone wants an opportunity to talk and to share their questions, and comments, and ideas and to bounce ideas off of one another.

The participants all employed training strategies that were meant to engage all of the trainees in their sessions and positioned these strategies as starting points to their facilitation approaches.

Clarissa offered an additional explanation that appeared to be more specific to actual content and described:

> Everybody is going to get the same training and it's going to move at a pace which I think is appropriate for the company and at the speed of which you should be working [as you would in the store]. I feel like when you bring somebody in, they need to know the speed at which they will be working…so I train them like that.

Clarissa's explanation of making sure all trainees receive training that is consistent with the pace and requirements of the company's structure may have been due to the fact that

she typically facilitated training for new hires or employees new to a particular job function; whereas, the other participants worked most with ongoing training topics. While these strategies were often used in many training settings, several of the participants also made a point to discuss training in a global context.

Delivering Training on a Global Scale

Six out of the seven participants facilitated training internationally at some point, and as a result many of the stories they shared took place in a global context. The perspectives they held about this work gave some insight into the relationships and styles that impact the training environment. Angela discussed her work with a diverse group in Europe that was composed of employees who were "Asian Americans, Dutch, Nigerian, Australian…and two that were from China." The racial identities of the team members who were Dutch, Nigerian, and Australian were not initially clear in Angela's description of the team. However, she went on to discuss some of the challenges that arose in the meetings because team members were misinterpreting one another. She described:

> The Dutch are quite outspoken and they don't mind sharing their ideas and speaking, and so after they had done this [brought up concerns], I was going around the table asking 'does anyone else have issues with this [Meyers-Briggs] because I want to make sure that we're all comfortable?' And the guy, one of the guys from China said 'well am I allowed to ask questions about it?' Sure of course! And we found out that they were feeling uncomfortable, not with the Meyers-Briggs, but with the team.

Angela's experience was that the team members' were able to express concern about the dynamics of the project after the dialogue was opened up as a result of the training. Through her attempt to hear from all of the participants, Angela was able to help the

team move forward while still maintaining a respectful training environment. Cathy also discussed the role of her work in a global setting that related to communication among employees and stated:

> I remember sitting on an airplane. It was one of my first business trips into Mexico. I did the very American thing, was sitting next to a man and I said 'what do you do?' He looked at me and smiled and he said 'I make friends.' [Laughter] I thought wow. That's what it's about there. That's what it's about. It's about building relationships. Then, from those relationships you can go into work.

Cathy was aware that her work in Mexico would be dependent upon her understanding of cultural communication styles that were very relationship based in comparison to her experiences in the U.S. She pointed out that her work in the U.S. was often business first and then relationships grew from there. Similarly, Mark discussed a training he facilitated in France where the schedule had to be adjusted when he realized that mealtimes were expected to be a leisurely experience with multiple courses of food. He realized:

> A meal is to be enjoyed. It's to be experienced. And so the fact that you're real focused on accomplishing some desired result or outcome, when it comes to the food service people, they're not really that interested. You know, this is the way we do things in France.

The expectations of the trainees, and the associated French service providers, were that the culture of their country would be respected as part of the training process.

Renee also discussed how working globally had influenced the ways that training was designed in her organization. She conducted a pilot training and specifically invited participants based on their diverse roles within the company. She further explained:

> We intentionally wanted a diverse group of people to be pilot participants but it wasn't diversity necessarily on race. It was more diversity of experience, location, and employee versus contractor, and role. It wasn't on race, it was more

> we wanted to make sure we had somebody from Australia, Asia, people from Africa, people from Kazakhstan, people from the U.S., people with more or less experience. That kind of thing.

The inclusion of employees who worked for the company in both the U.S. and other countries from around the world was pivotal to the composition of the training participants. She went on to discuss that the participants from Europe were White and the participants from the U.S. were White and Hispanic.

Sidney discussed her work in a global setting that included multiple trips to Southeast Asia. During her time at training in Indonesia, the participants in the training who were fluent in multiple languages, would speak to her in English even though they would speak another language to one another. She reflected on the experience and noted:

> I was teaching in English and, as I mentioned, our company tends to think that we can do everything in English because we communicate in English. And yet, where I was, the primary language was Bahasa…I hope I'm saying that right. I would teach the class and they would talk to their partner as part of the activities where they were...what I found interesting was they spoke in English to one another. Well they might speak in their native language to one another, but then they would kind of stop and realize I was in the room and so they would speak in English, so that I understood what they were saying.

Sidney subsequently realized "it was kind of a reverse experience where I probably should have learned a few words in their language that I can share, so that I can show them that I was making an effort." Her work in another country was ultimately a process that led her to question the fact that she had not prepared to work outside the scope of the English language, even when her organization had not asked her to do so. The influence of training experiences in international settings also emphasized the challenges some of the participants faced as a result of ethnocentric practices.

Ethnocentricity as a Challenge to Training Globally

The findings suggested that employment in an organization where training was conducted on an international scale sometimes resulted in instances where ethnocentric behavior was present within organizational practices. Angela first discussed the idea that there has been literature written about the interpretations of American behavior from authors and scholars around the world, which caught her attention. She further explained:

> It was, the things that are not well accepted other than being loud and so hearing some of those things gives you a different perspective. It was a great book and I thought 'wait a minute' and I took offense as I was reading the book. 'No we're not like that [loud],' but through other eyes. So, you need to look at yourself through other eyes too.

While Angela did not directly use the term ethnocentric, she expressed some behaviors typically exhibited by Americans are not always well received through the lens of cultures from around the world. Her underlying point focused on the need to consider opinions and perceptions about the American culture that are not necessarily positive.

Mark also argued that ethnocentricity is a problem when considering the scope of international business and long term growth. He stated:

> We [in America] really have a, an ethnocentric kind of view, but as we become global players, that can change us and we're no longer just an isolated U.S. group. We're working over the internet, through other countries, we're outsourcing things too. You know, so it's not just about us and our racial differences.

Mark described Americans as ethnocentric even while work takes place across continents and cultures. However, he also seemed to push the focus beyond discussion about race within the United States.

Sidney was the most descriptive about how ethnocentric practices are sometimes perpetuated by her organization. She provided an example of a procurement management training she facilitated with other team members and reflected:

> I remember the examples we used in class were very American like, say you're buying an expensive car like a Porsche, and we thought about it after integrating that other training maybe we should think of another type of car other than the Porsche. Or wherever it was we were teaching the that class, some vehicle type that was a luxury vehicle that would be something they would relate to and not just assume that they would know what a Porsche was. Also, just thinking in terms of the dollar, dollars versus pounds versus all the different kinds of denominations around the world. We tend to talk in terms of dollars, always, instead of translating that into the currency where we're teaching. Just thinking about that stuff and how it shows a lack of respect for people by not considering their culture.

She provided several examples of the small details of a training facilitation that were created from an ethnocentric point of view. She acknowledged that failing to relate the small details to the culture of the trainees, or the culture of the country of the training, were missed opportunities. She also expressed:

> There is an assumption that because English is the language of the company, of the headquarters, that everybody will just come along. And I don't know if anybody has ever really investigated the extent to which that way of thinking has impacted non-English speakers and people in other cultures. I just don't think we generally put a lot of thought into that. I think we just think well you're going to have to come along.

Sidney was very aware that limiting international training facilitations to delivery in English was a shortcoming. The participants acknowledged that concepts and ideas that work in America may need to be adjusted appropriately to fit with the needs of trainees in different countries and cultures.

Adjusting to Cross-cultural Communication Styles of Trainees

Five of the participants specifically discussed some of the communication differences that arose when they were working across cultures, specifically on an international scale. Mark explained that "perhaps there are layers of cultural differences and if I could better learn that, perhaps I could learn to better synchronize my communication." His statement provided an example of the purpose for the participants' shared stories about communication across cultures. By recognizing that styles differ, there is an opportunity to then adapt appropriately when facilitating training in a variety of settings.

Renee discussed some of the communication styles that were present in a pilot training they conducted that included participants from a variety of nationalities and cultures. She explained:

> In this pilot we had some of the Southeast Asians were very much more reserved. Even asking questions or giving feedback on the pilot or challenging those, they pulled us aside. They didn't want to give feedback in the classroom and that may be indicative of their culture of "saving face" and not wanting to disrespect people. I would say the, now the most vocal were the people from Australia. [laughing] But again, it was a culture thing. You know the people from Nigeria were very respectful but kind of how we do it. In the other pilot we probably had more Hispanics and they were more vocal. Again, I just realized we didn't have any Middle Eastern people although there's a great diversity of Middle Eastern people, we didn't have any Middle Eastern people in any of those pilots. I would say there were European people who were typically more reserved.

Renee used the example of the pilot training that took place in the U.S., but included employees from several different cultural backgrounds. The variety of communication styles used by the trainees was something that she could identify from her perspective as

a trainer. Cathy found that in facilitating training in Latin American that many of the male trainees would hold back from sharing information in group settings, which she believed was out of fear that they would lose their jobs for openly criticizing any aspect of the company. Angela reported similar observations of working with employees who are Dutch and described the experience as followed:

> When I was working in the Netherlands, the Dutch culture is—I found it to be more straightforward than the business culture in the United States. I was warned before I went that the Dutch were rude. They were very aggressive. I wasn't going to like them. I had worked with some people who were Dutch before I went, and so once I was in their environment, they are much more straightforward. If they don't like something, they say, "I don't like this." It isn't to be rude. It's to be clear. It's dealing with the things that are different. Simply because you grew up with them that way, it makes them different to you, but it's perfectly right for them. Just as you have to adjust to the weather, when you move to different places, you have to adjust to the culture.

While Angela pointed out that differences in communication styles exist across cultures, she also discussed that from the viewpoint of the employees within that culture the style is expected and considered the norm. She expressed that the standard communication styles across culture were all valid and trainers need to adjust accordingly when they are working in another culture. Mark also shared in acknowledgment of various communication styles and described:

> There's different levels of subtlety that cultures expect in communication. Japanese, they like to save face. Certain Filipino cultures feedback is not given directly. It's given indirectly. It kind of goes against our culture, which is to kind of give people, to their face, direct feedback. I mean granted, many people don't follow that.

The nature of the participants' comments regarding communication styles opened up the dialogue to further discuss training experiences across cultures that were positive, or

ways in which their respective organizations work to create training opportunities that reflect the needs and preferences of the trainees. When the trainers adjusted their styles according to their audiences, the training outcomes were more likely to be positive.

Culturally Responsive Training Outcomes

The findings suggested that training outcomes were more culturally responsive when trainers adjusted their facilitation styles and design to allow for a variety of perspectives, communication styles, and trainee preferences. Clarissa discussed a training experience she believed was a very positive experience due to the variety backgrounds and racial identities of the participants. She described the experience of working with that team of women as followed:

> I believe it's seven different women and it was probably the most, one of the most awesome training experiences ever because we were such a variety…I think we had two Caucasian ladies, three African American ladies, and I think a lady of Asian descent, like Middle Eastern. And we were just amazing. I think, how many ladies was that? We got different aspects on every problem we had. We all worked very well together. If one of us couldn't handle a problem the next one would step up and try it their way. And just successful. We were successful because you could see it in our numbers. You could see it in the clients that came in. You could see it with people that wanted to work with us and come, come with our team and stay on board.

The experience Clarissa described was one where she specifically focused on the variety of team member perspectives with reference to the race of each team member. Her example stood out because she shared an example that was about a training experience with employees who are also American, although a variety of races. She acknowledged that style differences, or ideas, may vary from one person to another and that the team constructed an affirming dynamic to try different approaches and ideas.

Some of the participants discussed culturally responsive training strategies or preparation that focused more on working with employees from various countries. Angela said "because I worked in Europe and across the world in a global organization, I get to use materials written from other cultures, which is a great perspective." Both Sidney and Cathy discussed instances where materials were translated into another language. Sidney described a training session at a previous organization where training for volunteer firefighters from Mexico was delivered by trainers who were fluent in Spanish. Cathy expressed:

> I know that my ability to speak Spanish has definitely helped in facilitating learning for non-English speakers. Yes, they're [the organization] aware of that. From the safety aspect I think that they're really concerned that the information is understood. That's why they wanted to make sure that the information that I impart comes in their own language.

The creation of training opportunities in the language used by most participants was something that Cathy discussed as a norm for her organization. Sidney's recollection of the training facilitation in Spanish was from a past workplace, which stood in contrast to her feedback about her current organization's use of primarily English materials.

The findings portrayed a level of flexibility and adherence to cultural norms of trainees in order to create culturally responsive training environments. The participants described several processes that have continued to impact their journey to improve their ability to provide culturally responsive training.

Becoming Culturally Responsive Trainers

The theme of becoming culturally responsive trainers emerged as participants described the constant evolution of their training practices. Self-reflection played a large

role in this process which was evident in the findings that supported this theme. These included: a) competencies White trainers need for culturally responsive training, b) past mistakes as catalysts for personal change, c) participation in the research as a gateway to change, and d) written reflections about identity and culturally responsive training. The findings in this theme supported the idea that White trainers should consider the role of their identity when training in racially diverse organizations. The participants shared that their past mistakes often led them to make changes in their practices due to a negative outcome. Additionally, they focused on the need to talk about the dynamics of race within the workplace instead of remaining silent, which is often a practice associated with Whiteness. Finally, they moved on to reflect in writing about their learning and experiences. The findings supported the possibility of becoming culturally responsive through a combination of these processes and sets of knowledge.

Competencies White Trainers Need for Culturally Responsive Training

The participants discussed some of the most important knowledge they believe a White trainer should possess in order to be successful in a racially diverse training environment. Renee discussed:

> I've learned not to have assumptions. To be curious about people. And I would say curious about people who may be different and have a different background or experience than I have. I think that I've learned…there *are* differences. And maybe awareness of those differences. Before maybe, I was raised that there really isn't a difference, not to see a difference, but I think I've learned, no, I need to see the differences. It's made me aware of that, because if I were to say, approach somebody from the Middle East who I may or may not know is Muslim, or Christian, or whatever, and go up and touch them that may be very offensive. So, I think being aware of that. I've learned to be aware of differences.

Renee focused on her transition from denying differences in identity to a mindset where she acknowledges that differences in identity such as race, culture, religion and gender are important components to consider. Similarly, Mark believed this was the most important competency for White trainers. He shared:

> Valuing and respecting differences I think I would put as one of, if not *the* most important, skill or competency. To treat everyone with dignity and respect. To make the 'un-discussable' discussable in a way that preserves the working relationship.

He pointed out that White trainers must learn how to address uncomfortable topics in a way that does not destroy the respect among colleagues. Angela took this idea a step further and discussed:

> You have to understand the culture. You have to understand that you've been fortunate to be in the majority and so, you have an obligation to be aware of the sensitivities of everybody in the audience. Not just because their skin is a different color, but because of age, because of gender, because of cultural issues. You have a responsibility. You are the authority in the room because you're at the front of the room. Well, you don't always end up at the front of the room [laughing] if you're experiential, but you start there. And so, there's no question that you are the power in the room, so you have the responsibility to make sure everybody in that room feels safe, everybody in that room feels welcome and if they don't, then you need to fix it. Period.

Angela pointed out that trainers are a source of power within the organization because they are responsible for leading that learning experience. She focused on the need to create culturally responsive training environments that respect the various identities people carry into the room. Audra agreed that trainers need to be "open-minded, not only to different people's backgrounds, but to different people's learning styles." Sidney looked at the idea from an international perspective and shared:

> There's a fine line between being the expert, but also showing a vulnerability, and that openness of ok, here's what I'm recommending, will it work here and

> asking that culture that you've invaded if the ideas will sort of play out there. And open up some dialogue and conversation about what we recommend, will it work in that culture?

The ability to take a step back from being the "authority" in the room was something that the participants valued as a key competency for White trainers. Clarissa also believed that it was important to create a space where people can share the strengths and knowledge they bring to the group. The participants believed that White trainers should possess these competencies in order to facilitate training in racially diverse organizations. They also discussed their overall philosophies on teaching and learning, which provided a more general approach to learning environments.

The philosophies and competencies identified by participants were largely influenced by some of their past mistakes.

Past Mistakes as Catalysts for Personal Change

Mistakes were often a source of learning that emerged in the findings. The findings showed that the process of addressing those mistakes and reevaluating their choices and behaviors for the future was an important step for the participants. Three of the participants directly discussed how they had changed something about their facilitation after they made a mistake in the past. Angela was extremely candid on this topic and still seemed bothered by her experience even many years after the fact. She recalled:

> I've learned that sometimes I become complacent and I think I'm doing a great job, but I've missed something. And usually when that happens, it's because I will do something stupid and, it doesn't happen often anymore, but it's happened to me a couple of times. Interestingly enough…both times it happened, it happened with White men, but as soon as I did it I realized that I'd done something stupid. And all the apologizing in the world doesn't ever make up for

> it. It's been, both times it happened when I felt threatened because I was a new instructor and I felt like I needed to maintain my position in the room as the authority.

Angela's reflection about her experience with the two White male trainees was something that had caused her to realize that she had felt threatened by their presence. While she did not disclose the nature of her actions explicitly, she believed that making a mistake of this nature with an adult learner was not something that would likely be forgiven as it might with a child. She later learned to spend additional time practicing and also used that time to "remind myself what I did and how I got to be so cocky that I hurt somebody's feelings." She recognized that her past mistake was an important learning experience for the future.

Audra was the only participant who discussed a mistake directly related to the racial identity of the trainees and discussed how her use of the word "ghetto," White training a predominantly African American team, was commented on in the evaluations. She described:

> I would say that that one training in Alabama was by far the most challenging and it was actually just because of that. It hadn't been a particularly cold or hostile training environment or anything. The training went really fine. People participated a lot. It was just in retrospect looking over the evaluations that someone had said that so I guess that definitely colors my experience retrospectively.

The evaluation comment caused her to completely discontinue use of the word in any training sessions and she also began using a replacement term to discuss older properties. The mistakes that the three participants discussed directly influenced their choices and strategies in subsequent training environments moving forward. The participants' work as training facilitators in racially diverse organizations caused them to

make connections between work and personal identities. They identified some of ongoing issues that they noticed as a result of their participation in this research.

Participation in the Research as a Gateway to Change

Topics such as racial identity and racism are rarely discussed directly in most workplaces and the participants' experiences followed this pattern. Participation in this research allowed several of the participants to discuss ideas that would not normally be a topic of discussion in their daily lives. Most of the trainers had not discussed race, racism and racial identify in this capacity. Audra stated that "doing this whole thing has made me think about different things." Mark also explained:

> It's educational for me to have these conversations. To be asked these questions that people don't normally ask in a social setting and so, for me, it furthers my knowledge to think through some of these things.

Similarly, Sidney acknowledged "It's just been, the experience for me to participate in this study…you've caused me to think a little bit more deeply than I have before." The use of dialogue throughout the interviews seemed to provide participants an opportunity to express, and struggle through, some of their ideas and thoughts about race. Additionally, the issue of race has often been a source of silence for White people when asked to discuss these topics openly.

White people do not often discuss their own racial identity, or the meanings behind their race. These discussions are often relegated to "silence" in favor of topics such as culture. Renee wondered more openly why the discussion about race should continue to often remain an unspoken topic. However, her explanation reverted back to ideas that were more culturally focused. She stated:

> I don't know why we have to be so uncomfortable talking about it...to me it's about more than just race. I've experienced, I've witnessed, I've heard about prejudice, more holistic, why does it have to be about race? I don't even think it's about race anymore. I think it's the other differences that are a factor now. I think maybe as a society in the US we've gotten more comfortable and more inclusive with the races, if you will.

In contrast, the other participants expressed that they did not believe people were comfortable talking about race. Clarissa and Audra discussed that White people are connected to racism historically and this fact is often used as an excuse for silence. Clarissa explained:

> Historically, we've [White people] screwed up so many times that we don't want to bring it up, because it's like we just don't want to know what anyone else is going to say [laughing]. It's like why even bring it up…because it's probably going to be bad.

She used humor to express this thought, but the undertones were that White people may not discuss race because there is an element of privilege that has paralleled the negative outcomes of racism throughout history. There may also be a lack of acceptance that as a White American, there is a connection to the historical past. Audra also discussed the racial tension in the United States. She shared:

> I think that for some people that's a really awkward—they want to avoid conversations like that. Because we do as a country, I think, have a lot of racial tension. Not that any, I mean, any other country doesn't, but I think especially because of our historical dealings with race, and how it's been approached, it's a really sensitive topic for some people. I feel like you just never know how sensitive someone's going to be about it. People don't want to misstep and say something awkward.

The fear many White people associate with talking about race was a topic that all seven participants discussed. She further stated "I think that one of the reasons there's so much tension in our country is because people don't want to talk about." The silence about

race, racism and White privilege are dominant among White Americans often with little, or no, attention given to unlearning racism from generation to generation.

The participants cited fear of offending as a main reason for the silence about race. Angela described:

> Adults are afraid to ask the question for fear of offending. I think they're being polite and courteous and so they're afraid to offend… Because race has been such an issue in the United States that I think people are afraid of offending. If you talk about culture—you can talk about culture and you're on safe land from criticism. It's a volatile, I guess, topic. People are afraid to mention it.

Angela pointed out that many people will not bring up race because they believe they will automatically offend someone. She also addressed the common strategy of defaulting to discuss culture instead because it is viewed as a safe topic. Mark also added:

> The term race brings up images of being racist or making judgments based on certain things and some people may be afraid to talk about it for fear that they're going to be seen as somehow judgmental.

Sidney spoke personally about this fear, which was not something that the other participants did directly. She described her experience participating in the study as an uncomfortable process. She explained:

> Initially I wasn't real sure what I was getting in to. I'm thinking this sounds interesting. It is uncomfortable, though. I think you, as a participant in your study, it feels like I'm going to say something stupid. I'm thinking there's a fear that I'm going to say something to really look stupid. I feel like I've evolved beyond that, and yet I think in some cases it's difficult to evolve beyond what you were raised with.

She was open about the fact that she continued to feel uncomfortable talking about race and her racial identity even after she has moved into adulthood. Sidney believed that she

was challenged to express ideas that stood in contrast to her experience growing up in the South.

In order to move beyond the silence associated with race for White people, Clarissa and Cathy discussed some alternatives. Clarissa pointed out:

> I think that the more we openly talk about differences that we all have and the positives and negatives about them, then one day, it won't be so 'hush-hush' and about whether we're going to talk about race or heritage or culture or anything.

The use of dialogue was suggested as a starting point to bring issues of race and racial identity to the forefront for White people. Cathy added that living in a racially, and culturally, diverse city was an important reason to discuss these issues. She stated:

> We really do need to examine our prejudices, examine the perceptions that we've grown up with, and take time to reevaluate those and learn different ways of understanding people. I just see it as a very critical issue just because of the whole global nature of the world.

Cathy's comment focused on the connection between the personal biases and assumptions at the individual level that remain connected to large scale environment. In order for the participants to continue to reflect on their ideas about their racial identity and the work they do as trainers, they were asked to reflect in writing about their responses to the thoughts they shared during the research process.

Written Reflections about Identity and Culturally Responsive Training

Written reflection was used as the final component in the research in order for participants to internally process the ideas they expressed in the previous interviews before responding to those statements. Their written responses reiterated their ideas about race, racial identity, culture, and the importance of the topics discussed during the

interviews. The participants revisited the idea that trainers must be able to move beyond their own personal beliefs to create a culturally inclusive environment.

Audra noticed "It's interesting to see my responses without the thought process behind them in the moment. It helped me see how I might come across in an educational environment to some of my trainees." Cathy discussed that the conflicting socially changing barriers between race and culture and explained:

> I see the world trying to homogenize and at the same time people attempting to maintain some kind of uniqueness. Race and culture are now more entwined as intermarriage, a global workforce, and borderless countries become the norm…The challenge is learning how to suspend our personal beliefs while trying to understand those of others. To explore the differences without feeling threatened by them.

She seemed to explore the idea that race is not always a clearly articulated concept. She does not go as far as to describe race as a socially constructed idea, but she touched on the notion of overlap in the factors that make up identity. Mark reflected that his ideas had changed from some of the examples he provided from his childhood. He stated:

> I tend to think about race and culture much more globally than I did when I grew up in a small town in Oklahoma. Race and culture become global terms when we realize that we must compete in the global village.

He briefly discussed the thinking that dominated his mind as a young person had been replaced by his focus on race and culture with consideration for the global scope of his work. Sidney also reflected on the role of learning social norms throughout her upbringing, which were typically shaped by family and other influencers. She explained:

> We're all influenced by our upbringing and often don't really reflect on why we do or believe the way we do. Participating in this study has caused me to do that and even though it was uncomfortable, I'm glad I was able to think about these rather "touchy" topics.

She believed that some of the stigma of talking about race was something that she was able to do through her role as a research participant. She also mentioned that people might benefit from the opportunity to discuss these topics in an educational environment. She further explained:

> I made the comment that I was afraid "I'm going to say something stupid" when it comes to a discussion about racism. It'd be great if we were able to build into our educational curricula opportunities to talk about these difficult issues in a safe, respectful and honest environment to examine that which is often left unexamined.

Sidney realized that for White people, there is not much examination about one's own racial identity as part of most educational environments. Her statement pointed out that the invisibility of Whiteness if often built into institutions such as education. Similarly, Clarissa realized that the variety in organizations where she had worked in the past confirmed her belief that a dedication to racial diversity and inclusiveness of many viewpoints was related to organizational success. She shared:

> After the interview I realized what an important part diversity plays in a training environment. I have worked for many different companies, and I have realized the ones that take diversity, and use it to grow and reach a larger community, are more successful. In addition, I have learned that I have a very open mind to other cultures and races, and I try very hard not to let others close the walls around me. I like to have a broad range of cultures and ethnicity around me to make sure my training abilities are strong enough to influence all my trainees and not just gravitate towards certain individuals.

She reflected that her work as a trainer is directly related to her ability to work with a variety of people and to facilitate learning environments that allow everyone to participate. The written reflections provided a final glimpse into the perspectives and

lens through which the participants view their racial identity within the context of the multiple environments that impact their lives.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of White corporate trainers who deliver training in racially diverse organizations. The research sought to gain an understanding of the various environmental influences that impact White trainers' understanding of their own racial identity and the work they do in racially diverse organizations. The data revealed four main themes, which included perceptions of racial identity, developing racial consciousness, cultural diversity and training, and becoming culturally responsive trainers.

The findings suggested that race continues to be a relevant topic in the United States and especially for individuals working in racially diverse environments. The participants' experiences surrounding their own racial identity confirmed that White people are taught about race from an early age, and much of the messaging from other White people is negative and focused on people of color. There continues to be a pervasive silence about race among White people, which was discussed in connection with larger social environments such as education and work. The participants expressed a variety of strategies and methods for creating culturally inclusive training environments, but also discussed the challenges they faced along the way within their organizations. The process of learning to understand different cultures was very influential for the trainers who worked internationally. For all of the trainers, self-reflection was foundational to their development professionally and personally.

While many of the organizations of the participants had created a work environment that was racially diverse, there were still issues related to ethnocentric viewpoints in some instances. The participants' experiences within their respective organizations created a complex intersection with their own racial identity development, which was simultaneously shaped by other environments and relationships. The findings offered new insight into the issues related to White racial identity development and the creation of culturally responsive training environments.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the forces and environments that shape the racial identity development of White corporate trainers who work in racially diverse for-profit organizations. The participants were selected through purposive sampling and were required to meet the following criteria to participate in the research: (a) currently be working in a professional job role where they deliver training sessions to a racially diverse audience and reside in Texas, (b) be a current employee of a for-profit organization or employed as an internal or external trainer who works with for-profit organizations on a temporary or contract basis, (c) to self-identify as racially "White" and self-identify that their workplace is racially diverse, (d) and have a minimum of five years of training experience in racially diverse organizations. Each of the seven participants in the study participated in two face-to-face interviews and five of the participants provided written reflections about their interview transcripts. The study used a qualitative research design, which allowed the participants to share a variety of ideas and experiences which had impacted their understanding about race and the work they do as trainers in racially diverse organizations.

A basic qualitative research design was used for the study because the interactions between the participants and the researcher created a mutually constructed outcome, and allowed different interpretations of the data. Additionally, the literature

and fields that informed the research emerged from education, psychology, and sociology (Merriam, 1998). The notion of identity exists as a fluid and constantly changing force that is often difficult to fully articulate. For this purpose, a basic interpretive approach was chosen to allow the participants to explain their experiences from their own points of view. This design allowed the findings to be constructed as themes based on similar meanings that arose within the data. The research was further guided through a conceptual framework composed of two theories: Helms' (1995) White Racial Identity Development Model and Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Model of Human Development.

Helms (1995) White racial identity development model outlined six statuses that White people may encounter as they discover and redefine the meaning of their racial identity. These statuses included contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independent, immersion/emersion, and autonomy. The first three statuses represented the process of beginning to recognize oneself as a White person and the acknowledgement of racism as an ongoing force. The second three statuses focus on the process of addressing racism as a structural and systemic problem while continuing to remove their own personal racist beliefs and actions. Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological model of human development outlined four environmental systems where people build and form their identity. These systems included the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. Similar to Helms model, the systems focus on small, personal environments and then branch out to large social systems and structures. The conceptual

framework guided the interpretation of the findings in order to answer the research questions of the study. The research questions that guided the study included:

1. How do White corporate trainers who work in racially diverse organizations experience and describe their racial identity in connection with the work they do as trainers?
2. How does the organization support the development of competencies related to culturally responsive training?

The data revealed four major findings, which included: (a) perceptions of racial identity, (b) developing racial consciousness, (c) cultural diversity and training, (d) and becoming culturally responsive trainers. The interaction between the participants' work as White trainers in racially diverse organizations and racial identity development informed the process of becoming more culturally responsive trainers.

Discussion

The literature regarding the racial identity development of White people highlighted that there are many stages individuals may go through as they attempt to understand their experiences as racial beings. Doane and Bonilla-Silva (2003) argued that many White people think of themselves as the racial norm and often race neutralize their experience as members of the dominant racial group. This takes place through the use of strategies such as denying the existence of racism, taking on a color-blind approach to race, distancing oneself as an actor in racism or receiver of White privilege, and perpetuating race myths (Doane & Bonilla Silva, 2003; Feagin, 2010; Tatum, 2003). While the discussion about White racial identity development has been heavily

researched in the context of higher education and among teachers in the public school system, there is a lack of empirical research focused on White trainers who work at for-profit corporate organizations.

Specifically, the findings of this research expand the literature base about White racial identity development of employees within the context of racially diverse for-profit organizations. The racial identity development of White corporate trainers was developed through a variety of environmental settings and relationships, which ultimately impacted their views and understanding of the work they do as trainers in racially diverse organizations. The interactions participants experienced as a result of their work helped them move towards a more culturally responsive training model. This process was heavily influenced through the process of self-reflection about their own beliefs, behaviors and views about identity.

Research Question #1

How do White corporate trainers who work in racially diverse organizations experience and describe their racial identity in connection with the work they do as trainers?

Alfred and Chlup (2010) argued that race is an important component to understand due to the changing racial and ethnic diversity in the workplace, but has largely stayed invisible in the HRD literature. The initial lack of attention to racial identity as an aspect that affected their experiences as trainers supported the invisibility of race. Bronfenbrenner's (1977) model highlighted that identity is constantly shaped and reshaped by the messages we receive in multiple environments, and often times, we

reformulate our perceptions as a result of these intersections. The use of this model as part of the conceptual framework was critical to the identification of environmental settings and experiences that influenced the participants' process of racial identity development. This is particularly important because the White trainers' identities are simultaneously shaped by all of these environments. The views and beliefs they come in contact with in various microsystem environments continue to impact them as they move into the work environment. However, the intersection of these environments as part of the mesosystem can cause identity to be changed.

The White trainers' stories depicted that they had received many negative messages about people of color during childhood as well as from other White people they had met over time. However, they struggled to attach meaning to their own identity as a White person until directly questioned about this idea. This finding suggested that Whiteness continues to operate as a pervasive norm because many White people still do not acknowledge their identity as a racial being.

This finding paralleled Tatum's (2003) definition of racism as both a set of personal beliefs and messages that are passed along from practices among White people. Therefore, racism functions through a set of beliefs and practices that are systemically taught in White culture from an early age. There were rare mentions of situations which required the White trainers to develop a specific understanding about what it meant to be a White person within a racially diverse community or workplace.

Instead, many of the participants struggled to express what meaning they attached to their own race until questioned directly about this idea during the research

even when they were able to express an understanding of racism and provide examples. Similarly, Frankenberg (1997) found that White women often talked about race and racism as separate ideas from their own experiences, but at other times grasped these ideas as salient to their own identity. All of the participants articulated specific examples of racism they had witnessed first-hand, or ideas about racism they understood from an abstract perspective. This finding suggested that racism at both the personal and structural level is an ongoing issue and some examples of the participants' responses in connection with Helms' statuses were identified in Table 3.

Table 3. Participant Examples of Helms' Statuses

Status	Participant Examples from the Data
Contact: Unaware of race as an issue or unwilling to acknowledge it	"You know I haven't spent much time distinguishing myself as a white person in America. To me, I spend maybe more time and give more credibility to being who it is that I want to be, which may be kind of counter cultural to my culture to other people." (Mark)
Disintegration: Able to describe and acknowledge racism and privilege; express discomfort	"…just the racism going to the US Embassy for people who had tried to get visas to come to the States, and how if you were a moneyed Mexican, that process would be easy for you 'cause you would get—you would pay your money get to the front of the line. Those who didn't have the money or the resources were considered more of a threat to the United States." (Cathy) "I think the fact that I was born and I am Caucasian is also a blessing because I did not have to go through some of the struggles I know people have gone through in the past." (Renee)
Reintegration: Denying racism and privilege; "blame the victim" tactics; anger	"I think being white in America is the same thing as being Asian in America or Black in America." (Angela)
Pseudo-independent: Distancing oneself from other White people; seeking out relationships with people of color; feelings of guilt related to self and other Whites	"A [White] lady that was working for home office comes in [to the store] and starts speaking with my team and she basically wants some like extra special treatment? And like beyond what a normal client would want and even though we all work for the same company, it's just, it was a little bit extra special." (Clarissa)
Immersion/Emersion: Building a positive racial identity; seeking out positive White role models	"It's educational for me to have these conversations. To be asked these questions that people don't normally ask in a social setting and so for me it furthers my knowledge to think through some of these things." (Mark)
Autonomy: Able to challenge racism; activist activities related to multiple oppressions in addition to race	"…my niece, who at the time was like 7 years old, came to our house and we were watching TV with our little sister, and an Aaliyah video came on and she goes… 'I don't like Aaliyah cause she's Black'… and my sister goes, 'Well, you like [friend's name] don't you?' And she's like 'Yeah.' And she goes 'Well you know [friend's name] is Black too.' She goes 'Yeaaahh' like you could see, she's only like 5 or 6 at the time, so the wheels are turning and you know when little kids say stuff like that it's normally not something they *thought* of, it's something that they heard." (Audra)

Only two of the participants believed that they were privileged racially because they are part of the racial majority. This presented a critical finding because, without being able to recognize privilege, the White trainers who distanced themselves from this idea are perpetuating racism through omission of their role within as oppressors. Doane and Bonilla-Silva (2003) and Tatum (2003) posited that this additional aspect of racism often goes unnoticed by White people because they continue to norm their own racial experience. Doane (2003) further argued that "Whites are less likely to feel socially and culturally 'different' in their everyday experiences and much less likely to have experienced significant prejudice, discrimination, or disadvantages as a result of their race" (p. 7). There was a disconnection between acknowledging racist practices enacted by White people and the idea that White people do not experience racism either presently, or in a historical context in the United States. Hays, Chang and Harvis (2009) found that among 197 White counseling trainees, their awareness of White privilege was predicted by White racial identity statuses of contact, reintegration, and immersion/emersion. For example, a participant may deny their White privilege when they are in the contact status because they are unaware of their racial identity, or a White person in the reintegration stage may have become uncomfortable acknowledging their privilege and deny that aspect of their identity. The two participants who had a higher awareness of White privilege might be experiencing some aspects of the immersion/emersion status of Helms' (1995) model. The further development of racial consciousness was a process that also took place through their work as trainers.

The experience of working in a racially diverse organization created an environment that further developed the racial consciousness of the participants. Shome (2003) argued that spaces where aspects of identity are reproduced contribute to the power dynamics within organizations. In this sense, the workplace becomes a site for perpetuating ideas associated with identity. In the presence of employees who were from a variety of racial and cultural backgrounds, the participants were able to think more in-depth about their own identity. The White trainers all espoused that diversity was an important part of creating successful teams and training environments, but they frequently shared negative examples of their experiences in diverse organizations.

According to Simpson (2003), White people often express positive viewpoints of diversity when it is related to cultural topics such as music or art, but portray negative perceptions when the focus moves to inequality. For example, some of the participants understood the dynamics of gender inequality in the workplace, while other participants expressed challenges related to ethnocentricity when working in international settings. Particularly, many of the participants used the terms culture and race as though the words shared the same meaning. Chen and Starosta (2005) provided the following definition of culture:

> Culture can be a set of fundamental ideas, practices, and experiences of a group of people that are symbolically transmitted generation to generation through a learning process. Culture may as well refer to beliefs, norms, and attitudes that are used to guide our behaviors and to solve human problems" (p. 25).

According to Tatum (2003), the term race is difficult to define due to the social construction of the term's meaning. However, she pointed out that race is often defined socially by physical characteristics that can include the color of a person's skin or facial

features (Tatum, 2003, p. 16). The participants were likely much more comfortable talking about culture because they viewed the notion as less threatening to discuss than race. The choice to avoid race in the early stages of the research may also indicate that as White trainers they did not often think about their own race as a salient part of their identity. They were ultimately supporting the invisibility of Whiteness in the work environment by talking about cultural diversity as a more pertinent topic. Evans and Chun (2007) found that cultural diversity was often highlighted in organizations as a way to name employees of color as "others" while simultaneously reproducing normative perceptions of Whiteness. The participants expressed their belief that race alone was not the only factor that created diversity in their workplaces, particularly for the participants that facilitated training on an international scale. After being explicitly asked to define the terms race and culture, the participants then made a more clear distinction between the ways that culture and race impact identity. However, the social construction of the term race was obvious in the participants' struggle to explain how they defined race.

The findings showed that their work as trainers in racially diverse organizations had influenced their self-awareness of racial identity at some level. Diversity has been generally defined as a means for recognizing the various experiences individuals possess as part of their identity such as gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, class, religion, language, culture and physical and mental ability (Adams, 2000). Many of the negative messages they received about people of color early in life were not ideas that they currently believed. However, the norming of Whiteness continued to be a pervasive

issue as they worked within racially diverse organizations particularly because they remained hesitant to acknowledge their personal experiences as part of the racial majority. The findings also showed how racially diverse organizations support the development of White trainers as they work towards culturally responsive training.

Research Question #2

How does the organization support the development of competencies related to culturally responsive training?

Bierema and D'Abundo (2004) discussed that organizations need to be aware of the ways that race and culture impact many facets of the work environment. Gay (2010) defined culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them" (p. 31). In line with this definition, the findings highlighted that the White trainers were required to think beyond their own personal preferences in facilitation and communication style in order to provide a variety of learning opportunities for trainees. For example, the findings indicated that experiential activities were a highly valued training strategy because it allowed for all the trainees to participate and provide feedback in the training. However, the participants' descriptions about their learning related to culturally responsive training competencies was predominantly an outcome of their own experiences and self-initiated changes in behavior rather. The findings indicated that training internationally was one setting that caused the participants to further think about their facilitation.

Another main idea in the findings included the impact of facilitating training on a global scale. The six participants who trained internationally expressed that delivering training on this scale required them to learn about the culture of the trainees whom they would be training. This finding supported Pesch's (2006) research, which highlighted the adjustments trainers made when they were training as part of a global perspective on learning. The experience of training internationally allowed the participants to interact with trainees from a variety of racial and cultural backgrounds. As they facilitated these trainings, they continued to think about the different experiences and preferences that may be present for trainees in international settings. The concept of facilitation was further compounded by the trainers' differences in culture, language, and nationality. One of the challenges that appeared in the findings dealt with ethnocentricity as a barrier to overcome when designing trainings for a global audience.

Jane (1998) found that utilization of a Western frame of reference caused problems when working in international settings. Likewise, the issue of ethnocentricity sometimes posed a problem for the trainers to overcome as part of their international training experiences. Particularly, the trainers realized that the paradigms often used in their trainings in America may not always fit within the culture of trainees who live in various countries around the world. American ideas and values were frequently at the center of training materials, which the participants noted was a problem. The concept of time was also an idea that functioned differently in some countries. The various cultural differences that the participants noticed while working internationally caused them to

realize the importance of moving away from an ethnocentric American view of training strategies and materials.

The need to make changes in accordance with the styles of the trainees was also a key finding. There was a direct need for the trainers to understand and recognize the communication styles of the trainees in their workshops. This contradicted Kumar and Lightner's (2007) findings among college faculty who believed a change in facilitation style was most likely caused by temperament alone. The White trainers indicated that when trainees from several different countries were present, this resulted in a variety of communication style preferences ultimately requiring the trainers to make adjustments. Chen and Starosta (2005) defined intercultural communication confidence as "the ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behaviors to elicit a desired response in a specific environment" (p. 241). While the definition portrays an emphasis on performance, the findings indicated that the White trainers had to identify strategies which acknowledged the differences in communication style in order to accomplish the goals of the training. When training goals were met in a culturally diverse training environment, the participants believed this was a positive description of training in a diverse setting.

The outcomes associated with culturally responsive training should meet the goals of the organization and allow for all the participants to positively impact the learning experience. The White trainers often worked with trainees to problem solve, which served as an important component to creating more culturally responsive training outcomes. Similarly, there were also instances where training materials for international

trainings had been created from the point of view of countries around the world, which aided in moving beyond ethnocentric materials from the U.S. Training in the dominant language of the trainees was also something that some of the participants believed to be helpful when engaging trainees who were multi-lingual. The participants' past facilitation of trainings with diverse audiences helped them identify the experiences that may assist trainers in the process of becoming more culturally inclusive trainers.

Gay (2013) argued that culturally responsive teaching must be learned over time and can continuously evolve as the individual gains new perspectives. The path for White trainers who desire to become culturally responsive trainers also emerged as a central concept among the findings. Self-reflection and the ability to identity past mistakes were key processes that moved the White trainers in the study towards changing their behavior. The opportunity to discuss racial identity and race as an aspect that affected their work as trainers continued to impact their thinking about these topics. Ultimately, breaking the silence about topics of race was an important component for the White trainers to move beyond the invisibility of Whiteness and the norming of their own experiences in the context of racially diverse organizations.

The competencies White trainers need to have to be successful facilitators in racially diverse organizations created a starting place for other White trainers to consider. The findings suggested that White trainers need to be able to let go of assumptions prior to getting to know the people they will be training. Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2009) argued that there are many alternative viewpoints that learners may hold that are often marginalized in learning environments. The ability to genuinely

respect and acknowledge the value of the experiences of all the trainees served as an important part of the learning process for the White trainers. The findings also highlighted that White trainers should spend time getting to know the culture of the trainees with whom they will be working, which was a particular focus for the trainers who worked internationally. However, this finding also applies to variations in culture present within the United States.

While Gay (2013) discussed that culturally responsive teaching must function as an on-toing learning process, there was less discussion about how trainers may learn from their past mistakes. The White trainers identified influential mistakes, which included examples of using language that negatively impacted the participants as well as situations when they had offended a trainee. Such mistakes had caused them to change their future behaviors and thought processes to be more attentive to the consequences of their actions. The process of discussing these instances because of their participation in the research also emerged as a gateway to change.

Likewise, the findings suggested that participating in this research was an opportunity for many of the participants to discuss race, identity and their work in a context that they had not previously experienced. The questions posed during the interviews were not topics that many of the participants had thought about prior to their participation, which suggests that these types of conversations surrounding race and racial identity are not taking place in many organizations. Mavin and Girling (2000) discussed that diversity training in organizations is often focused on general ideas of multiculturalism and difference. The notion of social justice topics related to deeper

discussions about racial identity for White people, or the role of privilege associated with dominant aspects of identity, are not often taking place in organizations through current diversity trainings. The result has been a silencing about race beyond the typical human resources policies, procedures and practices.

This silence about race within many organizations has supported the invisibility of Whiteness for the participants and appeared as a barrier to further examination of Whiteness. The need to break this silence related to race was an idea that the participants hailed, but simultaneously pointed out their own discomfort with that process. The written reflections on their transcripts produced further reflective thoughts about their experiences. The five White trainers who responded in writing noted how much their thought processes have changed over time and how their own ideas may come across as people interpret them in training settings.

The racial identity development for White trainers existed as a constantly evolving aspect of their overall identities and was directly impacted through their work in racially diverse organizations. Their role in facilitating learning for other employees was also a process that caused them to reflect on their own learning in relation to the work they do as trainers. Ultimately, the move towards creating more culturally inclusive training environments was influenced through interactions with team members of various racial backgrounds, cultures and nationalities.

Implications for Theory, Policy and Culturally Responsive Training Practices

Helms' (1995) White Racial Identity Development model and Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Model of Human Development served as a foundation to further

discuss implications for theory, policy and training practices based on the findings of the research.

Theory

The discussion in the literature regarding race, racism, Whiteness and White privilege have long since been taking place in educational settings. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argued that critical race theory could help identify and change the oppressive structures and outcomes that are perpetuated in the public school system. Similarly, Sleeter (2008) argued that teacher education programs are sites for potential change by requiring teachers to examine their perceptions, while Vaught and Castagro (2008) examined the resistance of White teachers to examine their own racism and racial identity. The HRD literature has largely focused on more general concepts of diversity. De Meuse & Hostager (2001) posited that employee perceptions of diversity can assist in training and development efforts aimed at diversity initiatives, while Hite and McDonald (2006) found that many diversity training programs only provided awareness level learning. The body of literature related to critical race studies in education could serve as a guide for moving the discussion among HRD scholars to a more critical perspective of race and racial identity.

Alfred and Chlup (2010) argued that the absence of discussion of race in the HRD literature has left a significant gap in theory related to the influence of the work environment on racial identity development. This is particularly important as many organizations are becoming more racially and culturally diverse in addition to doing business across national boundaries. Hatcher and Bowles (2006) discussed that the field

of HRD has often been characterized as overly reliant on rational measures and performance, while the field of adult education has taken a more critical approach. However, Amstutz (1994) and Merriem et al.. (2007) pointed out that many adult educators continue to be middle-class White individuals even in racially and culturally diverse organizations. According to Doane and Bonilla-Silva (2003), the lack of discussion about racial identity can be problematic specifically because many White people have race neutralized their own experience. This research supports the creation of a strand of HRD literature that focuses on the role of racial identity as an important contributor to systemic issues that operate at both the organizational level and at the personal level. Swanson and Holton (2009) contended that HRD "is about human beings functioning in productive systems" (p. 4). A deeper examination of the impact of racial identity on organizational systems would open up the potential for theorizing in HRD.

The personal aspects of racial identity laid a foundation to understand how the individual experience of White trainers may impact the overall system of their organizations. Helms (1995) White Racial Identity Development model suggested that White trainers experience different statuses of identity development as they become more aware of their own racism and systemic racism related to the work they do in racially diverse organizations. Helms' model has been extensively studied in the fields of counseling and education, but there were no studies identified that specifically looked at White trainers who work in racially diverse for-profit organizations. The implications within Helms' (1995) model suggest that White trainers do experience events, relationships and learning through their work in racially diverse organizations that

causes them to revisit their understanding of their own racial identity. However, the model also helped identify that the White trainers do not always move successfully within the last three statuses where they actively understand and challenge racist structures and systems. This suggests that diversity trainings as they currently function in many organizations may not be enough to move White employees beyond a race neutralized version of self, which indicates that work environments should be further studied as sites of identity development.

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Model of Human Development targeted four systems that are argued to affect identity. The microsystem was defined as the environments that are part of a person's everyday life such as home, church and work. This system was the most common environment where the participants were able to identify that their racial identity had been influenced at that level. The microsystems that influenced racial identity development for the White corporate trainers included work, family relationships, social relationships and previous school experiences. The mesosystem was defined as the intersection between all the environments that formed an individual's microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The implications related to the mesosystem included that White trainers had to shed the negative racial messages they were receiving from their microsystem environments. The junction between Helms' (1995) White Racial Identity Development model and Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Model of Human Development provided insight into the connection between racial identity development for White trainers and the work they do in racially diverse organizations. The findings suggest that work environments are an important site of

racial identity development for White trainers who work towards culturally responsive training.

Organizational Policy

Currently, much of the internal policies within organizations are focused on non-discrimination related to aspects such as gender, age, disability, race, religion and ethnicity (Pierce, 2003). While research has been conducted in areas such as psychology and adult education to examine the role of racial identity as a factor influencing the structure and practices of organizations, there has been less of a focus on training and development policies geared towards for-profit organizations that specifically discuss racial identity.

The increasingly diverse nature of many workplaces calls for a continued focus on policies that identify ways that racial identity for White employees impacts their experience and simultaneously teaches White trainers how to effectively facilitate training in racially diverse organizations. Evans and Chun (2007) argued that racism continues to permeate aspects of many organizations at the individual and system-wide levels. The creation of organizational policies that highlight the need for White trainers to gain professional development specifically focused on culturally responsive teaching would help guide organizations towards more inclusive training practices.

Culturally Responsive Training Practice

Davis, Naughton, and Rothwell (2006) argued that successful training and development practices should focus on three main aspects of trainer development, which included interpersonal, business/management, and personal skills. However, the

literature on culturally responsive teaching takes the notion of successful teaching a step further. Gay (2010) defined culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 31). The creation of a culturally responsive training environment should achieve the organizational goals for that training and to do so in a manner that allows trainees to use their own frameworks for creating new learning. For White trainers working in racially diverse organizations, this also suggests they should first understand their own racial identity in an effort to open up the dialogue well beyond their own experiences and viewpoints.

Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2009) were hesitant to confine culturally responsive training into a set of best practices because every training group may have different needs. This study revealed that in practice, all of the White trainers in the research believed they were attentive to the needs of trainees and made adjustments appropriately, but many times these adjustments were made retroactively. Gay (2013) suggested that culturally responsive teaching is more likely to take place when educators have first identified their own cultural experiences. She argued "it is futile for educators to claim they can attend to the needs of students (for academic learning or otherwise) without engaging their cultural socialization" (Gay, 2013, p. 61). While her focus has been in the educational arena, the need for White trainers to examine their own identities first is relevant to both HRD practices as well as adult education. The transition to a more proactive acknowledgement of differences as White trainers enter into training

facilitation may assist in creating more culturally responsive training environments from the onset.

Participant recommendations for practice. The participants in the research identified four main recommendations for practice White trainers may benefit from as they work towards creating more culturally responsive training environments.

Similar to Gay's (2013) focus on removing personal assumptions, the participants discussed the need to begin a training facilitation as clear as possible from any negative stereotypes about participants. This is particularly important in practice because White trainers will have to actively think about their own biases, cultural norms and communication styles before facilitating training. A strategy of this nature highlights that trainers are actors within organizations and can work at a very personal level to improve their skills relevant to culturally responsive training outcomes.

The participants also provided the recommendation that recognizing and placing value on the variety of trainee identities was critical for White trainers. This suggestion may only be truly viable as White trainers move into the later three statuses of Helms' (1995) model by acknowledging the ways that they may be at risk for norming their own experiences. The acknowledgement that there will be differences among the trainees and differences with the trainers themselves was critical to facilitating in an inclusive manner. If differences in identity are ignored in favor of a uniform training paradigm, there will likely be trainees whose valuable contributions will not be heard. It is then the responsibility of the trainer to intentionally open up the dialogue.

Third, the White trainers in the study felt it was the responsibility of the trainer to work in advance to create an environment where all of the trainees feel safe to contribute to the learning in the ways that they chose. Particularly, the trainer is the individual in the room with the greatest ability to adjust the flow of the training. The participants believed this influence should be used in a way that promoted open-mindedness, shared dialogue and multiple pathways to learning.

Finally, the participants expressed that White trainers need to balance the role of "expert" with the ability to step back and allow knowledge to come from the trainees. This was of particular focus for trainers who were working internationally because the content of the training may function differently in various countries and cultures. The creation of culturally responsive training was thought to be enhanced when there was direct attention to the values and ideas present among trainees. In order to further consider the relationship between these findings in relation to culturally responsive training, recommendations for future research have been identified.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research considered the relationship between the White racial identity development of White trainers with the work they do in racially diverse organizations. The literature revealed that White racial identity development was frequently studied within the fields of psychology, K-12 education, higher education and sociology. However, there was not a body of literature devoted to White trainers in racially diverse for-profit organizations.

According to Alfred and Chlup (2010), race continues to be a rarely researched agenda within HRD, while adult education has extensively studied the role of racism and other such forces. The findings of this research indicated that perceptions and practices of White trainers within racially diverse organizations need to be studied from a wider range of for-profit organizations to better understand how various organizational norms impact their thinking. For example, organizations that rank among the most diverse for-profit organizations in the country may offer different perspectives and expectations for White trainers in relation to understanding their own identities.

Second, further research about the changes the White trainers in the study experienced as a result of their participation in the study could offer new insights into their racial identity development. Gay (2013) argued that culturally responsive training is "a developmental process that involves learning over time" (p. 57). With this explanation at the forefront, a future research agenda focused on the outcomes related to discussing racial identity, in some instances for the first time, may provide valuable insight into the developmental process tied to culturally responsive training for White trainers.

Future research about organizational policies on diversity initiatives in for-profit organizations may also offer extended information about policy development related to social justice outcomes. Bierema (2000) argued that organizations should be concerned with the issues of "sexism, racism, patriarchy, or violence" specifically because they "have significant impact on organizational dynamics" (p. 287). A targeted critical approach to researching the ways that some for-profit organizations make these topics

relevant at the system level and the individual level could offer a wider range of options for organizations to create culturally inclusive training environments.

Conclusion

This research was organized into five chapters which included 1) statement of the research problem, 2) literature review, 3) methodology, 4) findings and 5) summary, discussion and conclusion. In Chapter I, the problem statement was identified as well as the purpose of the study, conceptual framework, and guiding research questions. The conceptual framework for the study included Helms' (1995) White Racial Identity Development model and Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Model of Human Development. Helms' model identified six statuses White people may experience as they learn about their own racial identity. Bronfenbrenner's model portrayed four environmental systems that can impact an individual's identity development.

Chapter II contained a literature review which discussed scholarly work about the history of race and racism, contemporary views on race and racism, work roles, adult learning and race, White racial identity and White privilege, and corporate organizations and diversity. Chapter III included an in-depth explanation of the methodology that guided the study. This chapter included the description of a basic qualitative design, participant selection and criteria, data collection, data analysis and ethical concerns. Chapter IV outlined the main findings of the research which included the themes of a) perceptions of racial identity, b) developing racial consciousness, c) cultural diversity and training, and d) becoming culturally responsive. In Chapter V, a discussion of the

findings and recommendations for theory, policy, practice and future research were discussed.

The workplace continues to become a more diverse environment and employees come from a variety backgrounds. White trainers in racially diverse for-profit organizations are in environments that first require an understanding of their own racial identity development in order to create culturally inclusive training environments. When White trainers normalize the experiences of White people, this perpetuates the invisibility of Whiteness within racially diverse organizations. Race continues to be an important component of identity and the work environment is often a site where employees interact with people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences.

The move towards continuously developing White trainers who are able to create culturally inclusive training environments may serve as an important goal for HRD practitioners and scholars. Through a more intentional focus on HRD research related to race and racism, this body of literature can be further expanded to bring issues of social justice and critical HRD topics to the forefront.

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APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project Title: White Corporate Trainers in Racially Diverse Organizations: The Role of Racial Identity Development in the Creation of Culturally Responsive Learning Environments

You are being invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Texas A&M University. You are being asked to read this form so that you know about this research study. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part in the research. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefit you normally would have.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding about how racially White trainers think about their race and job experiences as they work in racially diverse training environments.

WHY AM I BEING ASKED TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are working as a White trainer in a racially diverse training organization(s).

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE ASKED TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

Between six to eight people (participants) will be enrolled in this study.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO BEING IN THIS STUDY?

The alternative is not to participate.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IN THIS STUDY?

Your participation in this study will last up to five hours (not at all at once) and includes two face-to-face visits for interviews, a possible third interview and a brief written reflection on a later date about the printed notes (transcript) from the interviews. The study as a whole will continue for approximately 15-18 months and your participation

would only be required again if there are follow up questions about your interviews. The procedures you will be asked to perform are described below.

1. **Face-to-face interview #1**
   This visit will last about 60 to 90 minutes and will take place at private location and time of your choice (which cannot be at your workplace). During this visit I will ask you questions about your experiences and thoughts about working as a White trainer.

2. **Face-to-face interview #2**
   This visit will last about 60 to 90 minutes and will take place at private location and time of your choice (which cannot be at your workplace). During this visit I will ask you follow-up questions.

3. **Face-to-face interview #3 (if needed)**
   This visit will last about 60 to 90 minutes and will take place at private location and time of your choice (which cannot be at your workplace). During this visit I will ask you additional follow-up questions.

4. **Write a brief written reflection after reading your interview transcript and e-mail it back to Alicia at Alicia.Friday@yahoo.com**
   This should take approximately 20 minutes to read through the transcript and approximately 10-60 minutes to write a reflection (which will depend on how you choose to respond and at what depth).

WILL VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDINGS BE MADE OF ME DURING THE STUDY?

The researcher will take an audio recording during the study so that your interview can be typed up exactly as it was spoken only if you give your permission to do so. Indicate your decision below by initialing in the space provided.

_____ I **give** my permission for an audio recording to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

_____ I **do not** give my permission for an audio recording to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO ME?

The things that you will be doing have no more risk than you would come across in everyday life. You may find that thinking about your work experiences and experiences about race may be at times uncomfortable or bring up ideas you have not previously

discussed or considered. Your identity will be kept confidential by using a pseudonym (or made up name) to represent your responses in the study.

Although the researcher has tried to avoid risks, you may feel that some questions/procedures that are asked of you will be stressful or upsetting. You do not have to answer anything you do not want to.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS TO ME?

There may be no direct benefit to you by being in this study. What the researchers find out from this study may help other people understand more about being a White trainer in a racially diverse organization**.**

WILL THERE BE ANY COSTS TO ME?

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

WILL I BE PAID TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

WILL INFORMATION FROM THIS STUDY BE KEPT PRIVATE?

The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely.

Information about your interview will be stored in a locked file cabinet and computer files protected with a password. This consent form will be filed securely in an official area.

Information about you will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator (Alicia) and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

WHOM CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

You can call the Principal Investigator (Alicia) to tell her about a concern or complaint about this research study. Alicia Friday, M.Ed. can be called at (281)787-7541 or e-

mailed at Alicia.Friday@yahoo.com. You may also contact the Principal Investigator's advisor, Mary Alfred, Ph.D. at (979)848-2718 or malfred@tamu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research and cannot reach the Principal Investigator or want to talk to someone other than the Investigator, you may call the Texas A&M Human Subjects Protection Program office.

- Phone number: (979) 458-4067
- Email: irb@tamu.edu

MAY I CHANGE MY MIND ABOUT PARTICIPATING?

Yes. You have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide not to participate or stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study, there will be no effect on your student status, medical care, employment, evaluation, etc. You can stop being in this study at any time with no effect on your student status, medical care, employment, evaluation, etc.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. The procedures, risks, and benefits have been explained to me, and my questions have been answered. I know that new information about this research study will be provided to me as it becomes available and that the researcher will tell me if I must be removed from the study. I can ask more questions if I want. A copy of this entire, signed consent form will be given to me.

_____

Participant's Signature Date

_____

Printed Name Date

INVESTIGATOR'S AFFIDAVIT:

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

_____

Signature of Presenter Date

_____

Printed Name Date

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL #1

I. Basic Demographic Information

a. How did you originally get into training as a career?
b. How long have you worked in this job?
c. What are your responsibilities in your current job?
d. What does a typical day at your job include?
e. What types of training sessions do you normally lead in your current job?

II. Experiences of Working in a Racially Diverse Organization

a. How would you describe your philosophy on teaching and learning?
b. How do you incorporate a variety of perspectives in your training sessions and try to engage all the participants?
c. What is it like working in an organization that is racially diverse?
d. If you have worked in organizations that were not very racially diverse in the past, how was that experience different?
e. How does the organization encourage, or support you, as you facilitate trainings for a racially diverse audience?
f. Describe one or two of your best experiences working with a racially diverse training audience. What made those experiences stand out?
g. What are the challenges you have faced while training with racially mixed groups of people?
h. How have you adjusted your training style, or strategies, in response to those challenges? (if the participant discussed challenges)

III. Evaluating How Being White has Influenced Their Experiences

a. What experiences, or people, from your life have shaped the way you think about race? How have they influenced you?
b. How has working in racially diverse organizations influenced those ideas?
c. Describe a time when you "felt" White. What made that experience stand out to you?
d. What do you think are some of the most important competencies for a White trainer who is working in a racially diverse organization?
e. What have you learned about yourself through your work as a trainer in a racially diverse organization?

f. If you could go back to the time when your started your job here, what (if anything) would you change about your experience or strategies?
g. Is there anything else you think would be important to discuss about what it is like being a White trainer?

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL #2

I. Race and Culture

1. How do you define culture?
2. How do you define race?
3. How are the two ideas different?
4. Why do you think it's easier for some people to talk about culture instead of talking about race?
5. How would you describe your own culture?
6. What do you think it means to be White in America?

II. Racial Identity

7. When did you first realize that being White had meaning in your life? Was there a specific incident that made you realize your race was an important part of who you are?
8. What is the racial make-up of your family and your closest group of friends (such as friends you would spend time with outside of work)?
9. Have you ever had a friend of color, or a friend who is a different race than your own, tell you about a time they experienced racism? If so, describe what happened to them.
10. What was your reaction to that story?
11. Do you ever feel like there are situations that are easier to get access to, or deal with, if you are a White person? If so, give an example.

III. Anti-racism

12. How would you define the term "anti-racism"?
13. Do you think you fit into that definition? If so, why?