

1-1-2010

Separate but equal?: The experiences of African American female graduate students in a college student affairs program

Leah Reeves

Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in [Counseling and Student Development](#) at Eastern Illinois University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

Recommended Citation

Reeves, Leah, "Separate but equal?: The experiences of African American female graduate students in a college student affairs program" (2010). *Masters Theses*. 159.

<http://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/159>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

THESIS MAINTENANCE AND REPRODUCTION CERTIFICATE

TO: Graduate Degree Candidates (who have written formal theses)

SUBJECT: Permission to Reproduce Theses

The University Library is receiving a number of request from other institutions asking permission to reproduce dissertations for inclusion in their library holdings. Although no copyright laws are involved, we feel that professional courtesy demands that permission be obtained from the author before we allow these to be copied.

PLEASE SIGN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University has my permission to lend my thesis to a reputable college or university for the purpose of copying it for inclusion in that institution's library or research holdings.

Leah Reeves _____

Author's Signature

4-26-10 _____

Date

I respectfully request Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University **NOT** allow my thesis to be reproduced because:

Author's Signature

Date

This form must be submitted in duplicate.

Separate but Equal? The experiences of African American female
graduate students in a College Student Affairs program.

(TITLE)

BY

Leah Reeves

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Masters of Science in College Student Affairs

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

2010

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

 4/22/10
THESIS COMMITTEE CHAIR DATE

 4/22/10
DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL CHAIR DATE
OR CHAIR'S DESIGNEE

 4/22/10
THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBER DATE

 4-26-10
THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBER DATE

THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBER DATE

THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBER DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to many people who have helped me complete this thesis. I would like to first thank my thesis chair, Dr. Catherine Polydore, who has put in many hours helping me, as well as educating me along the way on research writing. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. James Harden and Dr. Gloria Leitschuh who have dedicated numerous hours sitting in committee meetings, reading emails, and editing earlier drafts of this document throughout the course of the project. The completion of this thesis is dedicated to my son, who was put on the back burner many nights for the completion of the final project. Mommy loves you dearly. There are a handful of other individuals who have helped me along the way that I would also like to thank. Many thanks to the wonderful faculty of Counseling and Student Development, Dr. Eberly, Dr. Roberts, Dr. Wallace, and any others who assisted in one way or another in the making of this project. I thank you all.

Abstract

Little research has been done exploring the experiences of African American women in graduate studies. Because of this, the purpose of the study was to examine the experiences of African American, female, graduate students in a College Student Affairs program. The participants were two African American, graduate students currently enrolled in a College Student Affairs program at a liberal arts, comprehensive institution in the Midwest. Data collection techniques included an in-depth interview in which participants responded to questions about their experiences in the program with regards to their interactions with classmates, professors, and other professionals in the field. The researcher also utilized natural observations of the participants in their classroom setting. Data analysis revealed five themes as salient to the experiences of the participants. Furthermore, the results suggested that Critical Race Theory, and Black Feminist Thought are appropriate theoretical frameworks for examining African American, female, graduate students experiences. The results also indicated that the possible reason that African American females feel their graduate school experience is so much different than their White counterparts is because of the oppressive mindset that African American women carry with them into their graduate studies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii

ABSTRACT iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS iv

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION1

 Purpose of Study4

 Research Question5

 Significance of Study6

 Limitations of Study6

 Definitions of Terms7

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE 8

 Predominantly White Institutions v. Predominantly Black Institutions8

 The black college student13

 The black female college student15

 Black Feminist Thought18

 Critical Race Theory19

 Socialization Theory20

CHAPTER III. METHODS22

 Design of Study22

Participants.....	23
Instrument	24
Data Collection	26
Treatment of Data	26
Data Analysis	27
CHAPTER IV. RESULTS.....	28
Personal Connections.....	29
Fish bowl syndrome.....	30
A Tale of “O” on being different	30
The muted group	31
Strategic Distancing.....	32
Summary	34
CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION.....	35
Black Feminist Thought.....	35
Critical Race Theory	36
Socialization Theory	37
Recommendations.....	37
Conclusion	39
REFERENCES	41
APPENDIX A: Informed Consent.....	53
APPENDIX B: Guiding Questions.....	56
APPENDIX C: Transcripts.....	58

APPENDIX D: Field Notes69

APPENDIX E: Peer Review Transcripts.....78

CHAPTER I

Introduction

There are many challenging experiences that African American women encounter in the higher education field that the majority groups do not experience (Ellis, 2009). This could be due to the history of African Americans in higher education and how obtaining a degree has been a struggle for this group since the Morrill Act (Evans, 2005). Historically, African Americans in general did not pursue degrees in education based on their own accord. Most academic fields were closed to them, and teaching offered one of the only viable options within the United States segregated educational system (Gravois, 2007; Woodson, 1933/2000). In recent years, various researchers have explored the issues faced by graduate students of color (Sims, 2008; Ellis, 2009; Cole, 2007; Gasman, Hirschfeld, & Vultaggio, 2008). According to Gasman, Hirschfeld, & Vultaggio (2008), African American graduate students frequently sense that their perspectives are not valued in the classroom. Although professionals acknowledge that there are ethnically and racially related challenges that most African American college students face, the salience of their race and ethnicity are made even more so in a predominantly White academic environment (Rodgers & Summers, 2008). Gasman et al. (2004) iterates that African American graduate students often feel academically isolated in the classroom due to the lack of alignment between their viewpoints and those of their White professors.

Heightened sensitivity on the part of faculty and administrators combined with heightened fears and sensitivities on the part of African American students create volatile situations that can destroy creative learning opportunities (Blake & Moore, 1999). Graduate students of color may also feel discouraged from participating in class discussions if there are no other minority students in the classroom (Guiffrida, 2005). Furthermore, due to the “risky”

nature of addressing racial issues, faculty members may not feel comfortable addressing these issues within the classroom (Gasman et al., 2004, p. 697). With regards to retention, research posits that on a personal level, students are discouraged by: negative classroom interactions, family responsibility, and insensitive institutional atmospheres (Bowl, 2001). On the other hand, sincere efforts by faculty and administrators to reach out to students and support them are often rebuffed by youth who are insecure, intimidated, and fearful that they will not achieve (Guiffrida, 2005). This feeling of isolation goes beyond the experiences African American graduate students face with their professors and classmates. The feeling is perpetuated in the coursework and assignments African American graduate students encounter in the classroom (Gasman, Hirschfeld, & Vultaggio, 2008). Findings from a study by Johnson-Bailey (2004) indicate that classroom hierarchies and hidden and overt curriculum affect the educational tenures of graduate Black women. The author also reiterates that learning environments are not neutral sites but are driven by the major hierarchies that order the macro societal level. Similarly, classrooms are existing at the community level and in a large part are ordered by the positionalities of the instructors (Johnson-Bailey).

Regarding curriculum, many faculty members and institutions have historically privileged Eurocentric knowledge in the classroom (Lee & Johnson-Bailey, 2004). Gasman et al., (2004) said that due to the lack of inclusion of alternative racial and ethnic perspectives, this prevalent Eurocentrism often creates an inhospitable environment for African American graduate students. This indubitably leads African American graduate students to feel that they have to prove themselves in the classroom. A burgeoning body of research in multicultural curriculum in higher education explores perspectives which shed light on this matter. Color Blind

Perspective, Cultural Diversity Perspective, and Social Justice Perspective are perspectives widely being studied by researchers in terms of multicultural curriculum in higher education.

The term Color Blind Perspective refers to the state of being well suited to a stance that does not acknowledge race or that views all racial issues as inconsequential when not expressed as part of any classroom or curriculum equation (Johnson-Bailey, 2002). Overall, race is either not mentioned or is rarely discussed in the adult education textbooks (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000). In a major survey of adult education graduate program curricula, race was conspicuously absent, with the exception being courses on cultural diversity or community education (Milton, Watkins, Spears-Studdard, & Burch, 2001).

Cultural Diversity Perspective is another view that has surfaced in graduate education. This perspective says that society comprises different cultures that imbue their members with values, folkways, and morals, and that one's experiences can be significantly influenced by one's cultural membership (Johnson-Bailey, 2002). This method is more specifically depicted in textbooks by authors adding on a final chapter that speaks of minority issues. These chapters are usually offered to placate the concerns of politically conscious publishers or reader to whom they would not want to appear exclusionary (Johnson-Bailey).

The third perspective, Social Justice Perspective says a society can be unjust towards minorities and other disenfranchised groups and calls for the field of higher education to remember its mission to work toward democratization (Johnson-Bailey, 2002). This perspective has many dimensions but the main purpose is to take a look at White privilege in classroom practices and the curriculum. Rocco and West (1998), and Tisdell (1995) write specifically about dialogue and the use of voice as analogous to how power and privilege are manifested in routine classroom workings: students who feel powerful and validated by the teacher or the

curriculum talk, and students who feel neglected or ignored by the teacher or the curriculum remain silent. To compound the issue, controversial course curriculum seems to add a layer of difficulty to students' willingness to accept and process new information (Lee and Johnson-Bailey, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

Despite the numerous research done on African American graduate students (Gasman, Hirschfeld, & Vultaggio, 2005; Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles, 2009; Ellis, 2000), little research has been done exploring the experiences of African American women in graduate studies. The purpose of this case study was to examine the experiences of African American women in a College Student Affairs program at a liberal arts university in the Midwest. The author examined these experiences by conducting in-depth interviews of African American women in this program, and by using natural observations to collaborate on the interviews. Interview procedures have been found useful in enabling researchers to develop first-person descriptions of diverse human experiences (Thomas & Pollio, 2001).

Flick, Kardorff, and Steinke (2004) explained that all human experiences are racially gendered; that is, filtered through the socially constructed categories of male and female. The authors go on to say that this system privileges whiteness over blackness. The current study used a case study approach for its method. This is appropriate because the purpose of a case study in qualitative research is to gain a detailed understanding of the processes involved within a setting, but this can involve studying single or multiple cases and numerous levels of analysis (Bloor & Wood, 2006). In a case study, there are multiple parts. In Yin's (2003) definition of case studies, the first part is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not

clearly evident. The second part of his definition says the case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables on interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. There are at least five different applications of a case study. One application is the importance of case studies explaining the casual link in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies. A second application is to describe an intervention and the real-life context in which it occurred. Third, case studies can illustrate certain topics within an evaluation, in a more descriptive mode. Fourth, the case study strategy may be used to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes. Fifth, the case study may be a meta-evaluation-a study of an evaluation study (Yin, 2003, p. 15).

Case study analysis usually proceeds by the researcher providing a description of the setting, searching for themes, aggregating data into themes and comparing the themes (Bloor & Wood, 2006). It is important to note that qualitative research is interpretive. This means that the researcher filters the data through a personal lens that is situated in a specific sociopolitical and historical moment (Creswell, 2003). The social phenomena in qualitative research are often viewed holistically. This explains why qualitative research studies appear as broad, panoramic views rather than micro-analyses (Creswell). This study employed third strategy.

Research Question

The research question that guided this study was: “What are the social experiences of African American females in graduate studies? Research has indicated that students of color and women in higher education deal with barriers designed to impede their progress because of their

embodiment of a racialized or gendered identity (Harris, 2007). The salience of one's racial identity, whether internally or externally imposed, forces one to live a "double life," which is the case for an African American woman (Harris, 2007).

Significance of the Study

There are a few theoretical frameworks that come in to play when explaining the experiences of African American females in higher education and in graduate studies. Black Feminist Thought, Critical Race Theory, and Socialization Theory are important when dealing with such issues of different challenges experienced by African American females in graduate studies that other groups are not experiencing. Understanding these experiences that African American female graduate students encounter is crucial to supporting their persistence through master's programs, and in turn, their professional success (Gasman, Hirschfeld, & Vultaggio, 2008).

Limitations of the Study

Two parameters for a research study establish the boundaries exceptions, reservations, and qualifications inherent in every study: delimitations and limitations (Creswell, 2003). When using interviews in qualitative research, limitations naturally present themselves, for example, interviewing provides indirect information filtered through the eyes of the interviewees, people are not equally articulate and perceptive, and the researcher's presence may bias responses. The first limitation of this study is the sample size. The purposive sampling procedures used decreased the generalizability of the findings. The study does not generalize to all African American, female, graduate students. Nor does it generalize their experiences in all College Student Affairs programs. There are not many African Americans who generally apply to this particular program, so the number of African American women in the program is very limited,

hence providing for a small sample size for the project. In fall 2008, ten percent of the applicants were African American. Out of the ten percent, three percent were female. The second limitation is the researcher is an African American, female, graduate student in the same program as the participants. Each participant would be considered a friend of the researcher, so access to the participants were relatively easy to obtain. The researcher carried her own personal biases towards the program, her classmates, and her professors. These biases were often shared with the participants in the earlier stages of their program, which may have presented themselves in latter parts of the research.

Definitions of Terms

African American: There are many definitions that apply to the classification, African American. For the purpose of this research, the researcher has defined African American as Black Americans who were born in the United States and currently reside in the United States.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) refers to the majority at these particular institutions of higher education are those of African American descent.

Predominantly White Institutions (PWI's) refers to the majority at these institutions of higher education being of the Euro-American descent.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Qualitative researchers approach their studies with a certain paradigm or worldview, a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that guide their inquiries (Creswell, 1998). The philosophical assumptions that guided this research were the epistemological approach, and the axiological approach. The relationship between the researcher and the research studied was one of extreme closeness. Creswell (1998) defines epistemological as, the relationship of the researcher to that being researched. Qualitative researchers interact with those they study whether this interaction assumes the form of living with or observing informants over a prolonged period of time or actual collaboration. The definition of an axiological assumption is an interpretive biography, meaning the researcher admits that the stories voiced represent an interpretation and presentation of the author as much as the subject of the study (Creswell, 1998).

Predominantly White Institutions v Predominantly Black Institutions

There is a continuous concern amongst administrators in higher education regarding black student enrollment and retention (Rodgers & Summers, 2008). Predominantly white institutions (PWI) of higher education often devote intensive efforts to minority student recruitment but find that subsequent retention is a significant problem (Davis, Dias-Bowie, Greenberg, Klukken, Pollio, Thomas, & Thompson, 2004). Research shows that PWI's have not been as effective as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) in retaining and conferring degrees upon Black college students (Rodgers & Summers, 2008). Although there has been steady progress in minority completion of undergraduate and terminal degrees (American Council on Education, 2004), blacks are still lacking far behind whites in terms of enrollment in institutions of higher education. In a report by the Department of Educational

Statistics, in 2001, 87.1% of Black undergraduates attended PWI's, and these institutions accounted for 78.5 of undergraduate degrees conferred upon Black students. In comparison, 12.9% of Black undergraduates (13.5% of all Black male students and 12.6% of all Black female students) attended HBCU's, yet graduates of these institutions accounted for 21.5% of undergraduate degrees conferred upon Black students (Rodgers & Summers, 2008). Despite enrolling a much larger percentage of Black students, graduates of PWI's account for a disproportionately low percentage of degrees awarded to Black students (Rodgers & Summers, 2008).

There have been many speculations as to why this is happening. According to Melendez (2004) one contributor to the apparent slowing of the rate of growth in minority educational attainment may be the decline in need-based financial aid, particularly full funding. Many low-income students, regardless of race, have been seeing greater gaps between costs and their financial aid packages (Melendez). Other authors have suggested that the predominantly white campuses do not present a hospitable atmosphere for minority student learning (Davis, et al, 2004). Administrators are seeing a vast number of Black students coming to PWI's of higher education and they are having difficulty relating to their professors. Faculty are operating on the basis of negative stereotypes in the classroom, whether consciously or not, and minority students are becoming acutely uncomfortable, mistrustful, or demoralized (Davis, et al, 2004). For minority students, however, racism or feelings of racial tension can sometimes create a barrier when interacting with faculty, which affects the nature and quality of their educational experience (Allen, 1992). According to Kraft (1991), for many minority students who lacked significant faculty contact, race was often considered as the determining factor. In turn, these minority students felt that faculty are less willing to interact with them, even concerning

academic issues (Kraft, 1991). In addition, more recent research indicates that Black students believed that White college professors stereotyped them as one-dimensional representatives of their race, often calling on them to serve as racial representatives or spokespersons (Cleveland, 2004). As a result, minority students, particularly those who experienced or perceived their college environment as racially or ethnically insensitive, were more likely to have fewer student-faculty contacts and abated academic development (Allen, 1992; Kraft, 1991).

Keller (2005) has done extensive research in the area of minority access and achievement in higher education. Keller (2005) attributed the lagging of minorities in higher education to 10 factors:

- (1) The campus subculture is hostile to Blacks at many institutions and the faculty and deans remain insensitive, (2) A growing number of Blacks are enrolling in the military, in part because of the more hospitable environment there, (3) Financial aid has been declining, (4) The decline is mainly among Black males; something is wrong with Black men, probably drugs, prison, and unemployment, (5) Poor preparation for college work, as seen in SAT scores, is a major factor, (6) With more jobs available, many Blacks go to work rather than college, (7) The deterioration of the Black family mean a lack of discipline and emphasis on education, (8) The high incidence of drug use inhibits study, (9) Attitudes of Blacks, such as lack of effort, are a problem, and (10) There is a lack of adult leadership emphasizing education.

Feagin (1992) referred to the traces of racism in the college subculture of PWI's.

According to Feagin many White professors and administrators have the misconception that Black Americans from "ghetto" communities are not able to handle difficult course loads and educational requirements in the same way that White, or White male, students can.

When taking a look at the history of Black students in HBCU's, we see a different trend. It is important to note that HBCU's originated with the passing of the second Morrill Act in 1890, which stipulated that no appropriations would go to states that denied admission to the colleges on the basis of race unless they also set up separate but equal facilities (Cohen, 1998).

Hence the mission of many of the beginning HBCU's was to improve the economic and social conditions of newly freed slaves (Zamani, 2003). Their curriculum initially began with emphasis on vocational studies but eventually evolved to include liberal arts and general education.

Curricula at HBCUs now also include a greater integration of black history and culture than at PWI's (Bennett & Xie, 2003). Dr. Gretchen Lockett an associate professor of education at Harris-Stowe State College in St. Louis, Missouri stated:

"HBCU's have significantly large numbers of students who have come from less than adequate or supportive elementary and secondary systems which results in the fact that the faculties at HBCUs must be committed to the teaching of both pre-college and college material." Faculty members at these institutions must see their work as reclamation of thousands of persons who had been discarded by society because of their skin color and their neighborhoods (Lockett, 1996, n.p.).

Until the midpoint of the 20th century, more than 90% of the Black students enrolled in higher education in this country were educated in HBCU's (Kim & Conrad, 2006). Although well over 80 percent of Black students attend PWI's, HBCUs have consistently produced slightly over one-third of Black degree recipients, more than other institutional types (Hope, 1996; Wolf-Wendel, 1998).

Research has shown that the difference between PWI's and HBCU's is the extent to which HBCUs foster degree aspirations and encourage career in engineering, the natural sciences, or mathematics (Carter, 2001; Chenoweth, 1997; Grandy, 1998; Joiner, 2001). A limited number of studies have also reported on major differences in institutional resources and characteristics between HBCUs and PWI's (Kim & Conrad, 2006). PWI's have been known to enroll more affluent students than HBCUs, but still Black students who attend these institutions are less likely to feel that their institution has responded to their needs (Allen, 1992). Students that attend HBCUs benefit from increased levels of engagement with peers and faculty and

faculty diversity (Stewart, Wright, Perry & Rankin, 2008). Even though Black students at HBCUs find their academic environment to be more rigorous, they are able to excel as a result of the increased support they receive (Seifert, Drummond, & Pascarella, 2006).

Other researchers have attributed the success of Black students attending HBCU's to other factors. Fleming (1985) states that HBCUs offer benefits minority students may otherwise not receive at PWI's. For example, according to Fleming (1985), success and the feeling of belonging are intimately connected with this factor. Racial minorities on PWI's experience a greater range of problems in their efforts to adapt socially, psychologically, and academically than do non-minorities (Fleming, 1985). Black students have found PWI's to be isolating because of the lack of a critical mass of black students, faculty and administrators (Britt & Turner, 2001). Allen (1992) reported that Black students have more frequent and meaningful interaction with Black and White faculty at HBCUs than at PWI's. This could be due to the fact at most PWI's; black faculty members often make up less than two percent of the full-time faculty (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2002) where as black faculty make up 58.2 percent at HBCUs. Kim (2004) also noted that Black students at HBCUs are more actively and deeply involved in the academic community because of the faculty interaction than those Black students who attend PWI's. Fleming (1982) also reported greater cognitive growth for Black college students attending HBCU's. DeSousa & Kuh, (1996) agree by stating Black students do indeed gain significantly more in cognitive and personal development from attending HBCUs. As a result they tend to have higher GPAs, higher career aspirations and more positive student-faculty interactions (Cokely, 1999).

In addition to academic success, HBCUs help cultivate strong bonds between peers and their community for black college students (Stewart, Wright, Perry, & Rankin, 2008). HBCUs

provide campus environments designed to nurture Black students (Redd, 1998; Roebuck & Murty, 1993). Redd (1998), Roebuck and Murty (1993) also state that Black students at HBCUs are more integrated into campus life, enjoy closer relationships with faculty and participate more fully in campus organizations and activities. Because of this factor, Black students who attend HBCUs do not have to cope with assimilating in addition to other collegiate pressures (Stewart, Wright, Perry, & Rankin, 2008).

The Black college student

There has been a significant change in attendance for Black students in institutions of higher education over the past few decades (Bowl, 2001). Before the appropriation of the GI bill, around 60 percent of Black students attended an HBCU. Today, in the 21st century, the majority of Black students are now enrolling in PWI's. Fleming (1984) reported that the comparison of White and Black student profiles tells us that Black students have special concerns in PWI settings that White students do not share.

Student affairs practitioners use a variety of terms to describe the feelings and perceptions of students of color as they interact on predominantly White campuses (Sims, 2008). Descriptors such as marginalization, mattering, and isolation are widely used to reflect the sentiment of the social state of students of color on predominantly White campuses (Sims, 2008). Black students have been relegated to a racialized existence that forces them to interpret experiences through a lens of oppression (Harris, 2007). It is almost as if the system is set up for Black students to fail in PWI's. The atmosphere at PWI's is geared for the success of White students. Black students are faced with alienation in the classroom and rejection from their peers and professors at many PWI's which eventually leads many to leave the campus. Dating back to the 1990s the national college dropout rate for Blacks was 20-25 percent higher than that for

Whites (Steele, 1999). Davis, et al (2004) stated attention must be given to nonacademic factors that influence attrition. In a meta-analysis of 113 studies covering research on minority students from 1970-1997, a number of social, academic, family, and institutional factors were found to be linked to academic success, such as whether or not a student comes from a single parent household or not, and if the student is considered to be first generation (Echols, 1998).

Vincent Tinto's Interactional Theory of students gives insight into the factors that play into why Black students have feelings of isolation and withdrawal at PWI's. Interactional theory is based on the premise that the environment and relationships formed or not formed are the determining factors for students of color of whether or not they feel accepted or comfortable at their university. Tinto (1998) as cited in Sims, 2008, also argues that students come in to college with a mindset or expectation of what college life entails. If these expectations are unmet, there is early disenchantment with the social and academic communities. Such disenchantment hinders academic and social integration, which in turn, influences subsequent institutional and goal commitments and ultimately student departure (Braxton, Vesper & Mossier, 1995).

There is much to be said about the dynamics of Black students. For students from underrepresented populations, identity struggles take on a particular intensity when the "longing to attain self-conscious [personhood]" means negotiating the multiple dimensions of their identities in an environmental context that may be neither inclusive nor welcoming (McEwen, Roper, Bryant, & Langa, 1990). For these students, neither the old self formed prior to entering college nor the self who is becoming during their college experience should be discarded (Stewart, 2008). Yet merging the two into a better and truer self to be both who they were and who they are becoming is a difficult process (DuBois 1903/1994, p. 2). The development of multiple aspects of identity in an environment that may be hostile to certain resolutions of one or

all of these sociocultural identities presents psychosocial identity challenges for Black students, particularly for those in predominantly White educational contexts (Brown-Collins & Sussewell, 1986).

The Black, female college student

The inequities faced by Blacks as a group have been particularly oppressive for black women (Zamani, 2003). Lerner (1992) states:

“Black women have always been more conscious of and more handicapped by race oppression than by sex oppression. They have been subject to all the restrictions against Blacks and those against women. Lerner goes on to explain, “In no area of life have they ever been permitted to attain higher levels of status than white women” (p.xxii).

This even dates back to the late nineteenth century when a few Black women began to attend the Seven Sisters colleges. One of the Seven Sisters’ colleges to produce the most significant number of Black women graduates before the civil war was Oberlin College. This event is very important when looking into Black females in higher education today because the Seven Sisters colleges were well known at that time for producing very intellectual and successful women. The presence of Black women and their academic success in these institutions refuted the notion of Blacks’ intellectual inferiority (Perkins, 1997). Perkins (1997) also states “exploring the experiences of Black women in these colleges will provide insight into the extent to which these institutions mirrored the views of the larger society concerning racial issues (p. 49).” These racial issues still exist today for Black women in higher education in the 21st century. Jane Bolin, a Black woman who graduated from Wellesley College, one of the Seven Sisters, recounts numerous issues of racism that she dealt with back in 1928. One of her sharpest and ugliest memories of Wellesley occurred during a mandatory conference with a guidance counselor who was in shock when she heard that Bolin wanted to be an attorney

(Perkins, 1997). The counselor stated that there was no way a Black woman would be able to become an attorney; it may be in her best interest to become a teacher instead. Although times have changed a great deal since 1928, Black women are still facing issues that are similar to Bolin's. It was also common for professors to warn Black women away from "difficult" classes in order to "save" them the trouble of hard work (Evans, 2006). This in turn led Black women to internalize this message and some were careful not to advance too far lest they ruin their chances of finding a mate (Evans, 2006). Despite vast improvements in overall quality of life, Black women's access to education, economic stability and professional employment has not drastically changed, relative to the population, since the late 1800's (Evans, 2006).

The number of Black females enrolling in institutions of higher education is continuing to increase (Cole, 2007). Looking at Black college enrollment by gender in the 1980's compared to 1999; we see that in 1980 the percentage of Black females enrolled was 58 percent compared to 42 percent of Black males (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). By 1999 Black women's enrollment increased to 63.2 percent while Black males enrollment decreased to 36.8 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education ("Ominous Gender Gap," 1999) projects that, if present attendance patterns continue, Black women will receive all baccalaureate degrees awarded to Blacks by the year 2097 (Zamani, 2003).

Despite these statistics, Black females are still being seen as invisible in colleges and universities. Not only do they face exclusion because of their race and gender, but they (Black females) are constantly struggling with inclusion. Black females traditionally have been preceded by white men, white women, and Black men in importance and standing (Lerner, 1992). This leads Black women to be put in a position of representing their race entirely in a predominantly white system (Turner, 2001). This may be the reason that Black women feel

more stress than any other group of students (Guloyan, 1986). Isolation, invisibility, hostility, indifference, and lack of understanding of their experiences are all too often part of the climate that Black women may face on campus (Moses, 2001).

It is likely that self-concepts and experiences of Black women are influenced by the composition of the colleges they attend (Aragon & Zamani, 2002; Jackson, 1998). Because of this, the mission, characteristics, and climates of postsecondary institutions require attention with regard to their capacity to foster postsecondary educational attainment for Black women (Zamani, 2003). The numbers of Black women attending research based institutions or Ivy League institutions are far lower than White women. Research by Wolf-Wendel (1998) asserts that although predominantly white, elite institutions receive the most acclaim for student outcomes, colleges for special populations (for example, HBCUs and women's colleges) should be given more credit, because they account for a greater proportion of Black women achievers (Zamani, 2003). Research done by Fleming (1984) on Black women's experiences in HBCUs and PWI's showed that women who attended the predominantly white schools were found to be more socially assertive and independent than those women who attended HBCUs. He also noted that women who attend predominantly White schools are often ostracized for their assertiveness; they experience more failed relationships, and suffer far more from isolation.

Black Feminist Thought

Black Feminist Thought (BFT) is a theoretical approach that discusses the marginalization of African American (AA) women in higher education. As Collins (1989, 1996a, 1996b) suggests, being a racialized individual African Americans in a predominately white environment calls for the embodiment of a stream of consciousness and awareness of oneself as the proverbial other (Harris, 2007). BFT was born out of the continuing

marginalization perpetuated in and by the feminist movement (Spitzack and Carter, 1987), capturing the intersection of race and gender and recognizing the oppressive nature of gender construction and of race as a social construct, which directly affect one's experience (Harris, 2007). Collins (2000) argues that BFT demonstrates the importance of Black women's emerging power as agents of knowledge. She explains that by sharing their experiences, women create new knowledge, which plays an integral role in their empowerment (Williams, Brewley, Reed, White, & Davis-Haley, 2005).

BFT is the main construct that is discussed in research concerning African American females in higher education and graduate school. It is an appropriate construct because it analyzes why African American females face difficulties in academia. If an African American female enters into the education field with the mindset that she is an oppressed individual, which may be the case the majority of the time especially if she is attending or working in a predominately white institution, then her success will be greatly influenced by that mindset. BFT encourages African American females to step outside of this "box" that their mindset puts them in, and step up to the plate of exposing the knowledge and power that resides in us. In order to step outside of this "box", Collins (2000) found it necessary to argue toward an epistemology that would illuminate Black females' membership in two oppressed groups: the Black race and the female gender.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that was generated by scholars of color who study law and legal policies and who are concerned about racial subjugation in society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey, 2002; Villalpando & Bernal, 2002). Research by these scholars revealed that persons in power designed laws and policies

that are supposed to be race-neutral, still perpetuating racial and ethnic oppression (Howard-Hamilton, 2003). CRT as applied to education differs slightly from its legal applications, “because it attempts to foreground race and racism in the research as well as challenge the traditional paradigms, methods, texts, and separate discourse on race, gender, and class by showing how these social constructs intersect to impact on communities of color” (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000, p. 63).

CRT is also an interesting theory to examine when researching African American females in graduate school. It is a complex theory that states marginalized groups, such as African American females, often act in ways or tell stories that confirm their marginalization. CRT uses counter stories in the form of discussion, archives, and personal testimonies because it acknowledges that some members of marginalized groups, by virtue of their marginal status, tell previously untold or different stories based on experiences that challenge the discourse and beliefs of the dominant group (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Villalpando & Bernal, 2002). This theory also states that because African American females are not accustomed to seeing a variety of other African American females in their classes or jobs, they tend to get involved with groups that have members of the same nationality and characteristics as them. For example you will see African American females joining a black sorority, or joining groups that navigate more towards their familiarity.

Socialization Theory

One of the primary objectives of graduate programs is to grant students the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in their field, yet these programs also serve the important purpose of socializing students into distinct occupational roles (Gasman, Hirschfeld, & Vultaggio, 2008). Socialization can be defined as “the process by which newcomers learn the encoded system of

behavior specific to their area of expertise and the system of meanings and values attached to those behaviors (Talyor & Antony, 2000). This process also includes students' interactions and involvements with peers and faculty members (Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001). In addition, socializing African Americans into faculty roles is the first step to increasing the number of professors of color, which in turn promotes greater enrollment and persistence of minority graduate students (Gasman, Hirschfeld, & Vultaggio, 2008). Gasman, Hirschfeld and Vultaggio (2008) also note that while socialization into professional roles is important for all graduate students, research suggests that the process may be more difficult for those from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Conclusion

The literature in this chapter discussed the dynamics and differences of Historically Black Colleges and Universities compared to Predominantly White Institutions, the Black college student, and the Black, female, college student and how these relate to the conceptual frameworks Black Feminist Thought, Critical Race Theory, and Socialization Theory. These frameworks will be further discussed in later chapters and how it relates to the current study.

CHAPTER III

Method

In this chapter the author describes the purpose and the process for this qualitative case study. A description of the participants that were chosen for this specific research, the setting in which the research took place, the instruments used to help the researcher prove validity and reliability of the research, the two forms of data collections, and how the data was treated throughout the process of the research project will also be described.

Design of the Study

Interview procedures have been found useful in enabling researchers to develop first-person descriptions of diverse human experiences (Polk-inghorne, 1989; Kvale, 1996; Thomas & Pollio, 2002). Once noted, these descriptions are then named using either the language of the participant or the more conceptual language of the researcher's discipline (Davis, et al, 2004). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine the experiences of African American female graduate students in their studies at a university. Although case studies are considered to be the more challenging forms of research, case studies would be considered the preferred method when the focus of the research is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context (Yin, 2003). Yin also goes on to add that, the case study relies on many of the same techniques as a history, but it adds two sources of evidence not usually included in the historian's repertoire: direct observation of the events being studied and interviews of the persons involved in the events. The strength of case studies lies in its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence, such as interviews and observations (Yin, 2003). Because of these strengths, counteracting the inherent limitation of a small sample size, the appropriate approach for this research is the case study.

Participants

Participants in this study were two female, African American, graduate students enrolled in the College Student Affairs program at a liberal arts institution in the Midwest region. This institution is a predominantly White institution located in a small rural town that is also predominantly White. The institution offers bachelors, masters, and specialist degrees. The student population is roughly 12,000 students of which 53 (.4%) are American Indian, 134 (1%) are Asian, 1,280 (11%) are Black, 316 (3%) are Hispanic, 134 (1%) are International, and 9,339 (83%) are White. These figures include both undergraduate and graduate students. The makeup of graduate students alone, is as follows: 1 (.06%) American Indian, 26 (1%) Asian, 83 (5%) Black, 18 (1%) Hispanic, 83 (5%) International, and 1,484 (85%) white. The faculty makeup of the institution almost mirrors the demographics of the student population: 0.06% of the staff and faculty are Native American, 2.7% are Black, 4.2% are Asian, 1.9 are Hispanic, 80.6% are White, 3.1% are International, and 6.9% are unclassified.

The closest city with a population of over one hundred thousand people is at least two hours away. The College Student Affairs program for this institution chooses between seventeen and twenty individuals each year to make up a cohort. Each year there is an average of two or three African American females that apply and get accepted into the program. Based on the low numbers of African American females that apply, get accepted, and choose to enter into the program, the numbers for this research is limited. The first participant, who will be referred to as Sam, is a 24 year old, single woman who entered the program in the fall semester, directly after completion of her undergraduate work that was completed at another institution. The second participant is a 35 year old, single mother of three, who is also completing her graduate work directly after completion of her undergraduate work, at the same institution. She

will be referred to as Pat. Sam and Pat are pseudonyms used to protect the identities of the participants, as well as facilitate tracking and minimize confusion of the participants in this study. Pat did not enter into the program until the spring semester, making her a part of a different cohort than Sam. Both participants are full time graduate students in the program. Both were treated equally throughout the process without any special treatment or rewards given to either participant. At the time the research was conducted there were three African American female graduate students enrolled in the program, the researcher, Sam and Pat. Therefore, excluding the researcher, two (66%) of the population of interest participated in this research.

Given the nature of this study, it is important to understand that a case study can be chosen to study a case with clear boundaries, which is illustrated in this research by the use of one particular graduate program at this institution (Creswell, 1998). In a case study the number of participants can vary depending on the particular case studied. In lieu of a limited number of participants, it is important for the researcher to provide a wide array of information about the case to provide an in-depth picture of it (Creswell).

Instrument

Interview. This research utilized two types of instruments for data collection. Those instruments were interviews and observations. The first instrument used was developed by the researcher using questions similar to the Post Focusing Questioner and the Focusing-Oriented Session Report by Dr. James R. Iberg, (2002). Consistent with the goal of qualitative research to allow participants to describe their experiences from their own viewpoints and in their own words (Creswell, 1994; Morrow & Smith, 2000), questions were open-ended and eschew psychological jargon to avoid imposing researcher bias or existing constructs on participants (Gomez et al., 2001; Richie et al., 1997).

Observation. The second form of data collection used in this research was natural observation of the participants. The researcher observed each participant in their natural classroom setting over the course of three weeks. Three weeks were chosen in order for the researcher to observe the participants in multiple classroom settings. Field notes were kept by the researcher on the atmosphere of the class, the background of the professor, the attitude and disposition of the participants and the class, as well as the professor. The researcher observed how each participant interacted with classmates, how they interacted with the professor, how often or how little they participated in class, what their body posture was, and what facial expressions were made throughout the class session. Ellis (2009) claims for African American females, social integration is not as important as academic integration, so you will find these students often times in isolation or seclusion with classmates because their focus is more on achieving good grades.

A major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence, a process known as triangulation (Yin, 2003). Data triangulation encourages the researcher to collect information from multiple sources but aims at corroborating the same fact or phenomenon. In employing triangulation, the researcher utilized interviews and direct observation as the two information sources to corroborate the facts.

Data Collection

Each participant was interviewed in a private, department, conference room at the university. The questions asked measured the perceived social support African American, female graduate students receive from professors and students. The five guiding questions that were asked to each participant were: (1) what experiences brought you to this program and this institution, (2) what challenges do you face in this program, (3) describe your experiences with

your classmates as far as group conversations and outside class encounters, (4) describe your experiences with your professors and or professionals in the field in regards to in class and out of class encounters, and(5) how do you percieve your experiences to be different than white or male students? The data was collected via an electronic audio recorder. Once the collection of the data was complete, the data was transcribed within a week of the initial interview.

The second type of data collection was field notes taken through natural observation of each participant. Each participant was observed in their classes over a period of three weeks. Extensive notes were taken by the researcher on each participant and detailed in Chapter IV.

Treatment of Data

The data was stored in a secured location several of miles from the researched institution. After each participant reviewed their transcriptions for accuracy and additions, a third party, who was not affiliated with the research project or the institution, reviewed the transcriptions for compared analysis. The findings were then categorized by the questions asked for complete analysis and for further completion of the project. Once the research was completed, the participants were offered their transcriptions. Both participants declined, and the transcriptions, as well as the recording were disposed of in a manner that was applicable by law. The field notes were stored in the same manner as the voice recordings, except that they were not shared with the participants.

Data Analysis

A graduate student trained on qualitative research methodology collaborated with the researcher in analyzing the finished transcripts. Both researchers looked over the transcripts and compared the transcriptions to the actual video recording for preciseness, thereby increasing the trustworthiness of the results. Each participant was then sent a copy of their transcription to

verify for accuracy. Once the transcriptions were verified by each participant, the researcher began the coding process. To reach the themes that are discussed in Chapter four, the researcher first worked with each individual transcript. A single transcript was broken down into categories. Each category was placed into a group, and then labeled. Once this step was completed, each group was then compared amongst the other groups for commonalities. Again, each previously labeled group was put into another sub-group, which was then labeled a theme. This process was also performed by the co-researcher and then compared to the themes reached by the initial researcher. The field notes were gathered and explained in rich description in following chapters.

CHAPTER IV

Results

This chapter discusses the results of the interview and the field notes used by the researcher. The first set of results discusses the interviews that took place between the participants and the researcher and the themes that derived from those interviews. The second set of results illustrates the field notes that were gathered through natural observation of both participants in their classroom environment. The chapter concludes with a general summary of the results from the research.

Interviews

A descriptive analysis of the transcripts revealed that five major themes characterized the experiences of African American graduate students in the College Student Affairs program. Each of the themes was labeled from reoccurring phrases that appeared in the transcription. Themes, however, are not to be construed as independent of one another but as interrelated aspects of a single overall pattern or gestalt (Davis, et al, 2004). Therefore, in this light, the themes in this research should be viewed as such. The five themes emerged from the responses to the following: what experiences brought you to this program and this institution, describe your experiences with your classmates as far as group conversations and outside class encounters, describe your experiences with your professors and or professionals in the field in regards to in class and out of class encounters, and do you percieve your experiences to be different than White or male students, are as follows:

1. Personal Connections
2. Fish bowl syndrome
3. A Tale of "O": on being different

4. The muted group
5. Strategic Distancing

Theme 1: Personal Connections

One way in which co-cultural group members are involved in educating others is during intragroup networking activities (Orbe, 1998). Certain aspects of Black students' interpersonal environment greatly influence their motivation to go or even continue with education (Sims, 2008). This theme derived from both participants deciding to attend this program from positive attributes that were described by individuals to whom both participants respected. Both participants had different reasons for applying to this program at this particular institution. Although both participants have different journeys, both chose this program because of personal connections they had outside of the program. One participant commented:

“I heard good things about the program but what really won me over were my experiences with the assistantships. I was strictly focused on working with housing and I heard good things about housing. I went to an OshKosh Placement Exchange conference and got to interact with a lot folks from *. They were friendly and when I got to campus I wasn't a number and that was important to me.”

This participant visited several institutions and chose this particular program because of its reputation and the positive experience she encountered from meeting representatives from the institution at a national conference. The second participant had a completely different reason for choosing this program. She had previous knowledge of the institution because she received her bachelor's from the same institution. When asked why she chose this program she explained:

“The familiarity with the school made me want to continue my progress as a graduate student. Besides I didn't want to move my family. My goal was to be a director of football operations, and after talking with my boss, he suggested that I would make more money in student affairs and it would give me a wider platform for employment options.”

Both participants had some previous knowledge of the program before they applied. Given the way that both participants were referred to this program, can lead one to believe that this is a reputable program and would be a good fit for these students and other students of their culture. One common goal both participants had was that future goals were a consideration in their decision of applying and accepting a position in this program.

Theme 2: Fishbowl Syndrome.

Mark Orbe (1998) describes the fish bowl syndrome as a situation where minorities feel or interpret that others are constantly watching every behavior-that is magnified by the fish bowl itself. Others can be interpreted as the professors, classmates, or professionals in the field.

“ I feel the professors look at the Black students and expect the quality of work to be better, the effort to be stronger, and the drive to just be stronger than the other students because we have fewer numbers.”

The second participant's responses were quite similar to the first participant's:

“I feel in this program that you have to make sure that you prove yourself. I also feel more pressure to not miss class because I think I will be looked down upon more by the professors. I feel the professors look at the Black students and expect the quality of work to be better, the effort to be stronger, and the drive to just be stronger than the other students because we have fewer numbers.”

Theme 3: A Tale of “O”: on being different.

A Tale of “O”: on being different is a widely used diversity training tool produced by Goodmeasure Inc., and provides a valuable point of initiation into an examination of co-cultural communication (Orbe, 1998). In this training program, the “O's” represent the minority group or culture, and the “X's” represent the majority. A Tale of “O”:on being different discusses three choices that “O's” must make if they would like to survive or succeed within groups dominated by “X” . This theme focuses on one of those three choices. “O's” must focus their efforts

towards Overachievement; recognizing that they must seemingly work twice as hard to get half as far (Orbe, 1998). This is illustrated in the following statements by Sam and Pat, respectively.

“The expectations are higher for students of color and for women. You are supposed to be more hungry for this degree; you’re supposed to work harder. From talking with some of the White students in the class, they like to wait until the last minute to complete assignments, and that is just not me.”

“I feel in this program that you have to make sure that you prove yourself. Other cohort members approach their assignments a lot differently than I do. For a lot of assignments they just feel like it’s just enough that they do the assignment without putting any effort any it. For example we had an annotative bib we had to do and another Black student and I were in the library working hard on ours when we ran into one of our White classmates. When we asked her about her annotative bib, she just laughed and responded that she only did three bullet points. I was wondering what you possibly said in three bullet points.”

Theme 4: The Muted group.

Muted group theory, established in the early 1980’s, is a theory that reflects the worldview of dominant group members that are being reinforced as the appropriate communicative system for both dominant and non-dominant group members (Orbe, 1998). Scholars (Kramarae, 1981; Ardener & Ardener, 1978) suggest that in every society a social hierarchy exists that privileges some groups over others. In many cases, the minority group is often silenced when engaging in conversation or activity with the dominant group. One of the participants recalls one of several situations where she feels she was silenced:

“In group work, they don’t really care to hear what we are saying. They don’t want our input. They just assume that we don’t have anything of value to say. When we do make suggestions for a group assignment, they totally ignore it.”

“There has been several times where I am working in a group and I am the only Black in the group and everyone talks around or over me. It is really frustrating because I know I have valuable input and when I try to offer it, it seems like my other group members disregard it. What is funny though is when it comes time to present what our group discusses, I have had group members say my points and pass them off as their own.”

Theme 5: Strategic Distancing.

Strategic distancing is a term used to describe how persons in the minority react in majority dominated environments which can be done in one of two ways: Avoidance, or Association. Persons of the minority may avoid associating with majority group members to avoid being pigeonholed as the typical minority group member even though they may be interacting with the majority group (Orbes, 1998). On the other hand, minorities may associate themselves with other minority groups to feel more secure in their environment or to feel some sort of connectedness that someone else is going through what they are going through. Both participants recall situations that are to the contrary and relate more to how they associate or avoid situations with the majority members of the cohort:

“Most of the cohort has a bad reputation and I don’t want to be a part of that. I have been asked on several occasions to go out with some of my cohorts, but I decline because they have a reputation for drinking and partying a lot. Don’t get me wrong we do party too, but you have to know when to say enough is enough, or not put yourself in the situation where someone can say, yeah I expected that from them.”

The second participant added:

“A lot of the first year cohorts have a bad reputation from the views of faculty and even the second year cohort. I know there have been issues with drinking and cheating and I don’t want to be a part of that. A lot of the other African American students do not want to be a part of that as well. We want to maintain a reputable image.”

These two experiences can also be referred to as separation. The preferred outcome of separation rejects the notion that of forming a common bond with dominant group members. Instead, they seek to create and maintain separate-group identities outside or in dominant structures (Orbe, 1998).

Field Notes

Contrary to what the participants described as their experiences during the interview, the direct observations didn't always correlate. However, there were certain observations that did make some connections to the themes mentioned above.

Theme 3: A Tale of "O": on being different.

Despite the choice that this research focused on which was "O's" must focus their efforts towards overachievement; recognizing that they must seemingly work twice as hard to get half as far, was not seen directly in the observations. There was an instance where Sam was participating in a group activity and she appeared to be less engaged than the other group members. She didn't give her input in the conversation of the group, nor did she seem attentive to what the group was discussing. If Sam was focused on overachievement like this theme explains, then she might have been more active in contributing her voice and opinion to the group discussion. On the contrary, when Pat was observed in group work, she seemed to dominate the group discussion making sure her point came across and offering her opinions towards other group members comments.

Theme 4: The Muted Group'

This theme was expressed by the actions of Sam while partaking in group activity, but not so much by Pat. Reflecting back to how Sam was acting in her group setting was hitting on the definition of Muted Group Theory. Sam took the passive role while engaging in group work by not offering her input. The other members of Sam's group also play a role in this Theory. All of her group members in one instance where White. While engaging in their group work, it was apparent that none of them were concerned with Sam not inputting any of her suggestions to what was being discussed. They carried on in the conversation as if she was not a part of the

group. However, when it came time for the group to present their discussion to the entire class, Sam had a minor speaking role of reading the scenario discussed and not offering any of the solutions the group came up with.

Theme 5: Strategic Distancing.

What was observed of both participants relate directly to them exercising Avoidance. In both classroom settings, Sam and Pat chose to sit away from other minorities in the classroom. In Sam's situation she chose to sit in the front of the class while the other minorities all sat in the back of the class. In Pat's situation, her classroom setup was less traditional in a sense that there were tables in the classroom instead of individual desks. Pat chose a table that other minorities were sitting at even though there were open seats at their table.

Summary

Both participants had a lot to say about their personal experiences in this program. Although they are two different individuals, with two different backgrounds, their experiences were quite similar. The field notes that were taken on both participants added a different perspective to their experiences, and confirmed that there may be differences in the experiences of African American, females in this particular graduate program. It is unknown what males or Caucasians experience in this program, but the responses from these participants, and the field notes taken will be further discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

Discussions

This study was designed to look at the experiences of African American females in a College Student Affairs program. Two participants contributed to this study by giving rich descriptions of their personal experiences. The researcher also collected data by conducting natural observations on the participants and recording the data in field notes. This chapter looks at these two forms of data collection and compares them to the literature review. This chapter concludes with recommendations for researchers, as well as professors.

Black Feminist Thought

As *the* main construct that is discussed in literature pertaining to Black college students, the research indicated that this theoretical approach was seen evident in the two participants. Discussed in Chapter II, Black Feminist Thought is an approach that discusses the marginalization of Black women in higher education. It asserts that if Black women have the mindset that they are oppressed, their success will mirror that mindset. The theme “Fishbowl syndrome” epitomizes this approach. Both participants made comments that suggest that there are differences in the expectations of Black women in this program versus non Black women. One can argue that these statements show signs of the mindsets of both participants. Linked together with the observations conducted by the researcher, it was shown that the mindsets of these two participants are one of oppression. In the field notes it was shown how participants when involved in group activity, would not contribute ideas to the group, or would often times appear to be disengaged. The whole concept of the “fishbowl syndrome” speaks towards Black Feminist Thought. Fishbowl syndrome discusses how minorities feel that they are constantly being watched and scrutinized by the majority. Is this not oppression? Webster dictionary

defines oppression as the exercise of authority or power in a burdensome, cruel, or unjust manner. Given this definition, themes “fishbowl syndrome”, “A tale of “O”: on being different”, which discusses the “O’s” efforts toward overachieving and “the muted group, which says because of the social hierarchy that exists in society, minorities are often silenced when engaging in conversation with the majority;” speaks towards the oppressive mindset of both participants.

Critical Race Theory

Along side of Black Feminist Thought, is this theory. Critical Race Theory in a way coincides with Black Feminist Thought because as Black Feminist Thought discusses the marginalization of Blacks, Critical Race Theory shows the marginalization through stories, discussions, and testimonies of the marginalized groups. The interview form of data collection used by the researcher illustrates Critical Race theory. Each participant told their personal experiences in this program with their professor, classmates, and other professionals. The other aspect to this theory speaks on how Black women aren’t accustomed to seeing other Black females in their classes, so when they do see a face that mirrors their own, they will often navigate or try to develop a relationship with that other Black face in the class. When discussing feelings of indirect racism, one participant recounts a time when a White classmate made a comment about all the Black students sitting together in class. In the field notes taken from natural observation of the participants you see that both participants tend to sit near and interact more with other Blacks in the class when given the opportunity. The theme “Strategic Distancing” relates more indirectly to Critical Race Theory. Strategic Distancing is defined as avoiding any association with other co-cultural group members in attempts to be perceived as distinct individual (Orbe, 1998). This was illustrated by Sam choosing to sit in the front of the classroom, apart from the other Blacks who sat in the back of the classroom.

Socialization Theory

This theory collectively involves all five themes that derived from the research.

Socialization Theory is the process by which newcomers learn the encoded system of behavior specific to their area of expertise (Taylor & Antony, 2000). In this specific research project, that area of expertise is the field of higher education. The graduate students' socialization process is nonlinear and interactive, with students acquiring knowledge about their professional fields through academic learning as well as direct involvement with peers and faculty members (Weidman, Twale, and Stein, 2001). Taylor and Anthony (2000) note that the socialization of Black female students into faculty and administrative roles has been uniquely problematic. It is unclear as to the reasons this is problematic but many have argued that one of those reasons are the direct experiences Black female graduate students encounter in their studies. This entire research project speaks to those experiences and includes the process of Socialization Theory.

Recommendations

The importance of the experiences of African American females in graduate study is a topic that needs further research. When you take an in-depth look into the responses of the participants, you can see how applicable the theoretical concepts relate to this research. The theme, "personal connections," highlights the essence of Black Feminist Thought and how the mentalities of the participants indirectly affect their experiences in this program. Both participants were referred to this program for good reasons. Because of this, they both came into the program with a positive outlook on them succeeding as an African American female in this program. It isn't until the "fishbowl syndrome" that you begin to see the Critical Race Theory added to Black Feminist Thought that was already present. The purpose of these in-depth interviews was to provide personal testimonies of the two participants. The transcripts

show that the two participants see perceived “differences” to their experiences compared to Caucasian females and males based on the fact that their skin color combined with their gender separates them significantly from others. These perceived differences that the participants elaborated on, explains why Critical Race Theory is a key theory on why African American females struggle in the field of higher education. Themes “A Tale of “O””: on being different, the muted group and Strategic distancing; speak to Socialization Theory. It would be extremely difficult for anyone to exist without the ability and capability to socialize with others.

Examining the responses of the participants, their interactions with their peer, faculty and professionals in this field are indeed preparing them for future positions if you make the assumption that these individuals will go on to take positions in other predominantly white institutions. I believe the transcriptions received from the two participants in this study, will help other researchers, faculty, and students better understand not only African American students, but African American female graduate students at predominantly White institutions. Both participants in this study expressed experiencing feelings of indirect racism from classmates, negative attitudes or comments from professors or professionals in the field, and the feeling of having to prove themselves as a student. Faculty members must realize that academic achievement in their courses is influenced as much by intangibles as by pedagogy and just as pedagogy can be improved, the environment in the classroom can be enhanced also if the willingness is there (Davis, et al, 2004). It is also recommended that professionals in the field learn or become re-educated on the various cultural identity theories, so that they may better understand their own personal biases. It may also be suggested that Faculty listen to the stories of their African American students and non African American students to be able to compare and

contrast the differences in their experiences so that they may be able to create a more productive and equal environment for all in their classrooms.

Limitations

This study was very limited in terms of participants. It is recommended for future researchers to possibly look at both African American females and Caucasian Females in various graduate programs to see if there are still differences in each group's experiences. Further research may also want to look at African American females and African American males to compare and contrast their experiences, and possibly see how those experiences compare to Caucasian male and female students.

Conclusion

This study was a qualitative, case study that looked at the experiences of African American females in a College Student Affairs Program at a liberal arts institution. This study had only two participants because of the narrow research question that was asked. The researcher chose to use in-depth interviews as a means for collecting data, in hopes of gathering "rich" data from each participant. Each interview was recorded for later transcribing, and for further review and cross checking. Both participants remained anonymous throughout the entire study. Both participants offered as detailed description as possible about their experiences in this program. The study was conducted at the end of the first semester of both participants program which helped the participants be able to reflect on a full years experiences in the program. Both participants expressed feelings of differences of their experiences that Caucasians, or males, they feel don't experience.

It can be determined from the present study, that further research is definitely needed in this area, and possibly further education on African American female students needs to be implemented for professionals and faculty in the field.

References

- Allen, W. (1992). The color of success: African American college student outcomes at Predominantly White and Historically Black public colleges and universities. *Harvard Educational Review* 62(1), 26-44.
- Allen-Castellitto, A.L., & Maillare, K. (2001). Student and faculty perspectives on black Americans' success in the white academy. *The Negro Educational Review*, 52(3), 89-99.
- Altbach, P.G., Lomotey, K., & Rivers, S. (2002). "Race in Higher Education: The Continuing Crisis." In W.A. Smith, P.G. Altbach, and K. Lomotey (eds.), *The Racial Crisis in American Higher Education: Continuing Challenges for the Twenty-First Century*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- American Council on Education (2004). *The Continuing Significance of Racism: U.S. Colleges and Universities*. Washington DC.
- Anderson, J.D. (1988). *The education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Aragon, S.R., and Zamani, E.M. (2002). "Promoting Access and Equity Through Minority-Serving Institutions." In *Readings on Equal Education*, Vol. 18: *Equity and Access in Higher Education: New Perspectives for the New Millennium* (M.C. Brown and K. Freeman, eds.). New York:AMS Press.
- Ardener, S. and Ardener, E. (1978). *Defining females: The nature of women in society*. New York: John Wiley.
- Bennett, L., Jr. (1998). *Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America*. (6th ed.) New York: Penguin Books.

- Bennett, P.R. & Xie, Y. (2003). Explaining the Black-White gap in college attendance: racial differences versus socioeconomic determinants. Research Report University of Michigan, Ann Arbor Population Studies Center Report No PSC-00-447.
- Benton, M.A. (2005). Challenges African American students face at predominantly white institutions, www.colostate.edu/Depts/SAHE/JOURNAL2/2001/Challenges.htm.
- Blake, J., & Moore, E. (1999, March 1). The Color Line: The Enduring Challenge in Higher Education. *Metropolitan Universities: An International Forum*, 9(4), 77-80.
- Bloor, M., & Wood, F. (2006). "Keywords in qualitative methods: a vocabulary of research concepts." Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Bonner, F. B. (2001). "Addressing Gender Issues in the Historically Black College and University Community: A challenge and Call to Action." *Journal of Negro Education*, 70(3), 176-191.
- Bowl, M. (2001). Experiencing the barriers: non-traditional students entering higher education, *Research Papers in Education*, 16(2), 141-160.
- Bowman, J. W. (1992). *America's Black Colleges: The Comprehensive Guide to Historically d Predominantly Black Four-Year Colleges and Universities*. Pasadena, Calif.: Sandcastle Publishing.
- Bowman, S. L. (1995). "African American or Female: How Do We Identify Ourselves?" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, New York, (ED 409 384).
- Braxton, J., Vesper, N., & Mossier, D. (1995). Expectations for college and student persistence. *Research in Higher Education*, 36(5), 595-612.

- Britt, S.L., & Turner, B. (2001). Facing stereotypes: A case study of black students on a white campus. *Journal of College Student Development*, 42, 420-429.
- Brown-Collins, A.R., & Sussewell, D.R. (1986). The Afro-American woman's emerging selves. *The Journal of Black Psychology*, 13, 1-11.
- Carter, D.F. (2001). *A Dream Deferred? Examining the Degree Aspirations of African American and White College Students*. New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Carter-Obayuwana, A., (Fall 1995). A model of hope and caring for African American women in higher education. *The Black Scholar* 25(4), 72-76.
- Cheatham, H., & Phelps, C. (1995). Promoting the development of graduate students of color. In Anne Pruitt and Paul Issac (Eds.). *Student services for the changing graduate student Population*, 72(4), 91-99.
- Chenoweth, K. (1997). "Forthcoming ETS Report Proclaims the Importance of HBCUs." *Black Issues in Higher Education*, 14, 16-19.
- Cleveland, D. (2004). *A long way to go: Conversations about race by African American faculty and graduate students*. New York: Peter Lange Publishing.
- Cohen, A.M. (1998). *The Shaping of American Higher Education: Emergence and Growth of the Contemporary System*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cokely, K. (1999). Reconceptualizing the impact of college racial composition on African American students' racial identity. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40(3), 234-245.
- Cole, D. (2007). Do Interracial Interactions Matter? An Examination of Student-Faculty Contact and Intellectual Self-Concept. *Journal of Higher Education*, 78(3), 249-281.

- Collins, P.H. (1989) The social construction of Black feminist thought, *Signs*, 14(4), 745-773.
- Collins, P.H. (1996) *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Collins, P.H. (2000) *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Copland, E. (1977). Counseling Black women with negative self-concepts. *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 55, 397-400.
- Creswell, J. (1998). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design; Choosing Among Five Traditions*. London, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approach*. California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Davis, M., Dias-Bowie, Y., Greenberg, K., Klukken, G., Pollio, H., Thomas, S., et al. (2004, July). A Fly in the Buttermilk: Descriptions of University Life by Successful Black Undergraduate Students at a Predominately White Southeastern University. *Journal of Higher Education*, 75(4), 420-445.
- Delgado, R., and Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. New York: New York University Press.
- DeSousa, J.D. & Kuh, G.D. (1996). Does Institutional Racial Composition Make a Difference in What Black Students Gain from College? *Journal of College Student Development*, 37(3), 257-267.
- DuBois, W.E.B. (1903). *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co.).

- Echols, L. (1998). *Factors related to the recruitment and retention of minority students in Higher education: A meta-analysis*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania.
- Ellis, E. (2009). Race, gender and the graduate student experience: recent research, www.diversityweb.org/digest/F00/graduate.html.
- Evans, S. (2005). "This right to grow: African American women's intellectual legacy." *International Journal of the Humanities*, 3(7), 165-172.
- Feagin, J. (1992, June). The continuing significance of racism: Discrimination against Black students in White colleges. *Journal of Black Studies*, 22(4), 546-578.
- Fleming, J. (1982). Sex differences in the impact of college environments on Black students. In: Perun, P. (ed.), *The Undergraduate Women: Issues in Educational Equity, Health*, Lexington, MA, pp. 229-250.
- Fleming, J. (1983). Black women in Black and White college environments: The making of a matriarch. *Journal of Social Issues*, 39(3), 41-54.
- Fleming, J. (1984). *Blacks in college*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Fleming, J. (1985). *Blacks in College: A Comparative Study of Students' Success in Black and White Institutions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Flick, U., Kardorff, E., & Steinke, I. (2004). "A Companion To Qualitative Research." Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Gasman, M., Gerstl-Pepin, C., Anderson-Thompkins, S., Rasheed, L., & Hathaway, K. (2004). Negotiating power, developing trust: Transgressing race and status in the academy. *Teachers College Record*, 106, 689-715.

- Gasman, M., Hirschfeld, A., & Vultaggio, J. (2008, June). 'Difficult yet rewarding': The experiences of African American graduate students in education at an Ivy League institution. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 1(2), 126-138.
- Grandy, J. (1998). "Persistence in Science of High-Ability Minority Students: Results of a Longitudinal Study. *Journal of Higher Education*, 69(6), 589-620.
- Gravios, J. (April 6, 2007). Trapped by education: How the discipline became the predominant one for Black scholars, and what it's costing them. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 53(31), A10.
- Guiffrida, D. (2005). Othermothering as a Framework for Understanding African American Students' Definitions of Student-Centered Faculty. *Journal of Higher Education*, 76(6), 701-723.
- Guloyan, E. (1986). An examination of White and non-White attitudes of university freshmen as they relate to attrition. *College Student Journal*, 20, 396-402.
- Harris, T. M. (2007). *Black feminist thought and cultural contracts: Understanding the intersection and negotiation of racial, gendered, and professional identities in the academy*. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, no. 110. Wiley Periodicals Inc.
- Hickson, M. (2002, Fall2002). What role does the race of professors have on the retention of students attending historically black colleges and universities? *Education*, 123(1), 186.
- Hope, R.O. (1996). "Revitalizing Minority Colleges and Universities." In L.I. Rendon & R.O. Hope (eds.), *Educating a New Majority: Transforming America's Educational System for Diversity*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Howard-Hamilton, M. F. (2003). *Meeting the needs of african american women*. *New Directions for Student Services*, no. 104. Wiley Periodicals Inc.

- Howard-Hamilton, M. F. (2003). *Theoretical frameworks for african american women*. *New Directions for Student Services*, no. 104. Wiley Periodicals Inc.
- Hurtado, S. (1994). Graduate school racial climates and academic self-concept among minority graduate students in the 1970s. *American Journal of Education*, 102, 330-351.
- Jackson, L. (1998, June 1). The Influence of Both Race and Gender on the Experiences of African American College Women. *Review of Higher Education*, 21(4), 359-75.
- Johnson-Bailey, J. (2002). Race Matters: The Unspoken Variable in the Teaching-Learning Transaction. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, (93), 39.
- Johnson-Bailey, J. (2004). Hitting and climbing the proverbial wall: participation and retention issues for Black graduate women. *Race, Ethnicity & Education*, 7(4), 331-349.
- Johnson-Bailey, J. and Cervero, R.M. (2000). "The Invisible Politics of Race in Adult Education." In A.L. Wilson and E.R. Hayes (eds.), *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Johnson-Bailey, J., Valentine, T., Cervero, R., & Bowles, T. (2009). Rooted in the Soil: The Social Experiences of Black Graduate Students at a Southern Research University. *Journal of Higher Education*, 80(2), 178-203.
- Joiner, L.L. (2001). "Success to the Third Degree." *Black Issues in Higher Education*, 18(11), 42-43.
- Keller, G. (2005). Black Students in higher education: Why so few? *Planning for Higher Education*, 17, 50-56.
- Kim, M.M. (2004). The experience of African-American students in historically black institutions. *The NEA Higher Education Journal: Thought and Action* XX(1) 107-124.

- Kim, M., & Conrad, C. (2006). The Impact of Historically Black Colleges and Universities on the Academic Success of African-American Students. *Research in Higher Education*, 47(4), 399-427.
- Kraft, C.L. (1991). What makes a successful black student on a predominantly white campus. *American Educational Research Journal*, 28(2), 423-443.
- Kramarae, C. (1981). *Women and men speaking*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: Introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lee, M., & Johnson-Bailey, J. (2004). Challenges to the classroom authority of women of color. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*,(102), 55-64.
- Lerner, G. (1992). *Black Women in White America: A Documentary History*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Lockett, G. (1996). *Making a Difference as a Faculty Member: Our HBCU's Recommitted to Excellence*. Retrieved from ERIC database.
- McEwen, M.K., Roper, L.D., Bryant, D.R., & Langa, M.J. (1990). Incorporating the development of African-American students into psychosocial theories of student development. *Journal of College Student Development*, 31, 429-436.
- Melendez, S. (2004). From humble beginnings comes great achievement. *American Council on Education*: Washington D.C.
- Milton, J., Watkins, K., Spears-Studdard, S., & Burch, M. "An Ever Widening Gyre: Factors Affecting Change in Adult Education Graduate Programs." Unpublished manuscript, 2001.

- Moses, Y. (2001). *Black women in academe: Issues and strategies*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- National Center for Educational Statistics (1996). *Historically Black Colleges and Universities, 1976-1994*, U.S. Department of Education, Washington DC.
- Noonan, B. M., Gallor, S. M., Hensler-McGinnis, N. F., Fassinger, R. E., Wang, S., & Goodman, J. (2004). Challenge and success: A qualitative study of the career development of highly achieving women with physical and sensory disabilities. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 51, 68-80.
- Orbe, M.P. (1998). *Constructing Co-Cultural Theory: An explication of culture, power and communication*. California: Sage Publications.
- Perkins, L. M. (1997). "The African American Female Elite: The Early History of African American Women in the Seven Sister Colleges, 1880-1960." *Harvard Educational Review*, 67(4), 718-756.
- Polkinghorne, D.E. (1989). Phenomenological research methods. In R.S. Valle & S. Halling (Eds.) *Existential phenomenological perspectives in psychology* (p. 41-60). New York: Plenum Press.
- Pruitt, A.S., & Isaac, P.D. (1985). Discrimination in recruitment, admission, and retention of minority graduate students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 54(4), 526-536.
- Redd, K. E. (1998). *Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Making a comeback*. *New Directions in Higher Education*, 102, 33-43.
- Roach, R. (1999). Succeeding on white campuses. *Black Issues in Higher Education*, 15(26), 42.
- Rocco, T., & West, G. (1998). "Deconstructing Privilege: An Examination of Privilege in Adult Education." *Adult Education Quarterly*, 48, 171-184.

- Roebuck, J.B. & Murty, K. S. (1993). *Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Their place in American higher education*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Rodgers, K., & Summers, J. (2008). African American Students at Predominantly White Institutions: A Motivational and Self-Systems Approach to Understanding Retention. *Educational Psychology Review*, 20(2), 171-190.
- Seifert, T.A., Drummond, J. & Pascarella, E.T. (2006). African American Students' Experiences of Good Practice: A Comparison of Institutional Type. *Journal of College Student Development*, 47(2), 185-205.
- Sims, G. (2008). IRRELATION AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE WOMEN ON A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE CAMPUS. *College Student Journal*, 42(2), 691-702.
- Smith, W. A., Altbach, P. G., & Lomotey, K. (2002). *The Racial Crisis in American Higher Education: Continuing Challenges for the Twenty-First Century*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., and Yosso, T. (2000). "Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate: The Experiences of African American College Students." *Journal of Negro Education*, 69(1-2), 60-73.
- Spitzack, C., and Carter, K. (1987). "Women in Communication Studies: A Typology for Revision." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 73(4), 401-423.
- Steele, C.M. (1999). Thin Ice: "Stereotype threat" and black college students. *Atlantic Monthly*, 44-54.
- Stewart, D. (2008). Being All of Me: Black Students Negotiating Multiple Identities. *Journal of Higher Education*, 79(2), 183-207.

Stewart, G., Wright, D., Perry, T., & Rankin, C. (2008). Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Caretakers of Precious Treasure. *Journal of College Admission*, (201), 24-29.

Taylor, E. & Antony, J.S. (Summer, 2000). Stereotype threat reduction and wise schooling: Towards the successful socialization of African American doctoral students in education. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 69(3), 184-198.

Thomas, S.P., & Pollio, H.R. (2002). *Listening to patients: A phenomenological approach to nursing research and practice*. New York: Springer.

Tisdell, E. (1995). *Creating Inclusive Adult Learning Environments: Insight from Multicultural and Feminist Pedagogy*. Columbus, Ohio: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education.

Turner, M.R. (2001). "Don't Forget the Women." *Black Issues in Higher Education*, 18(6), 34.

U.S. Department of Education. "College Enrollment by Racial and Ethnic Group, Selected Years, 1999." [<http://www.ed.gov>].

Villalpando, O., and Bernal, D. D. (2002). "A Critical Race Theory Analysis of Barriers That Impede the Success of Faculty of Color." In W. A. Smith, P. G. Altbach, and K. Lomotey (eds.), *The Racial Crisis in American Higher Education: Continuing Challenges for the Twenty-First Century*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Walker, K.L., Hanley, J.H., & Wright, G. (2001). The professional preparation of African American graduate students: A student perspective. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 32(6), 581-584.

Weidman, J.C., Twale, D.J., & Stein, E.L. (2001). *Socialization of graduate and professional students in higher education: A perilous passage?* ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, 28(3). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Williams, M. R., Brewley, D. N., Reed, R. J., White, D. Y., & Davis-Haley, R. T. (2005). Learning to read each other: Black female graduate students share their experiences at a white research 1 institution. *The Urban Review*, 37(3), 1-20.

Wolf-Wendel, L. (1998). "Models of Excellence: The Baccalaureate Origins of Successful European American Women, African American Women, and Latinas." *Journal of Higher Education*, 69, 141-186.

Woodson, C.G. (1933/2000). *The mis-education of the Negro*. New York: African American Images.

Yin, R.K. (2003). *Case study research, design and methods*, 3rd ed. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Zamani, E. (2003, Winter2003). African American women in higher education. *New Directions for Student Services*.

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT

Consent Form for Qualitative Research Interviews

Title of Project: Separate but Equal? The experiences of female African American graduate students in a College Students Affairs Program.

Leah Reeves is conducting research for submission for a Masters at Eastern Illinois University. This involves new research into the experiences African American Female graduate students face in a College of Student Affairs Program. The essential component to this research involves in-depth interviews of individuals in this program asking them to discuss their experiences and opinions of the program.

Eastern Illinois University understands that you are willing to be interviewed by Leah. It is important to the University and the researcher that only people who want to do so participate in this study. We complete this task by asking you to sign this form to consent to you freely participating in this interview. You may stop the interview at anytime or choose not to answer any particular question.

The interview will be audio taped and transcribed and last approximately an hour to an hour and a half. You will be given a copy of the transcription to review and amend. All personal details will be anonymous and your identity will not be revealed. It is important for you know that there are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. There are also no direct benefits to you as the participant for participating in this study.

The contents of the interview will be analyzed and written up throughout the course of the research. The findings will be included in a thesis submitted for a higher degree. Upon completion of the research, your audio tape will be stored in a locked location off of Eastern's campus. Once the final project is complete, you may have your audio tape back upon your request, otherwise your data will be destroyed in a manner that is applicable by law. I would be grateful if you would confirm, by signing this form, that you are happy to participate in this research and for me to use your interview for completion of a degree.

If you have any questions regarding this research, please feel free to contact Dr. Catherine Polydore, who serves as the principle investigator for this research at 581-7237 or by email at: cpolydore@eiu.edu

If you have any questions or concerns about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call or write Institutional Review Board, Eastern Illinois University, 600 Lincoln Ave., Charleston, IL 61920, Telephone: (217) 581-8576, E-mail:eiuirb@www.eiu.edu.

I confirm I have fully agreed to be interviewed for this project and that the recorded interview will be used as described above.

Signed:.....

Print Name:.....

Date:

APPENDIX B
GUIDING QUESTIONS

The College Of Student Affairs Guiding questions

Name:

1. What experiences brought you to this program and this institution?
2. What challenges do you face in this program that you feel that other students are not facing?
3. Describe your experiences with your classmates as far as group conversations and outside class encounters.
4. Describe your experiences with your professors and or professionals in the field in regards to in class and out of class encounters.
5. How do you perceive your experiences to be different than others in this program?

APPENDIX C
TRANSCRIPTS

Transcription of Participant 1

R= Researcher

P1= Participant 1: Sam

R: What experiences brought you to this program and this institution?

P1: Um I think I guess the experiences of past graduates um in regards to the program um the graduate was * um that graduated I believe she was a year out um and she worked at my undergrad as a hall director um I don't know I heard good things about it um but I think what really won me over was my experiences with the assistantship sides of it and um how they were in regards to diversity ok that's kind of what got me

R: Ok could you elaborate more on your assistantships? Are you saying you heard about what grad assistantships were available for being in the program?

P1: Well I was strictly focused on working with housing um and * came out of housing and the program as well * um and I heard good things about housing as well as the program but when I went to OPE I didn't know much about the program. I knew OPE was about housing and bringing grad assistants and all of that so I got to interact with a lot of * folks in regards in that aspect um very diverse group um they are friendly um and when I got on campus I wasn't a number if that makes sense and that was important to me um because I half way felt like I was um as a undergraduate until I really got involved in things but in regards to the program because yes we are one of the big programs but seeing a familiar face someone that looks like me as a professor um knowing that I can have that person as a mentor someone to support me and understand my struggles was big so * was a big big play. I don't think he knows that but um he was huge in regards to me jumping on board with *

R: Now that you are in the program have you felt like you have had some challenges that you feel you are facing that maybe other groups aren't facing?

P1: um I wouldn't say it would be things that's out of the ordinary. I guess you know I'm African American and you kind of go through the same struggles regardless of where you are so it kind of just becomes a part of your day to day steps and like um definitely I feel more so that you have to make sure that you prove yourself um it's I believe two of us, two African American women in my cohort um and then we have one part time that kind of takes classes with us and here and there but I think she's joining on to the next years cohort um so I guess we kind of

support each other if that makes sense cause we understand where each others but I guess to me would be the same struggles that we deal with regardless if it's on the job or you know just walking through life or you know down the street um so I don't really I don't think I do um I might have to think about it some more

R: Ok well can you explain or elaborate a little bit more when you talk about the other two females that's in your cohort like how you all support each other

P1: Ok um well I know that um I coming right from undergrad um oh wait it's only two of us in my cohort, well the three of us yup um but I 'm coming right from undergrad um and the other two females um aren't. They have their experiences of being outside, um both are mothers um so they have that as well that comes with them um and it's all about working together whether it's hey you know we have a group presentation but I can't find a babysitter so lets meet at my house type of deal or um well we can meet but just know you know my baby going to be with us at the playground or whatever like um we're kind of open and understanding of it um and your able to talk about some things cause you know sometimes you have those issues where um I don't necessarily say that you feel targeted as an African American um to speak up for things um to kind of speak for your race or you know all of that stuff um and we kind of have that and we are able to support each other so it's not just you being singled out all of the time and um we kind of feed back or bounce off of each other in regards to that um and whatever or like I guess it's just being open and understanding um for the most part with what's going on with that and bringing our own experiences to the table and helping each other out

R: Can you describe some of your experiences that you have with your classmates as far as group conversations and outside class encounters?

P1: Definitely uh if I look at the overall starting with outside class experiences if I look at it overall I would say that um it's very segregated if that's the right word to use um definitely um I want to say it's probably a total of five African Americans um in our cohort um and we pretty much stick together you know we socialize with each other um and then the rest of the cohort kind of do their own things but I don't think that we came in that way. I believe that um the majority of the cohort kind of separated themselves uh from others in the beginning and that kind of put us in the position to kind of just bond with each other um but at the same time um so outside I don't really do a lot with the cohort. I kind of just stay to myself because um I can say most of the cohort has put a bad reputation on themselves um and I don't want to be a part of that because I feel like um I have enough coming with me being an African American female um that I don't need anything extra to kind of fight if that makes sense um so I don't really hang with them a lot um in regards to group projects or group presentations its definitely different. I

believe that um and it could just come from the background um I have a very strong work ethic and I don't like to wait till the last minute with things um so when it comes down to group presentations whether it's we're doing everything as a team or we are going to split things up and we set deadlines I'm the type to kind of to hold to that and um a lot of the cohort isn't um and it could just be that they are used to things being handed to them or they are used to being able to talk their way through something um and it being okay um at the end of the day and I'm not so it's definitely struggle um I just finished up one project and I promise I will never work with these people again in life um and part of that is because you know how they are you know in regards to working priorities and all that um besides going to class majority of time I don't like I say we're segregated and the African American outside of that I don't really

R: You said a lot within that response. I kind of want you to explain a little deeper if you could explain at what point do you feel that it became segregated and what was the reason

P1: um I think honestly you know we all came in with you know we are the first year cohort lets hang out, let's do things but um like I say they had that bad reputation on them and it was easy to pick it up um so you try to distance yourself but we would still be willing to hand and do whatever but I think when it really came out was during the student development theory class um I believe it was that one and one of the um we were talking about race and I don't even think we were talking about race we might have just been talking about diversity knowing * um we were saying something um and one of the other students um just threw out the fact that all of the black people sat on one side of the room and all of the white people sat on the other side of the room when it really wasn't the case um because most of the class sections before that one we were all spread out so it was kind of shocking to say here we are in student development you know student affairs practitioners and we're still struggling with this type of diversity issue. The segregation so I think by her throwing it out there it was kind of like ok so a lot of us took it as a joke to say yup all the black people sit together so since then all the black people have sat together and you know sometimes we still throw out the joke like yup um huh we're segregated and you know things like that but I think that kind of really set the tone for it and maybe even with our um our multicultural class and we have this semester it's pretty obvious because I feel like maybe people struggle or don't understand how to communicate with people that aren't like themselves in regards to black versus white so they are comfortable with just hanging out with each other instead of trying to actually force themselves to step outside of their comfort zone a lot of time so we just kind of got used to being with each other

R: When you are saying they who are you referring to?

P1: they as in the majority so the white students

R: What are some of the bad reputations that the white students have that you feel or you know that the black students don't have that separates them?

P1: Definitely um they have been caught cheating um on midterms and finals and things like that um so academic honesty would be a huge one um another big one would be the partying, the alcohol and um just being a role model because a lot of us have the assistantships where we are interacting with students a lot and when students see them in the bar with them you know it gives them that wrong impression. I think those two would be the biggest that I know of

R: You also mentioned that you have enough as an African American female; can you kind of elaborate on that?

P1: definitely when I say that I mean you know you are coming in here and you are African American regardless if you are male or a female but to top it off you're a woman you know um so you have that on you and you have always been taught you need to make sure that you stand out for good things and not so much what society has placed on you you know. That you're here at the masters level and you know people don't believe that you should be even today so you have that to fight through and to always prove that you deserve to be here and to have this seat in the classroom um and as African American you know it's always a lesson that you have to teach someone and regardless if it's well talking to a student and that student is saying that their parents told them that they should never talk to an African American because of whatever reason um it's your job to prove that student wrong and you know give that experience to them that black people aren't what mom and dad told you um being one it's two black grads in my department and although we are close but we do things very different um and just making sure that I'm always looked at as me and not as this black grad or this other black student because so many stigmas come with being black so when I say I have enough you know I wake up in the morning and you know that you need to stay on top of your game. You need need to stay on top of your deadlines whether it's in the program or your assistantship you know you need to make sure that you are carrying yourself with the up most dignity and respect because you have people looking at you at all times we use a big philosophy with the fish you know your life is a fish bowl and I feel like as an African American your life your fish bowl per se is a little smaller because you know people are definitely zooming in on you just because of the color of your skin again because they don't see anything else besides that um so you have enough we wake up and you know you got to stay on top of it um so things like the academic dishonesty or partying not to say that we don't party because we do hang out too but just knowing that you know when to say it's enough or not putting yourself in the situation to say yeah I expected that out of someone

R: Now on the flip side can you describe your experiences with your professors and or professionals in the field in regards to in class and out of class encounters?

P1: ok first person that would come to mind would be * um love him to death, met him at ope for the first time and he's kind of been that support system if that makes sense um you know coming in and I guess it could be African American or whoever but you don't really know the right questions to ask prior to um and * was pretty good at figuring out what I was thinking and you know kind of going from there helping me I told * when I spoke with him during interview before I got admitted that I was terrified of this thesis thing and it was funny because we had * or maybe it was housing one of those days um and * singled me out with saying um you know (me) made she made a comment to me last year when she came you know just talking to the first years and you know he explained that the comment I made was I was terrified to the thesis and I didn't even remember that I said it but the fact that things stick out with * you know that you know that every conversation that you have with him is important and it could just be that he's good at faking it you know you never know but I feel kike with * he's passionate about his students he cares um so that was important. Day to day what's going on with this thesis what you need um even if it's just day to day stuff another would be um actually all of them, *, love her to death and she did our group counseling and we did a lot about diversity and then um but it was never her singling the African American out or even minorities period singling us out to make us answer different things um and for the most part all of our professors do that but at the same time I've had some issues with where they have singled me out um and grant it unfortunately I'm used to it you know um but it kind of still rubs you the wrong way because I feel like as professors um you should know that it's not okay to single someone out you should know um how to communicate um what you know our discussions um figure out where they need to go without singling them out prime example I had one um who was talking about um oh God I forgot bloody Sunday in the class and he asked um if any of us knew what it was and nobody said anything we all kind of just sat there and after class he grabbed me he said I know you knew what bloody Sunday was about um and why didn't you speak up and you know yes I knew but I don't feel like every time it's something that has to do with African Americans or civil rights or anything like that I should be one of the first ones to speak up. Yes I'm proud of you know what my heritage is about but everyone should know what bloody Sunday is so that was one that kind of just stuck out. I know that * who is an African American professor and a lot of us look to him you know for that support and sometimes you kind of you know he will go there with you um and he challenges you um on levels and you will say ok what's really up um and we kind of just take it as him pushing us because we are African American and want us to make sure that we're getting the best that we can but I've also heard that you know it's gets to the paint sometimes * can go over board as well but he hasn't with me so overall I can say that experiences have been good um but we've also had those struggles where it's like ok doc um hum now you know better than to single someone out you know especially in this field um but

R: What was the race of the professor that singled you out?

P1: White

R: How would you perceive your experiences in this program to be different than others

P1: my experiences um I think this could be bad to say but I'm saying it anyway I think that a lot of white students come in blind folded well on the straight and narrow um type of path, you know. They have always been well most of them I can't speak for all, but most that I've encountered have always been given um what they needed, what they wanted um they've never had to actually go out and fight for something or had to work to get something done um so they come in with the expectation um and you can see that even in our class discussions sometimes like that when we are talking about something little and don't get that somebody had to work to get to you know where they are um in life and I think as an African American um and just speaking for myself I have a broader view on what life means um you know. I come from a family where I had to work you know I worked through college, I worked in high school um and whether now that I think about it I could say well I probably didn't have to um but I'm grateful that my parents made me work because it put something in me to know that working pays off you know and at the end of the day, I can actually say that I got this degree because I worked for it and I bust my butt for this degree um so even with the experiences overall like um I think it's different because I come in um with a well rounded background you know other issues or experiences that I've encountered in life um and I know that that I'm here in student affairs not just because I don't ever want to leave college or you know because I get to party or whatever I'm actually here because something in my life put me here you know I have dealt with a lot of suicide issues and family committing suicide and everything and that kind of played into it. Um big with education and tutoring and all of that kind of played into it so I have a lot of things to say this is why I'm here um and when I ask questions or when I'm reading something for class I can connect something that's in the book to something I've already experienced in life or I'm going through or I'm looking at you know with another person um so I'm able to kind of make connections and I think a lot of people White people or white students aren't able to because they don't have it if that makes sense so it's hard for them to connect when they are talking to students whether for me African American, white, whoever um I'm able to connect with that person you know I'm approachable grant it some might struggle because I'm black um but I'm approachable because they know that I understand and I'm not judging them per se and I think a lot of other students struggle when it comes to that.

Participant 2 Responses

P2: Pat

R: So what made you choose this program that you are in?

P2: I chose the counseling, I mean college student affairs program as a result of talking with um my boss who kind of acted as a mentor um when I graduated from kinesiology and sport studies I wanted to do, my goal was to be a director of football operations um and I talked with my boss about it and his concern was having too narrow a field for employment options so in order to give me a wider spectrum or wider platform for employment options he suggested college student affairs um athletics is under, athletics is under student affairs at most universities so if I still wanted to work in athletics um I still could do that because of the combination of degrees but um what he was saying was that it would be better to not just have one area um where all your degrees are just in one concentration just to give me more options also he said that I would make more money in student affairs than I would in athletics

R: Ok so what brought you exactly to * program?

P2: um the familiarity with it just because I was an * undergrad um two because I graduated in the fall and because I am a mom I didn't want to move my family in the middle of the school year

R: What challenges do you feel you face in this program that either um males or Caucasian students aren't facing?

P2: I think the expectations are higher for students of color and for women um even by minority faculty and staff um I think just looking at some of the other cohort members they approach their assignments a lot differently than I do. They're like oh like with the annotated bib we had to do our annotated bibliography and I know there were some students that were like yeah I just did 3 bullet points and your like 3 bullet points really, you know I am panicking because I'm trying to do a whole paragraph you know and trying to make this lengthy and you're just doing 3 little bullet points like really what are saying in 3 bullet points but they just felt like that was enough they did the assignment where as for me as a black female I'm like okay I have to do a really really good job because I don't feel like it so much as more scrutiny but the expectations are just higher, like you know you are so supposed to be more hungry for this you're supposed to work

harder for this and I don't think they really mean to be insulting in those expectations but I just think the expectations are much higher

R: Ok well explain a little bit to me what expectations you feel you have as an African American female?

P2: I just think that they expect the quality of work, the effort um the sincerity the drive to just be stronger than the other students

R: Can you describe your experiences with your classmates as far as group conversations and outside class encounters?

P2: um out of class most of my cohort they don't invite me out I mean they really don't um some of the minority students may say hey lets go bowling, I think that we all went bowling once um but most of the time when when they are all getting together to go out I have not been formally invited now that can be because they know that I am a parent or it could be because they know that I am an older student now um or I know a lot of them because they know they all work in the same department they are all in housing you know so maybe that's why they have a different relationship than some of us have I know I have heard I've heard some students make comments that I don't think that they realize is insulting to minorities, um I have been in groups with them when um they don't really care to hear what we are saying they don't want our input until they are asking the question like wait I can't spell this but they don't ask you know like oh do you know how to spell it because they just assume that we don't have any thing of value to say um or we may make a suggestion for a group you know assignment and they totally ignore it um one particular student every time I say something has a counter for it without even understanding what I am saying so it happens and it is like if you, I know I am a confrontational person um not in an always negative fashion but if something is a problem I am going to say something but its viewed as you know you are getting real aggressive you are getting too offended versus no it was wrong and I am going to correct it plus from what I have heard from the second year cohorts, a lot of the first year cohort have a bad reputation with drinking and cheating and I don't want to be a part of that and I know a lot of the other African American students do want to be a part of that as well because we want to maintain a reputable image that will get us somewhere after we graduate from this program.

R: um okay I am going to touch on a couple of the comments that you made within that um just the most recent one, you said that its viewed as something negative who is it viewed negatively by?

P2: um I think just other students like the faculty and staff have never said hey you know we have observed this in class and we feel like you know your approaching this the wrong way um I think looking at the view points of the faculty they think that it encourages more conversation um having various input and I think that's what they look for when they put the cohorts together um but other cohort members get a little tense because they don't want to say anything or um even in um one of our discussions one of the faculty members pointed out ok everyone was saying stuff until * said this and it was like after that they didn't want to say anything that they thought was going to be different because no one wants to deal with confrontation or conflict

R: ok so when you are referring to others and they, who are you referring to? Are you referring to the minority students, are you referring to the white students

P2: the white students

R: What were some of the comments that were made that you considered to be insulting or that were insulting to you, and I am assuming these comments were made by the white students.

P2: um one young lady when she gave her presentation and she started talking about minority students she started saying for those students or students like them which it was second nature for her to say it and she didn't blink an eye so I don't think she understood that those students or students like them was an offensive way to address it. Um and that was a particular incident that I was talking about

R: Can you describe your experiences with your professors and or professionals in the field in regards to again, in class and out of class encounters?

P2: um actually for this particular department it has been very positive um all of them are very supportive they are willing to be any resource you need them to be if you have a question and they know 20 books they are going to give you 20 books and a possible 21 they are very very supportive very tangible

R: How do your percieve your experiences to be different than anybody else's?

P2: as a single mother my responsibilities are greater. If one of the students doesn't do well they just figure oh I will take it again or I will just do this I do that I don't have the option to fail. My entire family is dependant upon me making decent grades and progressing from one stage to the next um if I don't do well than my financial aid is in trouble, my program is in trouble, my ga is in trouble and that is how I take of and support my household so um if I don't stay on a certain schedule, if I don't do things a certain fashion, my family suffers um where as someone else may say oh I can do this assignment this weekend, I don't have open weekends I have children with activities and responsibilities, I have a whole household that I am responsible for so I think that is a really really big difference because a lot of them don't have to worry about what happens to a little person or someone else that they are responsible for its just them so its um just kind of okay I'll do it, I'll get to it I feel more pressure to not miss class where as some of them will just miss class because they are tired and even when I am tired or exhausted or whatever I am still at class, I am still communicating with my professors and a lot of time I hear them make up an excuse as to why they didn't come or to not just say anything and I feel so embarrassed saying okay I am sorry I don't feel well you know I am sorry I had to miss class because all these life things are happening and I feel maybe I take it more seriously um than a lot of the Caucasians students do because for them I think that they just expect that they are going to do well just because they are there yeah I will pass oh yeah its easy I'll do it, it will get done where as I am like fighting, I feel like I am fighting for these grades and I don't know if that is just me expecting more of myself as well or if they just feel like because I am here it will happen

R: um in regards to you and your classmates do you and other African American students in your cohort have you guys ever had a conversation where you percieve your experiences to be different than the white students in regards to how professors are treating them?

P2 I don't think in how the professors are treating us I think more so the attitude of the students how they approach the coursework I know one student that has had an African American student that has had some challenges but other minority students have not had those same challenges with the professors so its like that was something personal with that particular person not all minority students um but I don't recall anyone making a statement that the professors approached them differently just the different attitudes of the students

APPENDIX D
FIELD NOTES

*Field Notes**Field Note 1: Sam*

The professor for this course is a White, male, senior level administrator. The course is considered a seminar and it is 50 minutes in length. The professor's personality is very welcoming and his demeanor is very warm. He is standing in the front of the room looking through papers quietly. The class which is made up of five African American students and twelve White students, are talking amongst each other before the class begins. Sam enters into the class at 11:58 am, being the last student of the class to enter. The class is scheduled to begin at Noon. She hands some sheets of paperwork to the housing grads in the classroom and engages in conversation with one of the white, female, housing grad students. Participant one is dressed in khaki pants and a blue t-shirt with the university's logo. The attire for the remaining class is a mixture of business attire, and business casual attire. Sam sits in the first row at the front of the class, which is where she normally sits. The remaining African American students sit in the back rows of the classroom, none of which are participants in this research. The professor begins to lecture on crises management and emergency preparedness. Everyone including Sam is watching the professor and appears to be engaged. Sam turns around in her seat and whispers something to a White, female, classmate while the professor is speaking at the front of the class. The classmate with whom Sam is speaking with, nods her head, and Sam turns back around in her seat. The class now breaks up into pre-assigned groups and engages in group discussion. The professor goes back to looking at a stack of paperwork. Sam is in a group with two females, and one male. Everyone takes their turn in speaking except Sam. She twirls her hair and writes things down on a sheet

of a paper. Everyone else in the groups appears to be actively engaging in conversation with their other group members. Ten minutes pass and the professor asks if everyone is finished discussing. Everyone agrees and one of the groups volunteers to be the first to present their scenario that was given to them. While the group is presenting, Sam looks at her blackberry and pushes some buttons. The majority of the class is watching the group up front presenting. Two individuals are looking at sheets of papers in front of them. The group speaks for ten minutes, everyone claps and they sit down. The professor has some final thoughts for the class. Everyone is watching the professor, including Sam. The class ends at 12:50, Sam gathers her belongings and heads for the door.

Field Note 2: Sam

It is 7:00 pm on a Wednesday evening and the course is titled internship. The instructor for this course is a White, male, who was once the president of the university, but is now retired and teaching courses for the Department of Counseling and Student Development. He also has a very nice and warm demeanor and makes sure he doesn't say anything negative about anyone. He is real easy to talk to and several students address him by his first name since he does not have a terminal degree. There are only nine students registered for this course. Sam has already arrived before the researcher, which is unusual because it is normally the other way around. She is sitting in a circle with a group of other students, who are all White, engaging in dialogue. She is laughing while a White, male tells a story. There are five African Americans in this class. Two are females, and three are males. Everyone is sitting in a circle. Sam is dressed in business casual attire. The remaining class is dressed in casual attire. The instructor

begins to speak, by asking everyone how their day went. No one answers the question directly but more or less give different facial expressions to show how their day went. The instructor informs the class that we will be discussing amongst each other how our internship is going. There is a blue ball that is used to determine who's turn it is to speak. When an individual wants to speak, they ask for the ball. A White, female student begins the conversation about her internship site. Everyone is listening to the first speaker. Students continue to ask for the ball, each person taking at least ten minutes to explain their experiences. Sam is the last to speak on her experiences. She speaks for ten minutes like everyone else. She appears to perk up a little when discussing her experiences, much like everyone else did when discussing their experiences. She explains how she loves working with the students and most of the people in the office. She goes on to tell how one specific individual gets on her nerves and she makes a comment that she wants to choke him out sometimes, in jokingly manner. Everyone in the circle, including the instructor chuckles at the remark, knowing that she is really not going to choke this individual. The instructor tells her she has a very interesting experience. He did not make this comment to everyone. The instructor begins to speak after Sam and sums up everyone's experiences. He goes over some changes in the syllabus and tells everyone that he will see us later. Everyone gets up and pushes their seats back into the rows. Sam begins to speak to an African American male student in the class. They laugh. They walk out of the room.

Field Note 3: Sam

This is week two and this is the Monday seminar class that begins at Noon. Sam is the last student to arrive to class today. She is wearing jeans and a sweatshirt. There is

one other person in the class who is also wearing jeans and a sweat shirt, and the remaining class is dressed in business casual attire. Sam sits in the same seat she sat in the previous week. She begins to speak to the same classmates that she spoke to last week. The professor begins to speak and asks which group would like to present first. One individual from a group volunteers and all of the members walk to the front of the room. The entire class watches and listens to the group present their case study. A White, female in the class raises her hands and asks a question. Her question sparks the interest of several other classmates who immediately raise their hand to follow up. Sam still sits in the front with her head resting on her hand. She never raises her hand to ask a question. The group finishes their discussion, everyone, including Sam claps and they sit down. Another group walks up after them. They read their scenario and discuss their responses. Sam is looking at papers in a folder during the presentation. The remaining class watches the group up front. No one asks this group questions during or after the presentation. Everyone claps, including Sam and the group takes their seat. The professor has some closing remarks and the class is dismissed. Sam is the first to leave the class without speaking to anyone.

Field Note 4: Sam

This is the Monday class that is held at noon. Sam enters the class five minutes after the class has begun. The professor glances at Sam as she walks to her seat. Other classmates look towards the door as she enters. The professor is asking how everyone's weekend went. A white, female student begins telling the class the things she did during her weekend. No one in the class looks at the student while she is speaking. The student sits in the last row of the classroom. After she finishes her story, the professor asks the

last group to come up and discuss their scenario. Sam is in this last group. She reads the scenario to the class. After she is done reading, other members of her group begin to discuss their solutions. Sam doesn't speak again. No one asks the group a question. After everyone in the group has put their input in, everyone claps and they take their seat. The professor begins to announce the next project that the class will work on. Everyone is watching the professor, including Sam. The professor asks does anyone have anything to add, and no one responds. A couple of White students begin to gather their belongings. The professor says he will see everyone next week. Sam grabs her belongings and exits the class without speaking to anyone. A few White students stay behind and chat. Two African American males begin a conversation.

Field Note 1: Pat

The class that Pat is being observed in is a law class in higher education. The class begins at 4:00 p.m. on a Monday evening. The professor is an African American male, who has taught this course for several years, and is very knowledgeable about the subject matter. He has a joking but yet serious demeanor about him. He has had serious health issues in the past, so he readily tells everyone that he doesn't deal with anything that is going to stress him out. Pat is absent from class this evening. When asked where participant two was, the professor responded that she called in ill. It was later discovered that Pat missed class because she was tired from a concert that she attended the night before in Chicago, IL. Pat openly disclosed this information to the researcher the next time they met.

Field Note 2: Pat

It is 4:00 p.m. Monday evening. Pat comes in the class with a smile on her face, which is not out of the ordinary for her depending on her mood. She is dressed in business casual attire as is the rest of the class. She begins a conversation with the professor before she takes her seat. The rest of the class is speaking amongst each other. After speaking with the professor for 5 minutes, she speaks to an African American, female in the class. They laugh. Class begins and the instructor stands in front of the class and asks the individual who is supposed to present today, if she is ready. There is actually a guest speaker for the class today who is speaking on disciplinary rules and regulations. The class is listening and watching the guest speaker. Pat is writing things down on a sheet a paper not looking at the speaker. Every now and again, she lifts her head to look at the speaker. Pat sits at the front table in class, directly in front of the chalk board. A few students raise their hands to ask questions regarding the law. Pat is still writing on her sheet of paper. Everyone else in the class is watching the speaker. The guest speaker finishes and everyone claps, including Pat. The instructor announces we will take a five minute break. Pat stops writing, covers the sheet of paper she was writing on and leaves the classroom. She returns after ten minutes with her phone in her hand. She speaks to a White, female student in the classroom, who is considered a non-traditional student. They are laughing about something. Some of the other students who have made it back to the class are chatting with others. The professor interrupts everyone and announces that we will hear the next presentation scheduled for the day. Everyone takes their seat, including Pat. The second speaker walks to the front of the classroom and begins her presentation on admissions policies and procedures. The presenter has a

PowerPoint presentation with 45 slides. Pat returns to writing on the same sheet of paper she was writing on before. Other students in the class begin to open up books and focus on something else. There are seven students out of 17 who are actually watching the presentation. Pat stops writing, goes in her purse and brings out a container with food in it. She begins to eat. Other students in class occasional look at something else, then after a while focus their attention back on the speaker. After she finishes her food, Pat takes her cell phone out and sends a text to another student in the class. The student that she sent a text to was another African American female in the class. The researcher came upon this information by asking Pat after class who she was texting. The student sends a text on her phone and Pat grabs her phone to read. The two make eye contact and begin to chuckle. A few other students in the class have taken to their cell phones. The professor is looking down at paperwork during the presentation appearing to be disengaged. Pat has began to write again on her sheets of paper. She stops, digs in her purse and takes out some lip gloss and applies it. The speaker finishes her presentation after forty-five minutes. Everyone claps and she sits down. The professor stands back up and dismisses the class.

Field Note 3: Pat

It is Monday evening at 4:00 p.m. The class is expecting to listen to more presentations for the entire class. Pat has already arrived to class before the researcher. She is sitting quietly looking through her phone, while other classmates chat amongst themselves, and a couple of White males are looking through a text book. The professor has not made it to class yet. A white, female student is standing in the front of classroom at the computer. The professor walks in the room, asks if everyone is ready. Pat is

looking up at the professor as with the rest of the class. A couple of students nod their heads and the student who is standing at the front of the room begins to speak on the topic of special issues of hate speech on college campuses. The speaker is speaking in monotone and reading directly off of her slides. Pat is looking at some sheets of paper. The professor is staring off into space, not making eye contact with the speaker nor is he looking at her slides. Other students in the class are snickering amongst themselves. Pat looks up for about thirty seconds then returns to the papers she is reading. Pat begins to whisper to an African American female classmate throughout the remaining presentation. The presenter then asks the question if a fraternity that is housed off campus makes racial gestures and slurs to individuals while sitting outside of their residence, can the university reprimand them for it? Pat raises her hand and responds yes because they are still an organization of the university. A White, male raises his hand and makes a response. The speaker continues on with her presentation after the remark. Pat pulls out her cell phone and begins going through it. The speaker continues on for the next forty-five minutes. Only one, female, White, student is looking at her slides. Everyone else's attention is focused elsewhere, including the professor. Pat is still on her phone texting. The speaker has finished her presentation. Every one claps. The professor stands up and makes a couple of comments. Pat has stopped texting and is looking at the professor. The professor dismisses class. Pat is putting her books in her bag, she dials some number on her phone and begins speaking while she walks out of the class.

APPENDIX E
PEER REVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

- Length of interviews? observations?

- Number of participants? Why focus solely on CSA program? Expand to other programs in future research. Phenomenology qualitative study of lived experiences of a common ph

Transcription of Participant 1

R= Researcher

P1= Participant 1

= Plan to protect identity of P1 - Reflexivity. Personal statement

Plan to protect identities of ind named throughout the interview

R: What experiences brought you to this program and this institution?

Leave utterances like "um" out of quotes. Make it flow for the reader.

P1: Um I think I guess the experiences of past graduates um in regards to the program um the graduate was [redacted] um that graduated I believe she was a year out um and she worked at my undergrad as a hall director um I don't know I heard good things about it um but I think what really won me over was my experiences with the assistantship sides of it and um how they were in regards to diversity ok that's kind of what got me

R: Ok could you elaborate more on your assistantships? Are you saying you heard about what grad assistantships were available for being in the program?

P1: Well I was strictly focused on working with housing um and [redacted] came out of housing at the program as well CSA um and I heard good things about housing as well as the program but when I went to OPE I didn't know much about the program. I knew OPE was about housing and bringing grad assistants and all of that so I got to interact with a lot of [redacted] folks in regards in that aspect um very diverse group um they are friendly um and when I got on campus I wasn't number if that makes sense and that was important to me um because I half way felt like I was um as a undergraduate until I really got involved in things but in regards to the program because yes we are one of the big programs but seeing a familiar face someone that looks like me as a professor um knowing that I can have that person as a mentor someone to support me and understand my struggles was big so [redacted] was a big big play. I don't think he knows that but um he was huge in regards to me jumping on board with [redacted]

Leading question? Perhaps ask something more like "What is it like to be an African American graduate student?"

R: Now that you are in the program have you felt like you have had some challenges that you feel you are facing that maybe other groups aren't facing?

P1: um I wouldn't say it would be things that's out of the ordinary. I guess you know I'm African American and you kind of go through the same struggles regardless of where you are so it kind of just becomes a part of your day to day steps and like um definitely I feel more so that you have to make sure that you prove yourself um it's I believe two of us, two African American women in my cohort um and then we have one part time that kind of takes classes with us and here and there but I think she's joining on to the next years cohort um so I guess you kind of

would be the same struggles that we deal with regardless if it's on the job or you know just walking through life or you know down the street um so I don't really I don't think I do um I might have to think about it some more Int

R: Ok well can you explain or elaborate a little bit more when you talk about the other two females that's in your cohort like how you all support each other

P1: Ok um well I know that um I coming right from undergrad um oh wait it's only two of us in my cohort, well the three of us yep um but I 'm coming right from undergrad um and the other two females um aren't. They have their experiences of being outside, um both are mothers um so they have that as well that comes with them um and it's all about working together whether it's hey you know we have a group presentation but I can't find a babysitter so lets meet at my house type of deal or um well we can meet but just know you know my baby going to be with u at the playground or whatever like um we're kind of open and understanding of it um and your able to talk about some things cause you know sometimes you have those issues where um I don't necessarily say that you feel targeted as an African American um to speak up for things u to kind of speak for your race or you know all of that stuff um and we kind of have that and we are able to support each other so it's not just you being singled out all of the time and um we kind of feed back or bounce off of each other in regards to that um and whatever or like I guess it's just being open and understanding um for the most part with whats going on with that and bringing our own experiences to the table and helping each other out

R: Can you describe some of your experiences that you have with your classmates as far as group conversations and outside class encounters?

P1: Definitely uh if I look at the overall starting with outside class experiences if I look at it overall I would say that um it's very segregated if that's the right word to use um definitely um want to say it's probably a total of five African Americans um in our cohort um and we pretty much stick together you know we socialize with each other um and then the rest of the cohort kind of do their own things but I don't think that we came in that way. I believe that um the majority of the cohort kid of separated themselves uh from others in the beginning and that kind of put us in the position to kind of just bond with each other um but at the same time um so outside I don't really do a lot with the cohort. I kind of just stay to myself because um I can say most of the cohort has put a bad reputation on themselves um and I don't want to be a part of th because I feel like um I have enough coming with me being an African American female um th I don't need anything extra to kind of fight if that makes sense um so I don't really hang with them a lot um in regards to group projects or group presentations its definitely different. I believe that um and it could just come from the background um I have a very strong work ethic

presentations whether it's we're doing everything as a team or we are going to split things up and we set deadlines I'm the type to kind of to hold to that and um a lot of the cohort isn't um and it could just be that they are used to things being handed to them or they are used to being able to talk their way through something um and it being okay um at the end of the day and I'm not so it's definitely struggle um I just finished up one project and I promise I will never work with these people again in life um and part of that is because you know how they are you know in regards to working priorities and all that um besides going to class majority of time I don't like say we're segregated and the African American outside of that I don't really

R: You said a lot within that response. I kind of want you to explain a little deeper if you could explain at what point do you feel that it became segregated and what was the reason

P1: um I think honestly you know we all came in with you know we are the first year cohort let's hang out, let's do things but um like I say they had that bad reputation on them and it was easy pick it up um so you try to distance yourself but we would still be willing to hand and do whatever but I think when it really came out was during the student development theory class u I believe it was that one and one of the um we were talking about race and I don't even think we were talking about race we might have just been talking about diversity knowing [REDACTED] u we were saying something um and one of the other students um just threw out the fact that all of the black people sat on one side of the room and all of the white people sat on the other side of the room when it really wasn't the case um because most of the class sections before that one were all spread out so it was kind of shocking to say here we are in student development you know student affairs practitioners and we're still struggling with this type of diversity issue. The segregation so I think by her throwing it out there it was kind of like ok so a lot of us took it as a joke to say yup all the black people sit together so since then all the black people have sat together and you know sometimes we still throw out the joke like yup um huh we're segregated and you know things like that but I think that kind of really set the tone for it and maybe even with our um our multicultural class and we have this semester it's pretty obvious because I feel like maybe people struggle or don't understand how to communicate with people that aren't like themselves in regards to black versus white so they are comfortable with just hanging out with each other instead of trying to actually force themselves to step outside of their comfort zone a lot of time so we just kind of got used to being with each other

R: When you are saying they who are you referring to?

P1: they as in the majority so the white students

R: What are some of the bad reputations that the white students have that you feel or you know that the black students don't have that separates them?

P1: Definitely um they have been caught cheating um on midterms and finals and things like that um so academic honesty would be a huge one um another big one would be the partying, the alcohol and um just being a role model because a lot of us have the assistantships where we are interacting with students a lot and when students see them in the bar with them you know it gives them that wrong impression. I think those two would be the biggest that I know of

Remember... protect your participants' identity

R: You also mentioned that you have enough as an African American female; can you kind of elaborate on that?

P1: definitely when I say that I mean you know you are coming in here and you are African American regardless if you are male or a female but to top it off you're a woman you know um so you have that you and you have always been taught you need to make sure that you stand out for good things and not so much what society has placed on you you know. That you're here at the masters level and you know people don't believe that you should be even today so you have that to fight through and to always prove that you deserve to be here and to have this seat in the classroom um and as African American you know it's always a lesson that you have to teach someone and regardless if it's well talking to a student and that student is saying that their parents told them that they should never talk to an African American because of whatever reason um it's your job to prove that student wrong and you know give that experience to them that black people aren't what mom and dad told you um being one it's two black grads in my department and although we are close but we do things very different um and just making sure that I'm always looked at as me and not as this black grad or this other black student because so many stigmas come with being black so when I say I have enough you know I wake up in the morning and you know that you need to stay on top of your game. You need need to stay on top of your deadlines whether it's in the program or your assistantship you know you need to make sure that you are carrying yourself with the up most dignity and respect because you have people looking at you at a times we use a big philosophy with the fish you know your life is a fish bowl and I feel like as an African American your life your fish bowl per se is a little smaller because you know people are definitely zooming in on you just because of the color of your skin again because they don't see anything else besides that um so you have enough we wake up and you know you got to stay on top of it um so things like the academic dishonesty or partying not to say that we don't party because we do hang out too but just knowing that you know when to say it's enough or not putting yourself in the situation to say yeah expected that out of someone

R: Now on the flip side can you describe your experiences with your professors and or professionals in the field in regards to in class and out of class encounters?

P1: ok first person that would come to mind would be [redacted] um love him to death, met him at [redacted] ope for the first time and he's kind of been that support system if that makes sense um you know coming in and I guess it could be African American or whoever but you don't really know the right questions to ask prior to um and [redacted] was pretty good at figuring out what I was thinking and you know kind of going from there helping me I told [redacted] when I spoke with him during interview before I got admitted that I was terrified of this thesis thing and it was funny because we had [redacted] or maybe it was housing one of those days um and [redacted] singled me out with saying um you know (me) made she made a comment to me last year when she came you know just talking to the first years and you know he explained that the comment I made was I was terrified to the thesis and I didn't even remember that I said it but the fact that things stick out with [redacted] you know that you know that every conversation that you have with him is important and it could just be that he's good at faking it you know you never know but I feel kike with [redacted] he's passionate about his students he cares um so that was important. Day to day whats going on with this thesis what you need um even if it's just day to day stuff another would be um actually all of them [redacted] love her to death and she did our group counseling and we did a lot about diversity and then um but it was never her singling the African American out or even minorities period singling us out to make us answer different things um and for the most part all of our professors do that but at the same time I've had some issues with where they have singled me out um and grant it unfortunately I'm used to it you know um but it kind of still rubs you the wrong way because I feel like a professors um you should know that it's not okay to single someone out you should know um how to communicate um what you know our discussions um figure out where they need to go without singling them out prime example I had one um who was talking about um oh God I forgot bloody Sunday in the class and he asked um if any of us knew what it was and nobody said anything we all kind of just sat there and after class he grabbed me he said I know you knew what bloody Sunday was about um and why didn't you speak up and you know yes I knew but I don't feel like every time it's something that has to do with African Americans or civil rights or anything like that I should be one of the first ones to speak up. Yes I'm proud of you know what my heritage is about but everyone should know what bloody Sunday is so that was one that kind of just stuck out. I know that [redacted] who is an African American professor and a lot of us look to him you know for that support and sometimes you kind of you know he will go there with you um and he challenges you um on levels and you will say ok whats really up um and we kind of just take it as him pushing us because we are African American and want us to make sure that we're getting the best that we can but I've also heard that you know it's gets to the point sometimes [redacted] can go over board as well but he hasn't with me so overall I can say that experiences have been good um but we've also had those struggles where it's like ok doc um hum now you know better than to single someone out you know especially in this field um but

R: What was the race of the professor that singled you out?

P1: White

R: How would you perceive your experiences in this program to be different than others

P1: my experiences um I think this could be bad to say but I'm saying it anyway I think that a lot of white students come in blind folded well on the straight and narrow um type of path, you know. They have always been well most of them I can't speak for all, but most that I've encountered have always been given um what they needed, what they wanted um they've never had to actually go out and fight for something or had to work to get something done um so they come in with the expectation um and you can see that even in our class discussions sometimes like that when we are talking about something little and don't get that somebody had to work to get to you know where they are um in life and I think as an African American um and just speaking for myself I have a broader view on what life means um you know. I come from a family where I had to work you know I worked through college, I worked in high school um and whether now that I think about it I could say well I probably didn't have to um but I'm grateful that my parents made me work because it put something in me to know that working pays off you know and at the end of the day, I can actually say that I got this degree because I worked for it and I bust my butt for this degree um so even with the experiences overall like um I think it's different because I come in um with a well rounded background you know other issues or experiences that I've encountered in life um and I know that that I'm here in student affairs not just because I don't ever want to leave college or you know because I get to party or whatever I'm actually here because something in my life put me here you know I have dealt with a lot of suicide issues and family committing suicide and everything and that kind of played into it. Um big with education and tutoring and all of that kind of played into it so I have a lot of things to say this is why I'm here um and when I ask questions or when I'm reading something for class I can connect something that's in the book to something I've already experienced in life or I'm going through or I'm looking at you know with another person um so I'm able to kind of make connections and I think a lot of people White people or white students aren't able to because they don't have it if that makes sense so it's hard for them to connect when they are talking to students whether for me African American, white, whoever um I'm able to connect with that person you know I'm approachable grant it some might struggle because I'm black um but I'm approachable because they know that I understand and I'm not judging them per se and I think a lot of other students struggle when it comes to that.

- What support network does this student have (especially as a single mother)?

Participant 2 Responses

Critical race?

R: So what made you choose this program that you are in?

P2: I chose the counseling, I mean college student affairs program as a result of talking with um my boss who kind of acted as a mentor um when I graduated from kinesiology and sport studie: wanted to do, my goal was to be a director of football operations um and I talked with my boss about it and his concern was having too narrow a field for employment options so in order to give me a wider spectrum or wider platform for employment options he suggested college student affairs um athletics is under, athletics is under student affairs at most universities so if I still wanted to work in athletics um I still could do that because of the combination of degrees but um what he was saying was that it would be better to not just have one area um where all your degrees are just in one concentration just to give me more options also he said that I would make more money in student affairs than I would in athletics

R: Ok so what brought you exactly to [redacted] program?

P2: um the familiarity with it just because I was an [redacted] undergrad um two because I graduated in the fall and because I am a mom I didn't want to move my family in the middle of the school year

Leading question?

R: What challenges do you feel you face in this program that either um males or Caucasian students aren't facing?

P2: I think the expectations are higher for students of color and for women um even by minorit faculty and staff um I think just looking at some of the other cohort members they approach the assignments a lot differently than I do. They're like oh like with the annotated bib we had to do our annotated bibliography and I know there were some students that were like yeah I just did 3 bullet points and your like 3 bullet points really, you know I am panicking because I'm trying to do a whole paragraph you know and trying to make this lengthy and you're just doing 3 little bullet points like really what are saying in 3 bullet points but they just felt like that was enough they did the assignment where as for me as a black female I'm like okay I have to do a really really good job because I don't feel like it so much as more scrutiny but the expectations are ju: higher, like you know you are so supposed to be more hungry for this you're supposed to work harder for this and I don't think they really mean to be insulting in those expectations but I just think the expectations are much higher

R: Ok well explain a little bit to me what expectations you feel you have as an African American female?

P2: I just think that they expect the quality of work, the effort um the sincerety the drive to just be stronger than the other students

R: Can you describe your experiences with your classmates as far as group conversations and outside class encounters?

P2: um out of class most of my cohort they don't invite me out I mean they really don't um some of the minority students may say hey lets go bowling, I think that we all went bowling on um but most of the time when when they are all getting together to go out I have not been formally invited now that can be because they know that I am a parent or it could be because they know that I am an older student now um or I know a lot of them because they know they work in the same department they are all in housing you know so maybe that's why they have a different relationship than some of us have I know I have heard I've heard some students make comments that I don't think that they realize is insulting to minorities, um I have been in groups with them when um they don't really care to hear what we are saying they don't want our input until they are asking the question like wait I can't spell this but they don't ask you know like oh do you know how to spell it because they just assume that we don't have any thing of value to say um or we may make a suggestion for a group you know assignment and they totally ignore um one particular student everytime I say something has a counter for it without even understanding what I am saying so it happens and it is like if you, I know I am a confrontational person um not in an always negative fashion but if something is a problem I am going to say something but its viewed as you know you are getting real aggressive you are getting too offended versus no it was wrong and I am going to correct it plus from what I have heard from the second year cohorts, a lot of the first year cohort have a bad reputation with drinking and cheating and I don't want to be a part of that and I know a lot of the other African American students do want to be a part of that as well because we want to maintain a reputable image that will get us somewhere after we graduate from this program.

Again, remember to protect identity of particip

R: um okay I am going to touch on a couple of the comments that you made within that um just the most recent one, you said that its viewed as something negative who is it viewed negatively by?

P2: um I think just other students like the faculty and staff have never said hey you know we have observed this in class and we feel like you know your approaching this the wrong way um

um but other cohort members get a little tense because they don't want to say anything or um even in um one of our discussions one of the faculty members pointed out ok everyone was saying stuff until * said this and it was like after that they didn't want to say anything that they thought was going to be different because no one wants to deal with confrontation or conflict

R: ok so when you are referring to others and they, who are you referring to? Are you referring to the minority students, are you referring to the white students

P2: the white students

R: What were some of the comments that were made that you considered to be insulting or that were insulting to you, and I am assuming these comments were made by the white students.

P2: um one young lady when she gave her presentation and she started talking about minority students she started saying for those students or students like them which it was second nature for her to say it and she didn't blink an eye so I don't think she understood that those students or students like them was an offensive way to address it. Um and that was a particular incident that I was talking about

R: Can you describe your experiences with your professors and or professionals in the field in regards to again, in class and out of class encounters?

P2: um actually for this particular department it has been very positive um all of them are very supportive they are willing to be any resource you need them to be if you have a question and they know 20 books they are going to give you 20 books and a possible 21 they are very very supportive very tangible

Leading question

R: How do you perceive your experiences to be different than anybody else's?

P2: as a single mother my responsibilities are greater. If one of the students doesn't do well the just figure oh I will take it again or I will just do this I do that I don't have the option to fail. My entire family is dependant upon me making decent grades and progressing from one stage to the next um if I don't do well than my financial aid is in trouble, my program is in trouble, my ga is in trouble and that is how I take of and support my household so um if I don't stay on a certain schedule, if I don't do things a certain fashion, my family suffers um where as someone else may say oh I can do this assignment this weekend. I don't have open weekends I have children with

is a really really big difference because a lot of them don't have to worry about what happens to a little person or someone else that they are responsible for its just them so its um just kind of okay I'll do it, I'll get to it I feel more pressure to not miss class where as some of them will just miss class because they are tired and even when I am tired or exhausted or whatever I am still a class, I am still communicating with my professors and a lot of time I hear them make up an excuse as to why they didn't come or to not just say anything and I feel so embarrassed saying okay I am sorry I don't feel well you know I am sorry I had to miss class because all these life things are happening and I feel maybe I take it more seriously um than a lot of the Caucasians students do because for them I think that they just expect that they are going to do well just because they are there yeah I will pass oh yeah its easy I'll do it, it will get done where as I am like fighting, I feel like I am fighting for these grades and I don't know if that is just me expecting more of myself as well or if they just feel like because I am here it will happen

Leading
question?

R: um in regards to you and your classmates do you and other African American students in your cohort have you guys ever had a conversation where you perceive your experiences to be different than the white students in regards to how professors are treating them?

P2 I don't think in how the professors are treating us I think more so the attitude of the student how they approach the coursework I know one student that has had an African American student that has had some challenges but other minority students have not had those same challenges with the professors so its like that was something personal with that particular person not all minority students um but I don't recall anyone making a statement that the professors approached them differently just the different attitudes of the students