LEADERSHIP IN A RACE BASED MENTORING PROGRAM:
A CASE STUDY OF THE PROGRAM ENTITLED "CAN WE TALK"

by

CRAIG D. BUTLER II

B.S.E., Emporia State University, 1997
M.A.S.L., Baker University, 2004

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education

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Abstract

This qualitative case study explored the role of leadership in a mentoring program designed to work with students of color. Specifically, an instrumental case study was used to explore the leadership of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. Utilizing the framework of Critical Race Theory and themes related to the current status of students of color along the with the concept of school culture, the purpose of this study was to explore the leadership of a program "Can We Talk" designed to work with students of color in a majority White high school located in the Midwest. This purpose was also driven by the rationale that districts and schools due to increased accountability measures have to incorporate different strategies to meet the academic and social needs of all students. Mentoring programs are one of the strategies gaining momentum in education, especially for students who come from marginalized socio-economic, ethnic, and racial groups. The findings indicated that the "Can We Talk" program was implemented into this school setting based on interest convergence. The principal needed the program in order to meet accountability measures such as adequate yearly progress. The founders of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program had an interest of increasing the academic and social opportunities for the students of color at this school setting. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the "Can We Talk" program was successful based on the mentors being able to share their experiences with the mentees, attract students from other gender, ethnic and racial groups, and increase the academic and social opportunities of the mentees by creating a shared voice.

The implications of this study includes questions about the ways mentoring programs for students of color are implemented and maintained in majority White school settings. Therefore, this study raises the question about the role of school administrators, founders of mentoring

programs, teachers, and the rest of the school community in terms of implementing, maintaining, and supporting programs designed to support the needs of children of color.

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Acknowledgements

The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education- Martin Luther King

I want to acknowledge the educators who every day through their actions strive to make the lives of children better. Especially, those educators who work tiredly to enhance the lives of children who come from marginalized socio-economic, ethnic, and racial groups. I would like to thank Mr. South, Dr. White, Dr. Old, Mr. Butler, and the students of Everywhere High School who participated in this study. Your willingness to open up your worlds to me is inspiring and motivates me to go out and keep making the world of education better for all students.

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Dedication

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference. –Robert Frost

Every time he tried to pull away he found me right beside him until finally the impossible happened, he was not as strong as he believed and I was not as weak, it was the moment that made everything else possible. You want to know how I did it. This is how I did it. I never saved anything for the swim back. –Vincent, from Gattaca

First, I would like to thank God, with him everything is possible, and without God looking over me, protecting me, I would not be here today. This dissertation is dedicated to four special people in my life. To my late grandfather, Walter Morris, who constantly told me when I fell, that one day I would stand back up and that I would walk again. A World War II veteran, he faced numerous obstacles, and never graduated from college, but he is one of the smartest men I ever knew. To my father, who constantly believed in me, and never let me stop believing in myself. He inspired me to see this dissertation to the end. To my mother, who despite her battles constantly fought mine. She went out of her way to provide for me and to make sure that I was safe. To my son Caden, you are my inspiration, my motivation, and my salvation. I have learned, without you, I would not have had the courage to place one foot in front of the other and continued down this journey.

To my nephew Noah and my son Caden, I want to inspire you both to work hard and to follow your dreams. Too many people quit right before they accomplish their dreams. You both have tremendous talent, do not let anyone or anything discourage you from going after and accomplishing your dreams. I hope I have made you both proud to call me your uncle and

father. Please never save anything for the swim back, and never be afraid to take the road less traveled.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Schools often serve as reproduction systems of the dominant culture's social values, or cultural hegemony—"a commonsense view of what is and why things continue to happen that serves the interests of those already privileged in a society" (Banks & Banks, 2010, p. 46). When the dominant culture's social values are the standard by which schools operate, students who come from marginalized cultures are subtly taught that their cultures are alien. What many schools fail to realize is "that for students of color in the United States, the school's 'second culture' often appears alien and dominating" (Banks & Banks, 2010, p. 47). When the espoused values of knowledge and learning are at odds with the lived experiences of racially underrepresented students, students feel isolated and rejected (Thompson, 2004; Tatum, 1997).

An instrumental case study design is the vehicle of choice for this study. This case study design is used when the researcher's interest is in understanding something other than the particular case (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995). This instrumental case study aims to explore how leadership in mentoring programs designed for ethnically- and racially-marginalized- public school students can help counter the cultural hegemonic factors that create an academic and social achievement gap between White students and students of color. Specifically, it investigates the leadership of a mentoring program for public school students of color aged 14-18 called "Can We Talk," examining issues of race in education through the lens of critical race theory as well as themes related to the current status of students of color and the concept of school culture.

Background

Social Inequities in U.S. Public Education

As social institutions, public p-12 schools are not immune to social issues of the societies and communities in which they are located. Naturally, education is impacted by social constructs such as race, ethnicity, gender, and social class. Numerous studies and research have persistently pointed to a racial achievement gap in the U.S. (Pollack, 2012; Sugai, O'Keefe, & Fallon, 2012; Banks & Banks, 2010; Sealy-Ruiz & Green, 2010; Wyatt, 2009; Ladd & Fiske, 2008; Rothstein, 2008). Many such analyses indicate that students of color have lower achievement scores (Pollack, 2012; Sugai et al., 2012), higher disciplinary rates (Canton, 2012; Pollack, 2012; Sugai et al., 2012), higher rates of referral to special education services (Pollack, 2012; Sugai et al., 2012), and higher drop-out rates than White students (Wexler & Pyle, 2012). As a result, socio-economic and racial school-readiness gaps, mainstream-centric curriculum, and inadequately qualified teachers have contributed to the academic and social marginalization of students of color in some U.S. schools.

In order for students to be successful they have to feel academically and socially connected to the school. This is especially true for students of color. The lack of curriculum materials that reflect the experiences of youth of color has continued to lead to academic and social inequities. Although the U.S. has experienced a deepening in ethnic culture, "… the U.S. school, college, and university mainstream curriculum is organized around concepts, paradigms, and events that primarily reflect the experiences of mainstream Americans" (Banks & Banks, 2010, p. 233). Banks and Banks (2010) claim that mainstream-centric curriculum marginalizes the experiences of African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans.

Furthermore, students of color are also more likely to have teachers who are not certified in their subject areas (Ladd & Fiske, 2008). According to Sheets (2004), "teachers are the single most important resource in any classroom" (p. 163). However, teachers differ in the qualifications they bring into the classroom. There is evidence that students of color are more likely to experience teachers who have fewer qualifications and less teaching experience (Banks & Banks, 2010; Ladd & Fiske, 2008).

Strategies for Addressing the Inequities

With increased accountability measures and legislation such as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) *2001*, state education departments, school districts, and individual schools have been trying to counteract the racial achievement gap. To increase the early academic opportunities for students of color, districts are encouraging parents, especially parents of color, to enroll their children in pre-school programs. When implemented with fidelity these programs have been shown to be a powerful intervention for students both academically and socially, especially for African American children (Ladd & Fiske, 2008, p. 526).

Another strategy to counteract the racial achievement gap has been to recruit, develop, and retain teachers who deliver culturally relevant material. School districts are looking at ways to strengthen the cultural pedagogy of their teachers, enabling teachers to deal directly or explicitly with issues of injustice and oppression when encountered in the curriculum or daily experiences of students of color (Banks & Banks, 2010, p. 46). Districts employ research-based professional development to increase the cultural pedagogies of their instructional staffs while also looking for practical ways of doing so, such as encouraging their administrators and teachers to have more positive interactions with families of students of color (Vera et al., 2007). Retention of highly qualified teachers in poor, non-White, low performing schools is also an

issue, and Ladd and Fiske (2008) suggest that incentives such as one-time bonuses, loan forgiveness, and house subsidies can help with this (p. 545).

Curricular change is another strategy aimed at closing the racial performance gap (Pollack, 2012; Caton, 2012; Wexler & Pyle, 2012; Banks & Banks, 2010; Eilers & Camacho, 2007; Vera et al., 2007; Salend & Duhaney, 2005; Sheets, 2004). Salend and Duhaney (2005) argue that schools should incorporate content and instructional materials that recognize the histories and experiences of students of color and thus better connect students to the curriculum. Wexler and Pyle (2012) note that some schools have tried to promote a stronger connection between students and curriculum by implementing curricula with specific career-based objectives, which comes with smaller classes and more personalized attention for students.

Decreasing the dropout rates of marginalized students is another initiative (Caton, 2012; Wexler & Pyle; 2012; Ladd & Fiske, 2008). Retention plans often focus on re-engaging students through academic support and enrichment opportunities. Another retention strategy is to provide instruction that is more relevant to post-secondary opportunities. High schools that serve high numbers of students of color are also increasing their efforts in making students aware of the requirements for graduation (Wexler & Pyle, 2012).

Some schools have implemented multi-tier systems of support (MTSS), or response to intervention (RTI), or other programs that improve students' classroom behavior and social skills. In addition, many schools have tried to connect staff and students on a more personal level to increase students' investment in their school and create a collaborative school culture. This effort may be in response to Perry's (2008) finding that teachers and students had more personal connections in predominantly White schools than those in more diverse schools.

Another strategy that is gaining prominence is mentoring, whereby schools assign adult advocates to students because students who feel more connected and have on-going relationships with adults are more likely to stay engaged in the academic process (Wexler & Pyle, 2012). Hickman and Wright (2011) state, "Today mentoring is one of the most popular strategies commissioned among intervention, diversion, and prevention specialists" (p. 25). "Can We Talk" is one example of a school-based mentoring program aimed at combatting the racial performance gap, and one Midwest high school's implementation and leadership of the program is the subject of this study.

"Can We Talk" works with students of color, their families, and schools to counter the hegemonic structures of schools. Begun in 2007, the original intent of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program as stated by Dr. Willie White, one of the program co-founders, *"... was to work with African-American males. We were trying to address the educational disparity between those kids that are of color and the majority kids"* (Auchard, 2012). However, the program has subsequently also included Native Americans, Latinos, Whites, and females. The aim is still the same—helping students of color navigate the cultural hegemonic structures of schools in order to reach parity with White students—but it now serves more students. "Can We Talk" utilizes mentors, guest speakers, and field trips to help students of color develop a positive mindset about school and their future academic and professional goals. The program leaders also spend time conducting professional development seminars with community members, administrators, teachers, and other school personnel (Can We Talk Brochure, 2008).

"Can We Talk" leaders have been recognized and honored for their work. One district honored the "Can We Talk" program leaders with its outstanding citizen award. "Can We Talk" leaders have also been recognized nationally and have presented at the national Courageous

Conversations Summit. This summit is organized by the Pacific Education Institute, whose mission is to "transform educational systems into racially conscious and socially just environments that nurture the spirit and infinite potential of all learners, especially Black, Brown, and Native American children and their families" (Singleton, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

The achievement gap between Whites and students of color has been well documented, and "Racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in academic achievement remain a stubborn fact of schooling in the United States" (Ladd & Fiske, 2008, p. 497). Although programs being implemented to address the inequities are having some success, little scholarship has addressed how leaders are influencing such programs, specifically, mentoring initiatives like "Can We Talk." Leadership has the potential to counter the present hegemonic systems and lead to the necessary procedural changes in U.S. schools, and as such, it should be studied.

In U.S. schools the principal has been viewed as the implementer and caretaker of educational and social programs. Brown states, "… school leadership is second only to teacher quality among school related factors that effect student learning (p. 702).

 Leithwood et al. (2005), as cited by Brown, affirm that "The total (direct and indirect) effects of leadership on student learning account for about a quarter of the total school effects (p. 702). Stewart (2006) confirms the findings of Brown and cites the work of Leithwood and Richi (2003) who stated, "Although leadership explains only about three to five percent of the variation in student learning across schools, this effect is actually nearly one quarter of the total effect of all school factors" (Stewart, 2006, p. 4). For students of color it can be argued that the effects of school leadership play greater roles in their academic and social success (Brown, 2006,

p. 705). Missing from the literature, however, is analysis of the role of leadership in mentoring programs designed for students of color.

Purpose and Research Questions

This dissertation explores the role of leadership in the implementation and maintenance of a mentoring program designed to work with P-12 students of color. The main question guiding this research is: What is the role of leadership in mentoring programs designed to work with students of color? Sub questions essential to answering the main question include:

(1) How are the tenets of Critical Race Theory manifested in the dimensions of the
 school implementing the mentoring program as perceived by:

 A) The principal,
 B) Leaders of "Can We Talk" (directors of the program (mentors), and
 C) The students?

(2) How did "Can We Talk" shape school culture (shared meanings of symbols, artifacts,
 and behaviors) as perceived by:
  A) The principal,
  B) Leaders of " Can We Talk (directors of the program), and
  C) The students?

Overview of the Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of critical race theory (CRT) along with the concept of school culture guide this instrumental case study. CRT is what Creswell (2007) defines as an interpretive position. Creswell suggests that interpretive positions provide a perspective or a lens on all aspects of a qualitative study (p. 24). Creswell writes, "The participants in these interpretive projects represent underrepresented or marginalized groups…" (p. 24). According to Creswell, interpretive positions allow researchers to explore or aim to understand conditions that

marginalize individuals based on hegemony, race, culture, and other inequities that set them apart from the dominant group (p. 24).

As an interpretive position, CRT is an important tool in education for how it provides a look at the dynamics of power and privilege in schooling. "CRT comes from a long tradition of resistance to the unequal and unjust distribution of power and resources along political, economic, racial, and gendered lines in America …" (Taylor et al., 2009, p.1). CRT also allows for analysis of the curricula offered to underrepresented students. "Critical race theory sees the official school curriculum as a culturally specific artifact designed to maintain a White supremacist script" (Taylor et al., 2009, p. 29), and the majority of teachers in the U.S. are White (Ladd & Fiske, 2008). Taylor et al. (2009) write that we are "hobbled by the paradox of a largely White teaching staff whose practices, consciously or not, contribute to the racial achievement gap yet are unable to see what they are doing" (p. 9). Furthermore, it is suggested by Taylor et al. that by utilizing CRT these issues can be pointed out and co-racial approaches to addressing these issues can be implemented (p. 9). While much of the literature addresses the curriculum and the teachers, this case study focuses on leadership with respect to CRT.

CRT has four primary tenets. The first tenet states that racism is normal. Taylor et al. write, "The assumptions of White superiority are so ingrained in political, legal, and educational structures that they are almost unrecognizable" (p. 4). This fact has led to discrimination in housing, criminal sentencing, lending, hiring, and education (p. 5). The second tenet of CRT is interest convergence. Interest convergence was first coined by Derrick Bell and states that the interests of Blacks in gaining racial equality have been accommodated only when they have converged with the interest of powerful Whites. The third and fourth tenets of CRT are found in the work of Delgado, Stefanic, and Harris (2006). The third tenet states that races are social

constructs "… that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient" (p. 3). The fourth tenet suggests that underrepresented groups can share or voice their experiences with oppression to Whites (p. 4).

The second framework guiding this study is the concept of school culture. Public schools in the U.S. are becoming more and more culturally diverse. The culture of schools can help to support or hinder the healthy academic and social development of students of color. Sugai et al. (2012) state in their research that by 2050 students who have historically been considered minorities such as African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans will actually comprise more than 50 percent of the population (p. 197). With the increasing numbers of students of color entering U.S. schools, and increased accountability measures, leaders of schools are focusing more on school cultures' role in the academic and social success of all students.

Brief Description of the Methodology

An instrumental case study design is the vehicle for the exploration of the leadership in the P-12 public school "Can We Talk" mentoring program as it allows for an in-depth understanding of the issues within this case. As Stake (1995) states, "… we start and end with issues dominant" (p. 16). A case study design fits this research because, "A case study is a good approach when the inquirer has clearly identifiable cases with boundaries and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding…" (Creswell, 2007, p. 74). Also befitting of a case study design is this research's focus on one issue or concern. Additionally, an instrumental case study design allows for a general understanding of how leadership intersects with race and culture in a mentoring program designed for students of color. Lastly, an instrumental case study design foregoes attention to the complexity of the case to concentrate on relationships identified in the research questions (Stake, 1995, p. 74). An exploration of "Can We Talk" leadership can possibly lead to

a better understanding of mentoring programs for not only students of color, but for all students in general.   Several different schools in the Midwest have implemented "Can We Talk," but one high school in particular has been selected for this study. One selection factor is its close proximity and thus accessibility to the researcher. Second, the high school is one of the original sites of "Can We Talk," and its version tries to prescribe to the original intent of the program by focusing on students of color.

Participants in this study include:

1. The formal leader of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program, the school principal, as he is in charge of implementing and maintaining the academic and social programs of the school;

2. The Leaders of "Can We Talk," which includes the co-founders (who work closely with the school administration, develop curriculum, provide professional development to the staff, and work with the mentees enrolled in the program and their families);

3. Students who are involved in the mentoring initiative; and

4. Students not involved in the mentoring program.

Several different forms of data were gathered during this study.   Interviews with participants comprised one form of data. A second form was observations of "Can We Talk" student meetings as well as meetings of the formal leadership, as observations allow for unique complexities of the case to reveal themselves (Stake, 1995, p.64) so that immersion in the school by the researcher took place over a semester with additional visits and contacts with key participants as the case study analysis and report unfolded. The study also included information from documents and artifacts such as newspaper articles, monthly reports, and minutes of meetings, brochures, correspondence, and on-line material. Documents were vital sources of

information because they "serve as substitutes for records of activity that the researcher could not observe directly" (Stake, 1995, p. 68).

This study's analysis followed the recommendations of Stake (1995) and Creswell (2007), who suggested utilizing three processes of data analysis when performing a qualitative case study. Accordingly, this study incorporated all the cells of case study analysis as suggested by Creswell (2013). This included reading through the text, making margin notes, forming initial codes, and describing the case in its context. Creswell further suggested categorical aggregation be used to establish themes or patterns. Direct interpretation is utilized to develop generalizations of what was learned. Finally, this study presented an in-depth picture of the case using narrative, tables, and figures (p. 190-191).

Limitations

This study contained several limitations. First, because it is hard to draw conclusions from one phenomenon to another when conducting a qualitative case study, this instrumental case study sought to understand only one specific mentoring program in one school. This setting might or might not be typical of other academic settings that employ mentoring programs designed to work with students of color. However, qualitative research does allow researchers to empower participants to share their stories, and it allows researchers to understand settings and contexts in which participants in a study address an issue or a problem (Creswell, 2007, p. 40).

An additional limitation was the study's reliance on self-disclosure in the interview process. The interviewees might not have divulged all information on the program due to both personal and professional relationships. Furthermore, participants who could provide more accurate and detailed information may have been altogether missing from the interview process. Finally, the researcher's personal relationships with participants could have been a limiting

factor, although the researcher established credibility with the school community in which the study took place by having been a former student, athlete, teacher, and coach in the district. The researcher's family members had also served in key positions for the school district as advisory board members, district liaisons, teacher recruiters, and substitute teachers. Finally and presently, the researcher had friends who are administrators, counselors, teachers, and parents of children enrolled in the district.

Documents provided by members of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program or retrieved by the researcher could also have been limiting factors for interpretation. These documents might not have reflected the full range of details related to the program and its implementation. Other limiting factors might have included how the theoretical concepts of CRT and transformational leadership, as well as the concept of school culture were being utilized to guide this study. Many other frameworks could have been used to further the understanding of leadership in mentoring programs.

Conclusion

School districts' initiatives to decrease the achievement gap between White students and students of color have focused on a variety of factors, and one that is growing in prominence is mentoring programs. However, there is paucity in the research on leadership in mentoring programs, specifically in leadership of mentoring programs designed to work with students of color. This investigation examined the leadership of one specific high school's "Can We Talk" mentoring initiative designed to work with youth of color.

The subsequent chapters are as follows: Chapter 2 reviewed the related literature on the status of students of color, conceptual and theoretical literature (school culture, key leadership theories, CRT), strategies for addressing inequities in achievement for students of color (with

attention to mentoring programs for students of color and the identified program in the study),

and research most closely related to the study. Chapter 3 discussed the methodology used to

investigate the leadership of a "Can We Talk" mentoring program at one Midwest high school.

Chapter 4 provided a detailed explanation of the results, and Chapter 5 summarized and

interpreted the study's results.

Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

Introduction

The literature for this study was organized into four major sections: current status of students of color, the concept of school culture, mentoring, and critical race theory. The first section examined the current status of students of color and the reasons for the achievement gap between students of color and White students. The second section focused on the concept of school culture, including hegemonic culture, and its role in the education of students, specifically students of color. The third section discussed mentoring and its role in combating hegemonic school culture and reducing the achievement gap between White students and students of color. The fourth section discussed the theoretical paradigm of critical race theory and the potential impact this paradigm could have on the education of students of color.

Current Status of Students of Color: An Achievement Gap

The U.S.'s education of children of color has had a difficult history. Despite the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling fifty-plus years ago that "segregated schools are 'inherently unequal' and therefore unconstitutional," students of color still receive unfair and unequal education compared to that of their White counterparts (Milner, 2013; Toldson & Lewis, 2012; Butler et al., 2012; Banks & Banks, 2010; Ladd & Fiske, 2008; Barajas & Ronnkvist, 2007).

Formal attempts at parity between students of color and White students in the U.S. educational system have been numerous. In today's educational climate, the emphasis is on accountability, which "includes a hard look at disaggregated data that highlights a 'gap' between the success of students of color and their mainstream peers" (Barajas & Ronnkvist, 2007, p. 1518). Despite concerted efforts to increase the academic success of students of color, still these students achieve at levels below their White classmates. One of the best measures of academic

achievement and how achievement gaps have changed over time is the National Assessment of

Educational Progress (NAEP) (Rothstein, 2008; Ladd & Fiske, 2008). There are two types of

NAEP assessment: the NAEP long-term trend (NAEP-LTT) and the main NAEP. Because the

long-term trend tests "have remained essentially unchanged since their first administration in the

early 1970s, they provide a consistent instrument to evaluate achievement trends" (Ladd &

Fiske, 2008, p. 499). The main-NAEP and its content are updated approximately every two

years in order to reflect the material students are currently learning (Ladd & Fiske, 2008, p. 499).

According to the information published by Ladd and Fiske (2008), the achievement gaps in math

and reading narrowed between White students and students of color in the 1970s through the

1980s (p. 500-501). The gap widened in the 1990s, but according to the main NAEP data

published in the 2000s, the gap has once again narrowed. Data obtained from the National

Center for Education Statistics in 2009 and 2011 and published by *Education Week* (2011)

showed that students of color on average trailed their White peers by approximately twenty test-

score points on the NAEP in reading and math. However, *Education Week* (2011) also published

information from the U.S. Department of Education that showed that all students who graduated

in 2009 increased their number of course credits completed. African American students went

from 23.5 credits in 1990 to 27.4 in 2009; Latino students went from 24 to 26.5; White students

went from 23.7 to 27.3; and Asian American students went from 24.2 to 27 credits (*Education

Week*, 2011). Disturbingly, the National Center for Education Statistics also found that only 10

percent of students of color participated in rigorous courses (*Education Week*, 2011).

Furthermore, during this time period only 57.6% Latino, 57% African American, and 53.9%

American Indian students graduated on schedule (*Education Week*, 2011). During the same time

period the graduation rate for Asian students and White students was 82.7 and 78.4%, respectively (*Education Week*, 2011).

A troubling statistic that students of color lead in is the rate of discipline referrals. Numerous findings support that children of color and children who come from lower socio-economic levels are subjectively punished more than White students (Milner, 2013; Butler et al. 2012). African American students—who comprise only 17% of the U.S. public school enrollment—constituted roughly 32% of all suspensions from school (Butler et al., 2012, p. 12). Butler et al. (2012) have termed this disproportionate representation of school discipline referrals among students of color the "discipline gap" (p.11). Schools' zero tolerance policies have tended to affect males of color more than any other group of students (Butler et al., 2012, p.12). Milner (2013) suggests that zero tolerance policies have tended to be racist in nature because they are constructed on White norms, which tend to exclude the interactional and behavioral styles and practices of non-White people (p. 485).

The high rates of discipline referrals for students of color can have severe ramifications. These have included increased drop-out rates, increased referrals to special education, increased student absenteeism, and decreased student learning, which leads accordingly to lower test scores (Milner, 2012, p. 486). The next section presents the factors that affect the achievement gap between students of color and White students.

Achievement Gap Factors

School Attendance

One factor contributing to the achievement gap between students of color and White students has been the school they attended. African American and Latino students have been more likely to attend large urban schools with high student-to-teacher ratios (Mayer & Tucker, 2010, p. 475). Mayer and Tucker (2010) found through their research that "Schools in more affluent neighborhoods provide more rigorous college preparatory and honors courses than do schools that serve large populations of underrepresented students (p. 477). Toldson and Lewis (2012) found that out of 8,550,344 African American children enrolled in kindergarten through the 12th grade in the U.S., approximately 95.5% attended public schools, while the other 4.5% attended private schools (p. 2). Many public school students have been assigned to schools based on their home address, with the result that "some schools end up with large proportions of disadvantaged and low-performing students" (Ladd & Fiske, 2008, p. 537; Siegal-Hawley, 2013, p. 2). Students who come from high-economic areas that contain good schools, housing, favorable environmental conditions, and access to quality health care have been more likely to have better life chances "… than children locked into segregated, low-opportunity areas (Siegal-Hawley, 2013, p. 2). In support of this claim, Siegal-Hawley (2013) cites U.S. Supreme Court case Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburgh (1971), which recognized the critical link between school and housing segregation (p. 3). The case revealed that school policy in some ways is a housing policy. There have been tremendous resource disparities between lower socioeconomic and more affluent school districts, and according to Siegal-Hawley (2013), "Research specifically delineates the role boundaries play in exacerbating school segregation and limiting educational opportunities" (p. 5). Additionally, Siegal-Hawley (2013) proposed that race and

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racism have played a major role in families of color having access to predominantly White neighborhoods and schools, and thus better educational opportunities for their children. It was found that houses near high performing schools were priced nearly two times higher than those near low-scoring public schools (Siegal-Hawley, 2013, p. 8).

Schools that serve high numbers of students of color and students from lower socioeconomic areas have tended to offer fewer curricular opportunities (Toldson & Lewis, 2012). Toldson and Lewis (2012) posited that some students of color were being systematically excluded from competitive universities "because the curricula of their assigned public school are not compatible with public institutions of higher education" (p. 1). It was found that among schools serving the lowest numbers of African American and Latino students, "… 82% offered Algebra II, 66% offer physics and 55% offer Calculus" (Toldson & Lewis, 2012, p. 3). Meanwhile, among schools that served the highest percentage of African American and Latino students, "… 65% offered Algebra II, 40% offered Physics, and only 29% offer Calculus" (Toldson & Lewis, 2012, p. 3). Furthermore, it was found that some schools that serve high numbers of students of color did not required enough credits to gain enrollment into competitive universities. For example, some schools require students to take only Algebra I and Geometry, while the university in their home state might have required another math course after Geometry for admission. Even when students of color did gain access to rigorous advanced placement and honors courses, their achievement scores still tended to trail those of their dominant cultural counterparts (Mayer &Tucker, 2010). Students of color in these courses tended to feel marginalized because they may have been numerically out-numbered, ignored by White students, and subjected to teachers' lower expectations of them. The next section discusses how some students of color have tried to negotiate race.

Negotiating Race

Another factor contributing to the racial achievement gap has been the race negotiation students of color face. Barajas and Ronnkvist (2007) explored the reality that some students of color are "… aware on some level that they were negotiating race as a part of the educational experience…" (p.1519), an awareness that was at odds with color-blind ideologies adopted by their educational institutions. According to Barajas and Ronnkvist (2007), "Color-blind ideology asserts that when students enter the school doors, color (i.e., race) should not be an issue. All students, therefore, should be treated equally with the same opportunities regardless of race" (p. 1519). Nonetheless, it was found that students of color still referred to these institutions as 'White or as White space' (Barajas & Ronnkvist, 2007, p. 1519). "Whiteness" experienced by students of color has been described as a link to resources, power, and the perseverance of institutional racism in our schools (p. 1519). A color-blind ideology's de-emphasis on difference can make students of color feel that they have "to disappear in order for the institution to appear race-neutral" (p. 1522), which can result in students of color feeling isolated, alienated, and like they have to give up parts of their identities in order to succeed (Andrews, 2012, p. 4). Andrews (2012) pointed to lack of culturally diverse curriculum, tracking, negative stereotypical beliefs held by White peers, discriminatory policies, and negative attitudes and beliefs of teachers as additional problems for students of color (p. 5). Institutional polices that favor the dominant cultural group over marginalized groups have been seen to lead to various forms of microaggression. Microaggressions "are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults towards people of color" (Sue et al., 2007). Microaggressions experienced by students of color have taken various forms. These forms have

included experienced hypervisibility when being stared at by White peers during the presentation of racially insensitive material, the failure of White students to acknowledge students of color in group settings, and the lower expectations of White teachers (Andrews, 2012; Ladd & Fiske, 2008; Barajas & Ronnkvist, 2007).

Teachers

A third factor contributing to the racial achievement gap has been teachers. The majority of teachers in the U.S. have long been White, female, and middle class (Milner, 2013; Andrews, 2012; Banks & Banks, 2010; Ladd & Fiske, 2008). These teachers' teaching styles and classroom management styles have been guided by White middle class norms (Milner, 2013; Andrews, 2012; Banks & Banks, 2010; Ladd & Fiske, 2008). The classroom style utilized by these teachers has often been at conflict with the learning, social, and behavioral norms of youth of color. Unfortunately, the schools that serve the highest percentage of marginalized youth also have the highest percentage of the least qualified teachers (Ladd & Fiske, 2008, p. 535). These schools also have tended to have more teachers teaching subjects in which they are not highly qualified. Researchers such as Ladd and Fiske (2008) have asserted that given teachers' impact on the achievement of students, "improving the quality of teachers in schools with low performing students may well be the single best opportunity to reduce racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps" (p. 535). The achievement gap between students of color and White students has been further exacerbated by the fact that teachers are sorted by ways that disadvantage low-performing and youth of color (Ladd & Fiske, 2008). Teachers have tended to try to find employment in school districts that are similar to the ones in which they were educated. Furthermore, the majority of teachers have taken jobs in locations close to where they attended high school (Ladd & Fiske, 2008, p. 537). "Since the supply of teachers who attended urban

high schools is insufficient to fill urban teaching vacancies…" (Ladd & Fiske, 2008, p. 537), urban schools have needed to hire teachers that were educated in suburban and rural areas. Also, teachers who are highly qualified have tended to choose schools that are high achieving, have more White students, and have better working conditions. School districts in more affluent areas have been able to attract highly qualified teachers, as they have been able to compensate teachers at higher salary levels than districts that serve higher percentages of underrepresented students (Ladd & Fiske, 2008).

Research has estimated that novice teachers produce on average student achievement gains that range from 0.03 to 0.20 standard deviations lower than teachers with ten to fifteen years of experience (Ladd & Fiske, 2008, p. 541). It was further discovered that differences in the quality of the teacher in the classroom can actually provide up to a 50% improvement in the measures of student achievement (Ladd & Fiske, 2008, p. 540). For ethnically diverse students with average achievement scores it was found that they could successfully complete rigorous course work when supported by their teachers (Mayer & Tucker, 2010, p. 477). In spite of this fact, based on teacher recommendations, high numbers of children of color are more frequently tracked into lower-level academic classes than are their White classmates with similar achievement scores (Mayer & Tucker, 2010, p. 477). This may have led to a lower achievement scores for students of color and further suggests that the difference in high school achievement is likely the result of student of color test takers attending poorer quality schools (Dixon-Romain, Everson, & McArdie, 2013, p. 24).

Socio-economics

      Socio-economic factors have also contributed to the racial achievement gap. Students of color are more likely to come from poor families than their White counterparts. Dixson-Romain et al. (2013) reported that 18% of children in the U.S. live below the federal poverty line (p. 6). They further reported that 34% of African American children live below the poverty line as compared to only 10% of White children. Children who live in poverty and whose parents lack formal education are more likely to have poorer academic performance than students coming from higher socio-economic levels (Dixson-Romain et al., 2013, p. 7). Also supporting this notion is data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K), which found that "… the average cognitive scores of children from high socioeconomic backgrounds are approximately three-fifths of a standard deviation higher than those of children from lower socioeconomic background (cited in Ladd & Fiske, 2008, p. 517).

Unfair Rates of Punishment

      Children of color have also been more likely to experience discipline procedures in their academic institutions as compared to their White counterparts, and this has been seen as yet another element of the racial achievement gap. Even when White students and students of color are disciplined for similar infractions, the ethnically marginalized children have been more likely to receive harsher punishments (Sealy-Ruiz & Green, 2010; Gordon et al., 2009; Wyatt, 2009). These punishments have included being removed from the classroom and/or excluded from school. The cycle of unfair punishments has been seen to lead to lower achievement scores by youth of color (Milner, 2013; Banks & Banks, 2010; Wyatt, 2009). High discipline rates have led to students of color being placed in lower academic tracks, while increasing the probability that these same students will be referred to special education services. High discipline rates have

been associated with high dropout rates, lack of academic achievement, and classroom and school disengagement. This all has led to lower school completion rates for students who come from marginalized ethnic and racial groups (Milner, 2013; Butler et. al., 2012; Sealy-Ruiz & Greene, 2010; Gordon et al., 2009; Wyatt, 2009).

The academic achievement gap between students of color and White students has far-reaching implications. Ladd and Fiske (2008) proposed that "… achievement disparities are important primarily because test score disparities in elementary and secondary schools are highly predictive of corresponding disparities in subsequent labor market outcomes" (p. 511) such as evidence that the median salary for full time African American and Latino males is 28% and 40% lower than the average median income for full time White male workers. In addition, the salary for African American and Latino females who work full time has been established to be 15% and 32% lower as compared to full time White female workers (Ladd & Fiske, 2008, p. 511).

If students of color are going to reach academic-performance parity with their White peers, then school leaders are going to have to implement changes that affect the overall culture of the schools attended by these students. The next section examines the concept of school culture.

Concept of School Culture

Definitions

The concept of school culture can be traced back to Waller (1932), who wrote about the sociology of schools and teaching (Meier, 2011; Maslowski, 2006). Waller, as cited in Meier (2011) and Maslowski (2006), was one of the first to suggest that schools were institutionalized miniature societies that had cultures that were definitely their own. After Waller, the study of

school culture lay dormant for several years but then regained attention in the 1970s as new researchers looked at barriers to educational change and for better ways to understand the change process (Maslowski, 2006, p. 6). In the 1980s, culture became a major theme in organizational science, and the impact that culture had on schools finally started to gain more prominence (Maslowski, 2006, p. 6-7). This led to numerous studies on the impact culture had on schools. Even with an abundance of studies on the concept of culture, there has not been an agreed upon definition of what school culture actually is. As a matter of fact, Meier (2011) writes in his paper that "An extensive body of literature has been developed in the area defined as school culture and equally widespread are the definitions utilized in the field in an effort to describe it" (p. 805-806). Waller (2011) writes that over 150 definitions have been used to describe school culture. Bell and Kent (2010) posit, "The concept of culture as applied to schools is difficult to define and even harder to operationalize in research terms (p. 6). It is further suggested by Bell and Kent (2010) that "… limited progress has been made in establishing a broader model of cultural analysis that can be readily operationalized within educational settings" (p. 9).

Schein (1985), as cited by Waller (2011), suggested culture is "… the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken-for-granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment" (p. 806). Deal and Peterson (1999), as cited by Waller (2011), described school culture as "… an underground river of feelings, folkways, norms, and values that influence how people go about their daily work" (p. 806). Finally, Bower (1966), as cited by Waller (2011), simply stated that culture is "… the way we do things around here" (p. 806). In their article, Fallon, O'keeffe, and Sugai (2012) implied that culture is a set of rules that govern the verbal and non-verbal behavior of a group of individuals, serving to differentiate

these individuals from others, and are occasioned (or not) by actions and objects that help define

a given setting or context (p. 210). Mayer et al. (2013) cited the work of other researchers and

posited that "Culture comprises the values, norms, and other taken-for-granted assumptions

involved in shaping school-based events, processes, and experiences" (p. 700). Hallinger and

Leithwood cited the work of Kluchom and Kroeberb (1952) and characterized culture as patterns

of behaviors which over time are shared by symbols that communicate how others should act as

well as serve as a blueprint for future actions" (p.129). Strahan (2003) cited the work of Wolcott

(1999), who defined "… culture as how people conduct their lives and the beliefs related to their

behavior" (p.129). Strahan (2003) further utilized the work of Peterson and Deal (2002) to

identify three key elements in the study of school culture. First, the researcher should identify

the values, which are the standards for what is and what is not good. Second, the researcher

should identify the beliefs and assumptions, which are the systems that help guide behaviors.

Third, the researcher should identify the norms, which are the unstated rules that students and

staff are supposed to follow (p. 129). Briscoe (1991) further utilized the work of several

researchers and construes a different concept of culture. Briscoe (1991) wrote, "Culture is the

internal set of operating standards and values that shape behavior and determine how people

operate, communicate, and interpret the actions of others" (n.p.).

Based on the work of Martin and Frost (1995), Bell and Kent (2010) posited at least three

different classifications of school culture. First is the integrationist classification, which implies

that actions of the organization can be predicted and are controlled by administrators (p. 9).

Second, the differentiationist classification of school culture suggests that culture is formed

through the formation of subcultures, and this is based on some student cultures rejecting the

formal culture that puts pressure on students to acquiesce to the dominant culture of the school

(p. 9). The third and final classification of school culture is termed fragmented. This classification suggests that school culture consists of shared beliefs and values, heroes and heroines, ritual, ceremony, stories, and an informal network of cultural players. Furthermore, this classification of school culture posits that in order to understand school culture these different fragments along with folklore and oral history need to be studied in order to understand the entire organizational culture of the school (p. 10).

Diagnostic Tools

In order to measure the concept of culture in schools, several researchers have devised diagnostic tools. One tool was developed by Deal and Kennedy (1988), whose work is summarized in the research conducted by Bell and Kent (2010). According to Bell and Kent (2010) Deal and Kennedy's tool (1988) was based on organizational culture. Schools are viewed as organizations and the model called for specific elements to be measured, including shared values and beliefs, heroes and heroines, rituals, ceremonies, stories, and informal networks of cultural players (p. 11). The drawback of this model was that it "… assumes that culture emerges and is maintained only as a result of forces operating within the institution" (p. 11). The model did not take into account how outside influences impact the internal culture of the school. Additionally, the model did not take into account the sub-cultures that develop and exist within educational institutions. However, Deal and Kennedy (1988), as cited in Bell and Kent (2010), pointed to the fact that beliefs and values are fundamental to the culture of an organization (p. 13). Thus, it was suggested that, "… the organizational culture of the school confers heroic status on those who personify the culture's values by being the genuinely rounded person who achieves success in both academic and sporting fields" (p. 19). Moreover, it was suggested that the organization's culture is sustained by stories that transmit the values and shared beliefs that

the culture sees as being important" (p. 19). Bell and Kent (2010) suggested through the work of

Deal and Kennedy (1988) that "culture can be understood by examining the identity of those

who exert a particular influence upon it" (p. 21).

One of the most thorough examinations of school culture diagnostic tools was conducted

by Maslowski (2006). He found that much of the research on school culture was concerned with

the identification of particular school traits, was done by qualitative researchers who utilized

empirical means, and was conducted on a small sample of schools. However, according to

Maslowski (2006), researchers interested in school culture were starting to utilize larger surveys

(p. 7).

Maslowski (2006) identified six diagnostic tools that he felt adequately measured school

culture. The first tool was developed by Saphier and King (1985). The underlying assumption

of this tool was that school culture consists of shared beliefs about how the school should

operate, behavioral norms reflecting teacher perceptions of the school environment, and core

values reflecting what the school wants for its students (p. 14). The second tool was the School

Work Culture Profile developed by Snyder (1988). This tool conceived of the school as a

system. Specifically, "This system's approach implies that all team members are seen as

interrelated, each one knowing about and depending upon the work of others" (p.15). The third

tool was the Professional Culture Questionnaire for Primary Schools developed by Staessens

(1990, 1991b). This model saw culture "… as a pattern of basic assumptions invented,

discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external

adaptations an internal integration…" (p.17). The basic premise of this model was that the

principal is the carrier and builder of culture (p.19). The fourth tool was the School Values

Inventory Form III and Form IV (SVI) developed by Pang (1995). Pang (1995) saw values as

the core of an organization's culture, and those values are "… the forces and processes through which organizational participants are socialized into organizations" (p. 22). The last tool identified by Maslowski (2006) was the School Culture Elements Questionnaire developed by Cavanagh and Dellar (1996a). Cavanagh and Dellar (1996a) viewed schools as learning communities. They posited that "The culture of a learning community is manifested by the sharing of values and norms amongst teachers resulting in commonality of purpose and actions intended to improve the learning of students" (p. 25). This model was based on the view that school culture is related to school improvement (p. 25). Each of these tools for measuring school culture had its benefits as well as its drawbacks.

Many scholars have criticized the use of survey techniques in school culture research, arguing "… that questionnaires are not suited for identifying the more deeply hidden underlying aspects of culture" (Maslowski, 2006, p. 27). For example, they have suggested, even when the behavior patterns of schools change, some teachers will keep expressing the same values (Maslowski, 2006, p.27). Additionally, many of the critics mentioned in the work of Maslowski (2006) have stated that questionnaires actually measure school climate and not culture, and thus questionnaires are best suited to measure one specific aspect of the cultural elements of a school (p. 29-30).

External Influences

It is important to analyze how the external community impacts the internal community or culture of the school. Hallinger and Leithwood (n.d.) cited the work of several researchers and postulated, "The broader societal culture exerts an influence on administrators beyond the influence exerted by a specific organization's culture (p.128-129). Bell and Kent (2010) have also suggested "… that although the leadership and management of schools are important in

shaping their overall culture, schools do not exist in isolation" (p. 11). Additionally, they suggested that a school's academic culture is influenced by developments that occur outside the school (p. 26). In other words, the community, which includes the socio-economic status of the area in which the school is located, the expectations and wealth of parents, the geographic features (suburban, urban, and rural), and the level of support the community offers all play a critical role in the internal culture of a school. Surprisingly, it was suggested by Hallinger and Leithwood (n.d) that researchers have spent little time analyzing the impact of external culture foundations of educational leadership (p. 129).

The Role of Leadership

In investigating the literature on school culture and educational leadership it was discovered that many researchers acknowledged that leadership played a vital role in the culture of a school. However, the extent of that role is debated. Hallinger and Leithwood (n.d) in their research implied that cultural norms were more likely to change leaders than to be changed by them (p. 130). They also found that culture played a role in how leaders and followers viewed the concept of leadership. The role a principal played is linked to the community and thus the norms of the community have had a direct effect on the role of the principal. Caution should be applied to the notion that the "… principal's leadership acts as an independent variable that influences the school's culture, … the school's culture likely will influence the principal's leadership as well" (Hallinger & Leithwood, n.d., p. 141).

Eilers and Camacho (2007) found that principals influenced the school culture by the leadership traits they displayed. In studying one particular school in which the principal was able to foster a positive change in the culture, Eilers and Camacho (2007) found that the principal was able to foster change by creating learning communities among the staff, utilizing

best practices based on research, and demonstrating collaborative leadership. This principal received tremendous support from the district office. For example, the district provided the principal with an expert on curriculum and testing, which allowed the principal to align his curriculum with the proper assessments. Furthermore, the principal changed the schedule to meet the needs of the students. More importantly, the principal created an atmosphere of openness for improvement among the teachers (p. 620). The change in school culture "was linked to changes in teacher professionalism, school collaboration, and use of evidence linked to classroom work" (Eilers & Camacho, 2007, p. 632).

Reezigt and Creemers (2005), as cited in Bell and Kent (2010), argued that improvement in culture is multifaceted, and that leadership is only one influence. Factors such as autonomy, staff stability, shared vision, and the willingness to become a learning organization all played a role in improving the school culture (p. 10). In their study on school culture, Mayer et al. (2013) noted that administrators who "… made efforts to create structures that would support teacher decision making worked to shift struggling school cultures in a positive direction" (p.717). The results of the study further confirmed that teacher agency improved in schools where district- and principal-created structures led to the creation of more positive school cultures (p. 725). Studies have also demonstrated that principals played a key role in helping to shape the attitudes of teachers in terms of expectations for student learning, thus creating a school culture of high expectations for teaching and learning.

The Role of Teachers

The way teachers respond to school culture will likely be influenced by the community in which they teach and live (Bell & Kent, 2010, p. 12). The culture of a school is often taken for granted, but according to the research conducted by Meier (2011), "… a school's culture is the

most powerful predictor of a teacher's work within that school" (p. 806). Meier (2011) suggested that the culture of a school will determine what teachers deem to be important, the structure of their classrooms, the success of their individual goals, their work ethic, and how they identify with the school (p. 806).

When it comes to improving the culture of schools teachers play a vital role. However, the culture of a school does not come into being or improve overnight through the will power of a few teachers (Jackson, 2003, p. 583-584). Change occurs through the sustained efforts of teachers who recognize the worth of teaching all students. Jones (2005) encouraged teachers to use the cultural identities of their students to create class environments that recognized the cultural contributions of all students (p. 150). Jones (2005) suggested that teachers use the 12 attributes of culture identified by Cushner, McCielland, and Safford (2000) to better facilitate instruction. The 12 attributes are ethnicity/nationality, social class, sex/gender, health, age, geographic region, sexuality, religion, social status, language, ability/disability, and race (p. 150). Approaches that give all students a chance to experience academic success and allow them to develop "… a critical consciousness through which they may challenge social injustice" (Jones, 2005, p. 151) are also known as culturally relevant pedagogy or culturally relevant teaching.

The Role of Students

In order to truly evaluate and measure the impact of school culture on the academic and social programs of a school, the perspectives and roles of students are necessary components. Bell and Kent (2010), based on their evaluation of the work of Willis (n.d.), asserted that "student involvement and the ways in which students experience and transmit school culture is an important force in shaping the culture of any school" (p.10). Fallon et al.

(2012) reminded researchers that the impact students have on culture can and will change over time. These researchers suggested that student groups are flexible and dynamic and can change from one setting to the next (p. 210).

Impact

Whatever the definition utilized to define the concept of culture, whatever the tool utilized to measure it, and however one accounts for the roles of leadership, teachers, and students, most researchers agreed that the culture of a school has a tremendous impact on the daily lives of administrators, teachers, and students. Although education looks similar across U.S. schools, every school has its own feeling, environment, and culture. The environment of a school is "guided by norms, values, beliefs, rituals, symbols, ceremony and collective stories that all contribute to the persona or culture of the school" (Meier, 2011, p. 806).

Meier (2011) suggested that these beliefs, symbols, and collective stories develop into written and unwritten expectations that over time influence the vision and behavior of the stakeholders of the school (p. 806). Schein (1996), as cited by Hallinger and Leithwood (n.d.), found that culture "… was one of the most powerful and stable forces operating in organization" (p. 130). Hallinger and Leithwood (n.d.) found through their research that culture shapes the institution and community in which the school is situated and thus helps to define the dominant values within the school. Hallinger and Leithwood (n.d.) found that the culture of a school also shapes the attitude and behaviors of students and staff toward learning and instruction (p. 140). Briscoe (1991) wrote that from "… an educational perspective, culture can influence the way in which a class is formatted, the way in which a needs assessment is conducted, and the judgments made about those who are economically, socially, and physically different from us" (n.p.). The culture of a school played a role in how administrators conducted their daily business and in how

teachers facilitated instruction. School culture determined what teachers deem to be important and more importantly whom they deem to be important. School culture was one of the most important factors in determining the daily activities that occurred in a school.

One group of students school culture has had a major impact on is students of color. Youth of color are very sensitive to the cultural relationships that are formed in schools. Due to the hegemonic structures of schools, students of color have historically not done as well as their White peers.

Hegemonic School Structure

In their study of culture and school leadership Hallinger and Leithwood (n.d.) found the "… hegemonic influence of Western knowledge, … has overshadowed the intellectual traditions of other cultures…" (p. 132). This hegemonic system has continued to marginalize students who represent underrepresented cultural, racial, and ethnic groups. The U.S. Department of Education estimated that in 2008 43% of all students in public elementary and secondary schools came from marginalized ethnic and racial groups. Specifically, "17% were African American, 21% Hispanic, 5% Asian American or Pacific Islander, and 1% American Indian. Nearly 3% of students identified with more than one race" (Fallon et al., 2012, p. 210). With the growing number of diverse students entering the classroom, the cultural history of students will play a greater role in determining their academic and social success. Unfortunately, too many schools have incorporated the concept of color-blindness into their school cultures. Color-blindness shifts the focus "of social inequality away from race to culture and by using the rhetoric of post-civil rights leaders in a "hegemonic way" in service of the dominant culture" (p. 600). In allowing the hegemonic culture to dominate the culture of schools, the "… ways of knowing, speaking, and acting will always be defined by those who control discourse, and those who

delineated the field of normality" (p. 602). Wenger et al. (2004), as cited by Garza and Crawford (2005), posited that the hegemonic system forces underrepresented students to adopt certain status relationships and conform to the symbolic and overt practices that are entrenched in the school culture (p. 602).

Hegemony has also created institutional racism. Davis (2007) cited the work of Scheurich and Young (2002) when he defined institutional racism as the "operation procedures, rules, habits, culture, and symbols of a given organization or institution that negatively affect the marginalized in relation to that of the dominant group" (p. 219). Sealy-Ruiz and Greene (2010) cited the work of Delpit (2006) who suggested that schools are places where children come to find their places at the table of power. "Too often, that seating is limited or non-existent for Black and brown youth" (p. 345).

Vang (2006) suggested that by being aware of the hegemonic nature of schools, teachers and parents can challenge the hidden curriculum, which when it comes to students of color, "prejudges them and categorizes them as not as competent as their peers from the dominant culture" (p. 22). Vang (2006) further suggested that the hidden curriculum forces some youth to give up their cultural identity in order to fit in with the dominant culture. This can be countered by schools and teachers incorporating culturally relevant pedagogy that focuses on the strengths of different cultural groups. As noted by Antrop-Gonzalez (2006), school cultures that are based on culturally relevant pedagogy can lead to higher self-esteem among youth of color, which then can lead to higher academic achievement among these students as well (p. 274). This creates greater school connectedness for youth of color. Daly et al. (2010) found through that greater school connectedness led to more positive and social interactions among peers, teachers, and school staff. They also found that students who felt connected to the school culture had more

positive and physical and mental outcomes, displayed less substance abuse, and had a lower risk

of violent or deviant behavior (p. 18). In addition, students were less likely to drop out of school,

which is extremely important given the fact that youth of color have dropout rates three times

higher than other public school students (Vang, 2006, p. 21). A plethora of initiatives have been

designed to promote school connectedness among students of color and counteract the

hegemonic structures that have perpetuated the achievement gaps between White students and

students of color. One of these initiatives is mentoring, which will be discussed in the next

section.

Mentoring

Mentoring initiatives in schools have grown in popularity to help alleviate many of the

social and academic issues faced by students who come from underrepresented ethnic and

cultural groups. Accordingly, the number of youth who have participated in some type of

mentoring program has also grown. Rhodes, Spencer, and Lang (2009) wrote that millions of

young people have mentors and that the number has grown at unprecedented levels (p. 452).

Cavell et al. (2009) stated that mentoring programs have increased rapidly and serve more than

two million youth in the U.S., most of whom "are from disadvantaged social and economic

backgrounds" (p. 1). Rhodes and Dubois (2008) wrote, "An estimated three million youth are in

formal one-to-one mentoring relationships in the United States…" (p. 254). One of the reasons

for the growth in the number of youth participating in mentoring programs is the amount of

federal monies being devoted to programs.   Rhodes and Dubois (2008) in their research stated

that congressional appropriations have increased to approximately $100 million since 2004.

Definitions of Mentoring

The research offered many definitions of mentoring. Davis (2007) stated that mentoring influenced the occupational trajectory and aspirations of individuals, and that mentoring transferred information, exchanged information, and shared problems that could benefit protégés (p. 228). Townsel (1997) cited the work of Hamilton (1990) and suggested that mentoring is a one-to-one relationship between unrelated people who differ in ages, who meet on a regular basis, and have a commitment based on respect and loyalty (p. 2). Day (2006) wrote that "A mentor by traditional standards has been defined as a person who is usually 8 to 15 years older than his or her prospective mentee" (p. 196). LaVant, Anderson, and Tiggs (1997) wrote that mentoring dates back to the times of the ancient Greeks and incorporated the work of several authors, and presented several definitions of mentoring. First they cited the definition of Shandley (1989), who described mentoring as a nurturing process that fostered the growth and development of and passed on wisdom to the protégé (p. 44). LaVant et al. (1997) then cited Fagenson (1989), who described mentoring from a business perspective and stated that a mentor is a person in position of power who gave the protégé advice and brought the accomplishments of the protégé to the attention of others in the company who have power (p. 44). Zey (1989) as cited by LaVant et al. (1997), wrote that a mentor is a person who oversaw the career and development of another. Mentoring is done through teaching, counseling, protecting, psychological support, and at times sponsoring and or promoting (p. 44). Lastly, LaVant et al. (1997) cited the work of Phillips-Jones (1982), who suggested that a mentor influences people and helps them reach their goals (p. 44). Lavant et al. (1997) wrote that, "Mentoring is also referred to as role modeling, which requires direct interaction between the mentor and the protégé" (p. 44).

Arwood-Barton et al. (2000) combined the definitions of Levinson (1980) and O'Neil (1981) and described mentoring as a relationship between the experienced mentor and the less experienced mentee. This relationship was based on advisement, friendship, and/or sponsorship (p. 36). Dubois et al. (2002) cited the work of Rhodes (1994) and suggested that mentoring is a relationship between a younger protégé and an older, more experienced mentor (p. 162). Randolph and Johnson (2008) used Rhodes' definition, but add that the mentoring relationship provides instruction, encouragement, and guidance, and is concerned with developing the character of the protégé (p. 177). Finally, Slicker and Palmer (1993) wrote that a mentor is a mixture of a peer and parent to the mentee. They suggested that mentors increased the performance and competence of mentees by having demonstrated trust and confidence, having explained to mentees proper behavior, having protected mentees, and offering having praised and encouragement to the mentee (p. 1). Even though there is no set definition for mentoring, the basic premise of all the definitions is that someone with experience helps someone with less experience. The next section discusses mentoring's benefits, for both mentees and mentors.

Benefits for Mentees

Educational

Mentoring programs in education that are implemented with research and best practices have the ability to counteract some of the harsh realities faced by some underrepresented students. Specifically, mentoring can help curb the trends of African American males not succeeding in the educational system. Wyatt (2009) noted that students involved in the mentoring program obtained better GPA's, had better outlooks, and had a better understanding of the connection between the real world and academics. Furthermore, it was determined that mentoring programs for students of color can reduce the number of youth of color placed in

educationally mentally handicapped classes (EMR). Additionally, mentoring programs designed

for students of color have been found to increase academic engagement, increase the basic

academic skills, increase standardized test scores, and reduce dropout rates among youth of color

(Sealy-Ruiz & Greene, 2010; Arwood et al., 2000; Lavant et al., 1997; Townsel, 1997; Hickman

& Wright, n.d).

Future Opportunities

Mentors can also help mentees develop educational and professional goals. In his study

of mentoring programs designed to help African American males and other underrepresented

male students, Wyatt (2009) found that mentored students were better at setting and completing

their goals (p. 467). Additionally, mentors have the ability to use their personal and professional

connections "… to help protégés gain desired information, status, position, influence, and other

types of personal and professional achievements" (Rhodes, Spencer, & Liang, 2009, p. 454). In

their article, Arwood-Barton et al. (2000) stated that mentoring improves the social network of

the mentee and helps the mentee learn and practice social norms for different environments (p.

36-37). Davis (2007) suggested that students who participated in mentoring programs

"recognized that social skills, such as effective communication, the ability to start and maintain a

conversation and diplomacy are invaluable to success …" (p. 222). Schweder and Wissick

(2009) suggested that high quality mentoring programs have the potential to produce sizable

monetary returns (p. 2).

Gordon et al. (2009) found that when black students are paired with black mentors, the

interaction with successful members of the Black community allowed for greater connectedness

and provided educationally successful role models. They wrote, "Exposure to and interactions

with minority men who have achieved professional and personal success may help to open

alternative educational opportunities and motivation for Black boys" (Gorden et al., 2009, p. 286).

Self-efficacy

Sealy-Ruiz and Greene (2010) noted in their research that mentoring gave students a more positive image of not only themselves, but also their school; they also found it increased the mentees' self-efficacy. Davis (2007) wrote that specifically for Black students, "Self-efficacy increased via observation of and interactions with other Black Americans who successfully executed similar tasks" (p. 226). Schweder and Wissick (2009) found that mentoring can help in multiple domains of youth behavior and development. These included improved relationships of mentees and their parents, greater school connectedness, reduced substance abuse, and a decrease in violence and at-risk behaviors.

Another benefit of mentoring programs for underrepresented students is that they get a safe place to share their ideas and thoughts. Many youth of color feel marginalized by White teachers. They also feel marginalized in schools that for the most part are based on White European norms. In these schools many marginalized students experience stereotypical threats, and micro and macro invalidations of their academic potential. Mentoring allows these students to voice their concerns while providing them with the skills to navigate these potential problems. (Andrews, 2012; Gordon et al., 2009; Davis, 2007).

There are several benefits to having mentors that are not of the same race and ethnic group as the mentees. Cross-race, cross-ethnic, and cross-cultural mentoring allows students to learn and practice norms and communication skills that they are going to need once they enter different environments. In addition, underrepresented students learn how to build reciprocal relationships with others.

Benefits for Mentors

Mentors can also experience benefits. The first benefit is that the mentor gets the opportunity to have a positive experience with a young person. This positive experience can help the less experienced person develop lifelong skills that will help in improving their academic, social, and professional opportunities. The mentor also gets the chance to serve as a role model for the mentee. This role modeling can help the protégé develop contacts that they might have never encountered along with developing such skills as time management and educational commitment.

If the person who volunteers to mentor is a more privileged adult, then the more privileged person has the potential to promote social change in the lives of the less experienced. The benefits of mentoring for the mentor described by Day (2006) are "…emotional satisfaction, psychological well-being, growth of the mentor's reputation, and rejuvenation and creativity" (p. 196). Mentors according to Lavant et al. (1997) got satisfaction from being a source of inspiration to the young people they serve. Arwood-Barton et al. (2000) stated that benefits for mentors include the development of emotional supports and friendship. Mentors increase their self-esteem, hone their skills in working with others, develop their knowledge base, and further improve their social skills.

Implementation of Mentoring Programs

Numerous studies have focused on how mentoring programs should be implemented. First and foremost, the programs need to attract and retain quality mentors. Second, the mentoring programs need to be implemented based on guidelines. Third, the programs need an evaluation plan.

Rhodes et al. (2009) suggested the implementation of mentoring programs be based on the Ethical Principles of the Psychologist and Code of Conduct based on the American Psychological Association. Five principles guide this code of conduct. The first principle states the mentor should promote the welfare and safety of the young person. The basic premise is that the mentor should do no harm. The second guideline calls upon the mentor to be trustworthy and responsible. This speaks to the relationship aspect of mentoring. The mentee or protégé needs to be able to trust the mentor. The third guideline calls for the mentor to act with integrity. If the mentor comes from a different socio-economic level or cultural background than the mentee, it is the responsibility of the mentor to respect the culture and circumstances of the protégé. Rhodes et al. (2009) stated that the majority of mentors tend to be White. However, they also wrote that protégés tend to come from more economically diverse and cultural backgrounds. "Differences in cultural backgrounds and values may lead volunteers to hold or unwittingly act on cultural biases" (p. 455). The mentor needs to understand these cultural differences and keep in mind the needs of the mentee. The fourth principle asks mentors to promote justice for young people. The fifth and last principle asks for the mentor to respect the rights and dignity of the young person. In other words, "… volunteers should seek to understand and respect the decisions and lifestyle of a young person and his or her family" (Rhodes et al., 2009, p. 456).

LaVant et al. (1997) suggested that support be garnered before establishing a mentoring program. The support needs to come from all stakeholders in the educational institution at hand. These entities must also have a stake in the community that surrounds the academic institution. The local community leaders, businesses, and the educational hierarchy must be on the same page. Similarly, Schweder and Wissick (2009) suggested that mentoring programs be comprehensive and coordinate amongst multiple entities such as community organizations,

parents, and teachers. Townsel (1997) suggested that to increase the effectiveness of mentoring programs, "Mentoring should use existing support systems and family systems …" (p. 3). Lavant et al. (1997) suggested that "the executive leadership within the institution must be genuinely committed to the concept of a formal mentoring program (p. 51). The executive leadership needs to provide human and economic support in order to help in the implementation and facilitation of the mentoring program. Lavant et al. (1997) wrote that the school based mentoring program then needs to be marketed "… to community leaders, business affiliates, and educators" (p. 51). With sound and broad support, the mentoring program has a better chance of being implemented and sustained.

Mentoring programs need to have clear expectations and measurable goals. According to Hickman and Wright (n.d), some mentoring programs do not have measurable goals and have not adequately thought out the curriculums associated with their programs. Using school data such as grade point averages, state assessments, formative assessments, attendance rates, and disciplinary figures to determine a mentoring program's goals can help its implementation and maintenance.

Additionally, mentoring programs need to target the unique needs of its intended population and be based on their cultural needs (Cavell et al., 2009). Mentors who come from different backgrounds may view mentees through their cultural lenses, which can lead to the mentor or mentee terminating the relationship prematurely. Rhodes et al. (2009) stated that, "Unfortunately, as many as half of volunteer mentoring relationships end prematurely, most often at the request of the volunteer" (p. 454). Mentoring programs that work with students of color need to connect the culture of the students to the curriculum. If a mentoring program is targeting underrepresented students such as Black and Latino youth, the program needs to

"Encourage African American and Latino/a youth to connect to their cultures" (Sealy-Ruiz &

Ruiz, 2010, p. 354). Townsel (1997) wrote in her article that some mentoring programs typically

have focused on what is wrong with students and have not concentrated on the strengths of the

students and the communities from which they come. The school needs to support the program

so that "… the academic success of Black male students is not only expected but celebrated and

integrated into any intervention developed to support students "(Gordon et al., 2009, p. 287).

The successful implementation of mentoring programs requires careful recruitment and

training of mentors. Cavell et al. (2009) suggested that mentoring programs use rigorous

standards to screen and train mentors, and Dubois et al. (2002) stated that "Background checks

and other screening procedures (interviews) have been included consistently in recommended

guidelines for the selection of mentors in programs" (p. 159). Dubois et al. (2002) stated that

programs should recruit mentors "whose backgrounds include prior experience and success in

helping roles" (p.160). However, Slicker and Palmer (1993) suggested that "Mentoring

relationships can be established or enriched by learning or encouraging mentor-like behavior

rather than by selecting certain types of people (as mentors)" (p. 1). Upon selection, mentors

need ongoing professional development and support. The mentors should be aware of the goals

of the program and should model the appropriate behavior. Furthermore, "Programs have an

obligation to sensitize volunteer mentors to the ethical issues that can arise when working with

unrelated youth" (Rhodes et al., 2009, p. 456).

In order to make sure mentoring programs are meeting the needs of their targeted groups,

the programs need to have an evaluation component. LaVant et al. (1997) wrote, "An unbiased

assessment and evaluation of all phases of the program must be an ongoing process, since

redesign can be expected and a program may be ignored or eliminated for lack of objective

documentation regarding its effectiveness (p.51). The evaluation should include measurable

formative and summative components. The measurable components should guide the curricular

goals of the mentoring program. The evaluation program should use official school data such as

GPA, discipline records, attendance records, and state and local assessments to measure if the

mentoring program is actually meeting the needs of students.

Additionally, Cavell et al. (2009) wrote that mentoring programs with a strong showing

of effectiveness should have measured expansion. These programs should also incorporate an

evaluation of newer and innovative approaches, while utilizing "… federal leadership in the

areas of quality assurance, evaluation, and support for mentor recruitment and retention" (p. 1).

Rhodes et al. (2009) stated that many mentoring programs follow general guidelines and not

practices based on current practice and research (p. 452). They postulated that "Funding

agencies reinforce this tendency often using the number of new matches, as opposed to their

sustainability, as the measure of program success" (p. 453).

Mentoring programs need to be structured, organized and meet at scheduled times. In

order to gain the desired effects of the mentoring program, the mentor and mentee should have

patterns of regular meetings over a significant amount of time (Arwood-Barton et al., 2000;

Dubois et al., 2002).   Cautions Randolph and Johnson (2008), meeting a student once a week to

go over academic inadequacies should not be considered a mentoring program (p. 177).

The involvement of parents can improve the implementation of mentoring programs

(Dubois et al., 2002). Townsel (1997) even asserted that "Mentoring programs that do not have

a parental component run the risk of being short term interventions because parents are not

encouraged to do anything differently" (p. 5). Parents who are involved in the mentoring

program are more likely to support the program and will more likely maintain their children's enrollment in the program.

Mentoring programs designed with fidelity can have a major impact on the education of students of color. However, mentoring programs need to be implemented with theoretical paradigms in order to be effective for the students in which they are designed. The next section of the paper presents critical race theory and how this theoretical paradigm can play a role in programs designed for students of color.

Critical Race Theory

History and Definitions

Historically, people of color in the U.S. have been discriminated against, and racism persists. Lynn and Adams (2002), cited the work of Bell (1996), and wrote, "Racism continues to be a problem of social, political, and economic import in America society" (p. 87). Parker and Lynn (2004) posited that this White supremacy ideology "… was used hierarchically to rank races and justified horrific acts in the form of slavery, colonial domination of land and populations, and forced assimilation" (p. 170). Different groups of color had challenged the acts of subjugation by the dominant culture but systematic advances did not begin until the era of the civil rights movement.

Taylor, Gillborn, and Ladson-Billings (2009) stated, "In the era of the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War, the principals of Legal Realism re-emerged as a movement known as Critical Legal Studies (CLS)" (p.1). According to these scholars, "much of the CLS ideology emanated from the work of Gramsci (1971) and depends on the Gramscian notion of "hegemony" (p. 20). Two of the most prominent scholars in the area of CLS are Derrick Bell and Richard Delgado who are noted for identifying the many ways race and racism are

intimately ingrained into American social structures and have shaped U.S. legal systems and the fundamental concepts of law, property, and privilege (Lynn & Adams, 2002, p. 88).

According to Taylor et al. (2009), some marked the official start of CLS in 1977 at a conference at the University of Wisconsin (p. 2). However, CLS really gained prominence when Derrick Bell chose to leave Harvard Law School because of the lack of women of color faculty. This action spurred some of his law students, namely Kimberly Crenshaw, Mari Matsuda, and Charles Lawrence, to fight to "ensure that issues of race and racism would be addressed in the law school curriculum and placed at the center of legal scholarship" (Lynn & Adams, 2002, p. 88). The work of these legal scholars led to the development of another paradigm: critical race theory (CRT).

CRT is viewed historically as a sub-division of CLS and originated due to failures or perceived stalling of traditional civil rights litigation to produce meaningful and lasting reform in such areas as legislative districting, affirmative action, and criminal sentencing (Banks & Banks, 2010; Hughes & Giles, 2010; Knaus, 2009; Taylor et al., 2009; Gillborn, 2006; Parker & Stovall, 2004; Lynn & Adams, 2002). By the 1980's, CRT scholars were focused on reinterpreting civil rights laws due to their ineffectiveness in addressing racial injustices, especially institutional and structural racism in the political economy (Lynn & Adams, 2002, p. 87-88). Even though it is important to note that CRT started as a legal movement, Lynn and Adams stated that "… it is equally important to recognize the multifaceted roots of CRT analyses of racism within other critical, intellectual, and scholarly discourses on racism in U.S. history (p. 89). Lynn and Adams posited that CRT draws from the intellectual and historical customs that existed for years in marginalized communities (p. 89).

Hughes and Giles (2010) argued that CRT should be used to affect change. They charged that if CRT is not used to create change then it falls short of its true potential (p. 45). Hughes and Giles (2010) stated that CRT is contextual and that CRT allows for "Close attention to be paid to the lives, experiences, and daily environments of people of color who suffer from and offer resistance to oppressive pressures that manifest in various ways in their personal and collective lives" (p. 46). Through this attention to the lives of marginalized people, CRT exposes the problems of the color blind ideology espoused by the dominant cultural group. In color blind ideology, all people are equals and thus judged on the false paradigm of meritocracy. One of the primary purposes of CRT is to portray "… dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, color blindness, and meritocracy as camouflages for the self-interest of powerful entities of society" (Gillborn, 2006, p. 21). Parker and Stovall (2004) supported the ideas of Gillborn (2006), and wrote, "Critical race theory offers a framework that would attack seemingly neutral forms of racial subordination, while counteracting the devaluation of minority cultural and racial institutions in a color-blind society (p. 174). Through exposing color blindness for what it is, CRT can be used to empower people of color and to help change negative socio-political forces into positive ones (Parker & Stovall, 2004, p. 174).

CRT's tenets have continued to grow and be tweaked to fit certain disciplines (Hughes & Giles, 2010, p. 46). However, Dixson and Rousseau (2005), cited the work of Matsuda et al. (1993), and suggested six defining themes:

- Critical race theory recognizes that racism is endemic to American life.
- Critical race theory expresses skepticism toward dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, color blindness, and meritocracy.

- Critical race theory challenges ahistoricism and insists on a contextual/historical analysis of the law… Critical race theorists… adopt a stance that presumes that racism has contributed to all contemporary manifestations of group advantage and disadvantage.

- Critical race theory insists on recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of origin in analyzing law and society.

- Critical race theory is interdisciplinary.

- Critical race theory works toward the end of eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression (p. 9).

Many critical race scholars and theorists subscribe to these same basic critical race themes with slight variations. Lynn and Adams (2002) listed four tenets or core principals of CRT. First, racism is endemic and even perhaps permanent in the U.S. Therefore, they suggested, the first task of CRT is to analyze and challenge race and racism in society and in the law (p. 88). Second, CRT crosses epistemological boundaries and borrows from multiple traditions (feminism, Marxism, and liberalism); thus, CRT is a theoretical and political intersection between race, racism, and other forms of inequity (p. 88). Third, CRT investigates the limitations of the U.S. legal system to see if it might be re-framed to the advantage of traditionally marginalized peoples (p. 88). Fourth, CRT exposes the dominant culture's self-interest that was camouflaged by the legal and cultural claims of objectivity, color blindness, and meritocracy (p. 88). Finally, CRT helps reconstruct the experiential knowledge of people of color while also exposing their everyday life experiences with racism (p. 88).

Hughes and Giles (2010) provided six tenets of CRT. The first tenet states that racism is common in America, not aberrant (p. 46). Next, they posited that CRT is contextual and that close attention should be paid to the lives and experiences of people of color. The third tenet

mentioned by these authors is the notion of interest convergence: "Interest convergence contends that White elites tolerate racial diversity advances only if it benefits their own individual or group interest" (Hughes & Giles, 2010, p. 47). Fourth, CRT rejects the notion of a color-blind society. Next, CRT recognizes that racism is both structural and personal and is alive and well. Fifth, CRT recognizes that the dominant culture constructs realities to promote its own self-interest. Finally, CRT recognizes the use of counter-story telling to counter the narratives of the dominant culture so marginalized people can have a voice (p. 47-48).

Several tenets of CRT are also located in the work conducted by Knaus (2009), who wrote, "Critical race theory centers on the notion of racism as normal…" (p. 142). The second tenet is that "… CRT critiques White liberalism by recognizing that policies and practices shift to support purposefully excluded groups of color only when in the interest of Whites" (p 142). Similar to the work of Hughes and Giles (2010), Knaus (2009) mentioned that storytelling by those who are oppressed expresses insight into how society is structured and how these structures impact their daily lives (p. 142).

Applications in Education

The use of CRT is gaining prominence in the field of education. The first prominent mention of CRT and education came with the publication of "Toward a Critical Race Education Theory of Education" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) "…documented propositions connecting 'race and property as a central construct' toward under-standing the 'property functions of whiteness' in relation to schooling" (Lynn & Adams, 2002, p. 88). For example, schools located in areas with higher property values generally have access to better technologies, well-prepared teachers, AP curricula, weighted AP grades, and gifted or other sorts of honors programs, which all lead to better chances of being admitted into elite

colleges; this, in turn, allows for access to better paying jobs and homes in good neighborhoods (Lynn & Adams, 2002, p. 88-89). The work of Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) "raises questions about divergent and conflicting epistemological viewpoints based on Eurocentric ('I think therefore I am') rather than African-centered ('I am because we are') traditions in educational settings" (Hughes & Giles, 2010, p. 44). Within a CRT framework, educational practitioners, policies, and practices can be developed to enact significant change that centers on the best interest and educational experiences of students of color.

Teachers

CRT also provides a useful way to analyze how the majority of educational professionals view the education of children of color. The majority of teachers in the U.S. come from the dominant cultural and ethnic group (Taylor et al., 2009; Ladd & Fiske, 2008). Many White teachers who teach in schools that have a high number of students of color are young with little experience, have no stated dedication to their communities, and have no real training when it comes to dealing with students of color (Banks & Banks, 2010; Knaus, 2009; Taylor et al., 2009; Ladd & Fiske, 2008).

For teachers to be able to successfully educate students of color, they must be able to authentically evaluate their beliefs about students of color. Many teachers, through no fault of their own, espouse color blindness ideology. Dixson and Rousseau (2005) cited the work of Crenshaw et al. (1995) and, "note that integration, assimilation and colour-blindness have become the official norms for racial enlightenment" (p. 14). This thought process hurts students of color because, "As long as the teachers believed that they had treated students equally, disproportionately negative outcomes for students of color were not questioned" (p.14).

CRT also exposes how traditional schools support racism through White-supremacist teaching pedagogies and, dominant culture based curriculums. It challenges schools that promote White culture and ignore and deny how racism impacts the lives of students of color (Knaus, 2009, p. 142).

Parker and Stovall (2004) believed that CRT could be used as "… a framework to examine teacher education racial discourse about the abilities of children of color…" (p. 175). This in turn could challenge the preconceived notion of race and serve as a guide to develop critical thinking skills among teaching candidates when it comes to the education of students of color. The implementation of CRT also discourages tracking in teacher educational programs, tracking that is based on the educational programs offered by institutions of higher education: "The schools that the students moved on to after graduation were not the high schools or colleges in which they would become students, but the elementary and middle schools in which they would become teachers" (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005, p. 24).

CRT encourages teachers to provide a voice to traditionally marginalized students, while at the same time arming teachers with the skills needed to successfully educate all students. After all, Knaus (2009) argued, CRT must be applied in predominately White and all-White schools, not just more diverse schools. He believes that CRT illuminated issues of class-based exploitation and sexism. Knaus (2009) also pointed to CRT's ability to "recognize and address the silencing of White students who speak to alternative realities and who illuminate the impact of Whiteness and White racism on White people" (p. 152).

CRT asks educators to take a critical look at the history of educational reforms. By doing so, educators will be better prepared to implement changes that will have a substantial effect on the education of youth of color. For example, considered through a CRT lens, *Brown v Board*

1954 is not the landmark case it is upheld as. Bell (1980), cited in Dixson and Rousseau (2005), called the *Brown* ruling a "magnificent mirage" and described it as an historic example of interest convergence (p.18). Morris (2001), as cited by Dixson and Rousseau (2005), "… notes that white county schools have been the primary beneficiaries of the desegregation plan, through increases in overall revenue" (p. 19) because African American students are drawn to White schools in better neighborhoods. These White schools in turn get funding for the additional students, thus increasing their property values while at the same time decreasing the property values in African American neighborhoods. "CRT takes to task school reformers who fail to recognize that property is a powerful determinant of academic advantage" (Taylor et al., 2009, p. 32). Taylor et al. (2009) further stated, "Without a commitment to redesign funding formulas, one of the basic inequities of schooling will remain in place and virtually guarantee the reproduction of the status quo" (p. 32).

CRT sees current educational trends as a move towards resegregation. These trends include White flight and the growing insistence on voucher programs, the use of public funding for private schools, and school choice (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005, p. 8). Students of color are also more likely to be placed in lower academic tracks and referred to special educational services in mainstream schools. CRT suggests that educators look at these trends and address these issues so that schools can become safe places where students of color can thrive both academically and socially.

In the Classroom

CRT views the curriculums taught in many schools as culturally specific artifacts designed to promote Whiteness as the master script. "This master scripting means stories of African American are muted and erased when they challenge dominant culture and power"

(Taylor et al., 2009, p. 29). Delpit (1988), as cited in Taylor et al. (2009), submitted that one of the major "… tragedies of the field of education is how the dialogue of people of color has been silenced" (p. 24). Knaus (2009) wrote, "I have come to see school as designed to keep personal experiences as far outside the classroom as possible" (p. 134). He postulated that by applying CRT to the classroom, educators can counter the official school curriculum that "… is culturally designed to maintain White supremacy through focusing on what works well for many White people … (p. 137). CRT's advocacy of storytelling and counter-storytelling can help develop a voice with thick descriptions that challenge racism and the structures of oppression found in traditional U.S. schools (Hughes & Giles, 2010; Knaus, 2009; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). Applying CRT to the classroom allows the voices of students of color to develop and thrive in dominant culture schools and classrooms (Knaus, 2009, p. 142).

CRT promotes methods and approaches that validate the cultures of all students, yet still recognize the students as individuals. By contrast, colorblind ideology fails to recognize students as individuals, and hence the educational experience of many students of color becomes a measure of their skill to successfully navigate the hegemonic structures of mainstream schools (Knaus, 2009, p. 142).

Applying CRT in the classroom also exposes mainstream approaches in education that frequently imply that students of color, their parents, and communities are deficient. The application of CRT exposes the nature of the conflicts of majoritarian teachers and administrators with children and parents of color in urban, suburban, and rural communities (Parker & Stovall, 2004, p. 172).

Criticism

CRT is not universally accepted as a theory, nor is it always seen as practical and beneficent. Gillborn (2006) suggested that CRT is not so much of a theory as it is a perspective. Gillborn (2006) posited that CRT is not a finished product and that CRT does not offer a set of recommendations to explain current situations or predict what will occur under a set of certain conditions.

CRT tends to rely on the experiential knowledge of people of color, and many scholars contend that CRT lacks the empirical data to back up its claims. Hughes and Giles (2010) refuted this claim, writing, "Would several hundred years of historical evidence of America's continued racist structure, policies and practices suffice?" (p. 46). Still, criticism persists. Farber and Sherry (1997), whose work is cited in the work of Taylor et al. (2009), argued that may of the counter-stories provided by CRT theorists cannot be verified for accuracy and may not be typical of the experiences of other people of color, and stated that "… critical race theory has not yet established a comparable empirical foundation. "We know not of work on critical race theory that discusses psychological or other social science studies supporting the existence of a voice of color" (p. 315). Furthermore, Farber and Sherry (1997) implied that CRT scholars tend to use feminist scholarship to support their ideas and thoughts (Taylor et al., 2009, p. 315). Another criticism stated that in the same way "… lawyers normally are not allowed to offer testimony at trial, or to vouch for witnesses, scholars should not be readily allowed to offer their own experiences as evidence" (Taylor et al., 2009, p. 328).

Another criticism is that CRT has not identified strategies to combat the myriad of ways race oppresses and marginalizes people of color (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005, p. 23). Dixson and Rousseau (2005) pointed out that CRT scholars in education have failed to come together as

CRT scholars have in the legal arena to address issues of equity in the field of education. Ladson-Billings (1999a) and Tate (1999), as cited by Dixson and Rousseau (2005), stated, "The work of ensuring equity in schools and schooling involves continued study of the legal literature and careful thought about its application to education" (p. 23).

Criticism of CRT also came from scholars who advocated a post-Marxist view. These critics have argued that CRT fails to provide an analysis of the effects of global capitalism (Parker & Stovall, 2004, p. 168). Post-Marxists suggested that CRT scholars focus too much on race and forget to see how capitalism tends to blend rather than diversify the human experience (Parker & Stovall, 2004, p. 168). The application of CRT can have a major impact on the education of students of color. However, in order for CRT and other counter-hegemonic initiatives to work, effective leadership will need to be in place.

Conclusion

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature on the constructs that guided this study's research design. First, it explored the literature on the current status of students of color in U.S. schools specifically, the achievement gap that exists between students of color and white students. Chapter 2 also introduced the concept of school culture and then discussed mentoring and its current popularity and impacts in terms of reducing the achievement gap between white students and students of color. Finally, it reviewed the theoretical paradigm of CRT.

The subsequent chapters were as followed: Chapter 3 discussed the methodology used to explore the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. Chapter 4 provided a detailed explanation of the results, and Chapter 5 summarized and interpreted the results of the study.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Recall the purpose of this study was to explore the "Can We Talk" mentoring program, which is designed to work with African American male students in a traditional secondary high school setting. The main question guiding this research is: What is the role of leadership in mentoring programs designed to work with students of color? Sub questions essential to answering the main question include:

1. How are the tenets of CRT manifested in the dimensions of the school implementing the mentoring program as perceived by:

A) The principal,

B) Leaders of "Can We Talk" (directors of the program (mentors), and

C) The students?

2. How did "Can We Talk" shape school culture (shared meanings of symbols, artifacts, and behaviors) as perceived by:

A) The principal,

B) Leaders of "Can We Talk" (directors of the program (mentors), and

C) The students?

Rationale

This study used a qualitative research design to gain a better understanding of a mentoring program called "Can We Talk" for students of color. Creswell (2007) advocated the use of qualitative research "when we want to empower individuals to share their stories [and] hear their voices" (p. 40). This study's qualitative research method allowed for just that through interviews, observations, and elicitations that inquired about the participants' experiences. It is hoped that the participants' insights will illuminate the challenges educators face when implementing programs designed for students of color. More importantly it is hoped that the

study will shed light on the academic and social needs of students of color as they navigate the current structures of schools. Furthermore, it is hoped that the results of this study will encourage school administrators, staffs, and communities to explore the implementation of programs designed to meet the unique academic and social needs of students of color.

There are many critics of qualitative research methodologies. Yin (2009) posits that critics of qualitative research emphasize the value of "studies [that] aim to establish causal relationships" (p. 15-16), and "In the eyes of many, the emphasis has led to a downgrading of case study research because case studies (and other types of non-experimental methods) cannot directly address this issue" (p. 16). However, qualitative methodology brings to light the viewpoints of participants' explicit experiences that cannot be apprehended through other research methods. Stake (1995) contends that the researcher gets to know the uniqueness of the case "and come(s) to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is, what it does" (p. 8). Indeed, a qualitative case study approach allows for a better understanding of the uniqueness of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program.

Methodological Framework

This study is guided by the CRT framework. An in-depth explanation of CRT is found in the literary review chapter of this dissertation, but a brief recap is appropriate. CRT is viewed historically as a sub-division of CLS and originated due to failures or perceived stalling of traditional civil rights litigation to produce meaningful and lasting reform in such areas as legislative districting, affirmative action, and criminal sentencing (Banks & Banks, 2010; Hughes & Giles, 2010; Knaus, 2009; Taylor et al., 2009; Gillborn, 2006; Parker & Stovall, 2004; Lynn & Adams, 2002). By the 1980's, CRT scholars were focused on reinterpreting civil rights

laws due to their ineffectiveness in addressing racial injustices, especially institutional and structural racism in the political economy (Lynn & Adams, 2002, p. 87-88). Even though it is important to note that CRT started as a legal movement, Lynn and Adams stated that "… it is equally important to recognize the multifaceted roots of CRT analyses of racism within other critical, intellectual, and scholarly discourses on racism in U.S. history (p. 89).

CRT has several tenets and these tenets have continued to grow to meet the needs of diverse disciplines. The tenets guiding this study are:

- CRT recognizes that racism is endemic to American life.

- CRT expresses skepticism toward dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, color blindness, and meritocracy.

- CRT helps reconstruct the experiential knowledge of people of color while also exposing their everyday life experiences with racism.

- CRT recognizes interest convergence, which posits that White elites will tolerate racial advancements of people of color when it benefits them individually or as a group.

- Through storytelling, those who are oppressed can express insights into how society is structured and how these structures impact their daily lives, thus giving them a voice (Hughes & Giles, 2010; Knaus, 2009; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005).

Specifically, this research will look at how the framework of CRT can be applied to the area of education. Historically, students of color have attended schools located in lower socio-economic areas as compared to White students. School located in higher property areas have access to better technologies, well-prepared teachers, AP curricula, weighted AP grades, and

gifted or other sorts of honors programs, which all lead to better chances of being admitted into elite colleges; this, in turn, allows for access to better paying jobs and homes in good neighborhoods (Lynn & Adams, 2002, p. 88-89).

The majority of teachers in the U.S. are White and come from an Anglo-middle class background (Taylor et al., 2009; Ladd & Fiske, 2008). The majority of White teachers that teach in areas that have high numbers of students of color come from less competitive schools in terms of their standards for admission into the school of education, have less rigorous teacher preparation programs, have fewer years of teaching experience, and have little to no preparation in working with students of color (Banks & Banks, 2010; Knaus, 2009; Taylor et al., 2009; Ladd & Fiske, 2008).

In order for teachers to effectively facilitate instruction to students of color, they must be able to authentically evaluate how they feel about children of color. Dixson and Rousseau (2005) postulate that many teachers espouse the belief of color blindness. Furthermore, these teachers belief that if students of color perform poorly it is not due to a teaching fault or failure but instead to the innate ability of the student. This belief is a direct result of the false ideologies of color blindness and meritocracy.

CRT illuminates several race-related issues in the field education. First, CRT provides a framework for looking at teacher racial discourse (ideas, thoughts, and beliefs) about the capabilities of students of color. This challenges the preconceived notions about children of color and allows for counter-narratives to be developed that can guide the thought processes of teachers when it comes to the education of students of color. Second, CRT gives teachers the opportunity to provide children of color a voice. Many times the voices of these students are silenced in classrooms. By applying CRT in the classroom, teachers challenge "… the status quo

of mainstream US colonial-based schooling by creating the structures through which student voice, particularly the voice of students of color, can develop, thrive, and be expressed in culturally affirming and relevant ways" (Knaus, 2009, 142).

Third, CRT asks facilitators to take a critical look at educational reform. Educational reform that has taken place even under the guise of helping students of color has actually helped and benefitted White students and predominately White school districts. For example, White county schools have been the primary beneficiaries of school desegregation plans, through increased budgetary revenues. When Black students leave their schools to attend predominately White schools, the White schools receive additional funds for increased student enrollment. The schools that serve predominately Black students see a decrease in their school monies due to the students they lose, thus decreasing the property values surrounding these Black neighborhood schools (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005).

Fourth, CRT takes a demanding look at the current situations of students of color. Children of color are more likely to attend schools with less qualified teachers. In addition, these students are more likely to attend schools where teachers are not certified or are teaching out of their content areas. Moreover, students of color are more likely to be placed on lower academic tracks and/or be assigned to special education classrooms within mainstream schools (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ladd & Fiske, 2008).

Fifth, CRT sees the official school curriculum as a hegemonic tool that is designed and utilized to maintain a White supremacist narrative. This narrative is designed to marginalize all counter-narratives, so the voices of students who come from marginalized cultural, racial, and ethnic groups are silenced. CRT exposes the falsehood notions utilized by some mainstream

schools that students and their parents who hail from marginalized communities are deficient (Knaus, 2009, p. 142; Parker & Stovall, 2004, p. 172).

Methodological Design

This research focused on the "Can We Talk" mentoring program designed to work with students of color in a mainstream secondary school. The methodology that best allowed for the exploration of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program was case study analysis, specifically an instrumental case study design. An instrumental case study design allows for the researcher to understand more than the just the particular case (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995). Furthermore, case study methodology grants the researcher the ability to gather from multiple sources of data, through extended time in the field in order to gain a deeper understanding of our and the participants' world. Through this study's examination of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program, the researcher planned to capture what is known about the implementation of this program, what the program looks like when implemented, and what it does based on the perspectives of the key participants. An instrumental case study design best allowed for the completion of this exploration.

Merriam (2009) defines case study as "… an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40). The bounded system is the case being analyzed, such as the experiences of the participants in the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. Creswell (2007) defines case studies as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case-based themes (p. 73). In addition, Yin (2009) characterizes case study as "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" (p.18). A case can involve an individual, multiple individuals, an event, a location, or a program. Through a case study methodology, I plan to capture a deeper understanding of the issues and processes within the case, the "Can We Talk" mentoring program.

The research questions I sought to answer were designed to reveal the experiences of the participants within the mentoring program. I used interviews, observations, documents, and photo/object elicitations, so that the participant's experiences and voices could be understood through a variety of data sources, thus offering an in-depth snapshot of a specific mentoring program designed to help students of color navigate a predominately secondary school.
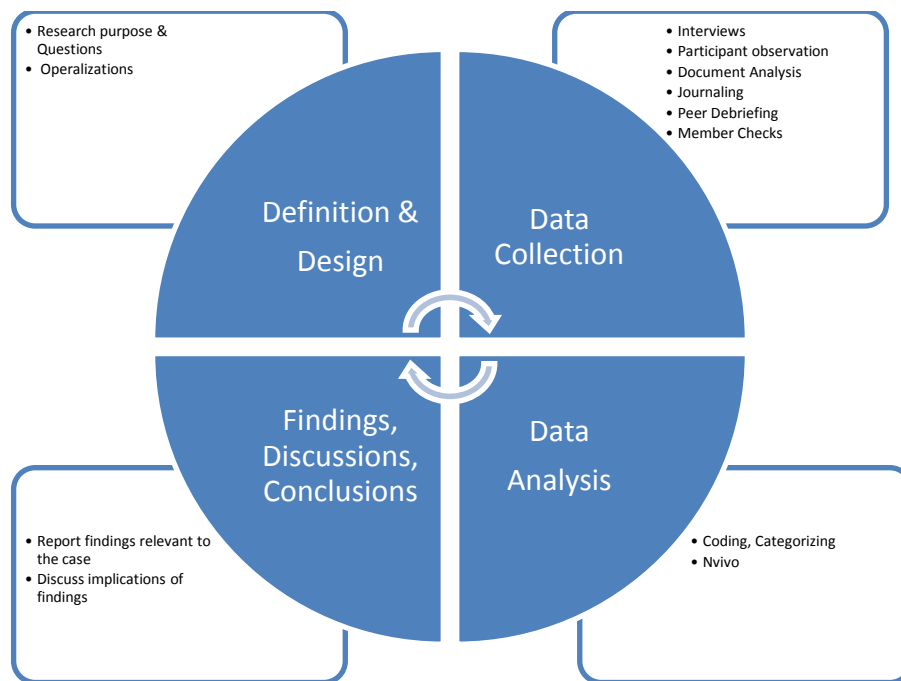
Figure 3.1. Graphic Design of Instrumental Case Study

The case study process starts with the definition and design of the research. Within this category the research purpose and questions are contained. The next category is the data

collection methods. In this category interviews, participant observation, document analysis, peer

debriefing, and member checking are located. The following category is the data analysis

section. This section contains coding, categorizing, and theming. The last category is findings,

discussions, and conclusions.

In this study, I used the guidelines of Figure 3.1 for research design, data collection and

analysis, and data representation. The goal of my study is not to claim generalizability. My goal

is to provide a rich and thick, detailed description of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program, as

this may allow the reader to gain a better understanding of this specific program. This, in turn

may cause ideas to resonate within the reader, cause the reader to reflect back on their personal

experiences, or may inspire thoughts in the reader, thereby creating transferability.

Subjectivity Statement

An understanding of my background is important in outlining my subjectivities as they

relate to this case study. According to Creswell (2007) the researcher is the key instrument in

qualitative research (p. 38). He suggests the qualitative researcher is the one charged with

collecting data "…through examining documents, observing behavior, and interviewing

participants" (p. 38). In a case study the researcher plays different roles (Stake, 1995, p. 91).

The roles may include participant, observer, reader, storyteller, advocate, teacher, and a host of

others (p. 91). However, it is important to note that all qualitative research is viewed through the

perspectives, values, and theoretical lenses of the researcher. Peshkin (1998) postulates,

"whatever the substance of one's persuasions at a given point, one's subjectivity is like a

garment that cannot be removed" (p. 17). This means, as the researcher, I must consider my

assumptions, personal background, and attitude in relation to the study. The garments I bring to

this study are: I am an African American male, whose father is one of the founding members of

the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. I bring to this study my experiences of attending schools where I was one of a handful of African American students. Furthermore, I bring my experiences of being a parent of a bi-racial son, an uncle of a male middle school student, a brother, a teacher, a former secondary school administrator, and an educational consultant who has traveled the country working with other school administrators. These experiences have shaped my beliefs, values, and assumptions when it comes to educating students, especially students of color. The core belief that has guided me throughout my travels in education is that all students have the right to reach their highest individual potential. Furthermore, I believe that all children can learn and teachers have a fundamental obligation to teach all children to the best of their ability. I would be naive to think that one can control or remove one's subjectivities from their study. Accordingly, it is academically prudent that one reflects on one's conscious subjectivities, as it can safely be assumed that there are sub-conscious subjectivities that may surface during the conduction of the study. The following paragraphs will detail my experiences in working in the field of education as well as my experiences in working with students of color.

My first teaching experience took place at a high school located on the campus of a juvenile correctional facility. This facility contained students who were habitual and violent offenders. During the year I spent at this high-security facility I witnessed a plethora of low socio-economic and children of color consistently rotating through the facility. These students were given access to a basic curriculum. I did not understand why these students were not being given access to a curriculum that could possibly change their lives. Many of the staff members had low expectations for the students and the school was more designed to control the students than to academically enrich the students. As a science teacher at this location I felt it was my duty to provide these students with the same quality of education they would get in a quality

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accredited high school. So, I implemented a science curriculum that was based on current national and state standards. I was the only certified science teacher in the building and I wanted to make sure the students were receiving a quality science education. Many schools that serve underrepresented students employ teachers that are relatively new to the profession or are not certified in areas they are teaching. I found this to be true in this school. Likewise, students who come from marginalized socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial groups are more likely to be referred to special education services. At this school 99% of our students were on an individualized education program (IEP). The majority of our students were poor and came from marginalized ethnic and racial groups. In addition, there was a push by the current administration for all staff to become certified in special education. I did not want to be certified in the area of special education; therefore, I chose to leave this setting.

The next three years of my teaching experience took place in a large school district in the Southwestern part of the U.S. During this time I was a general education biology teacher in a school that was approximately 80% underrepresented economically, ethnically, and racially. While teaching in this setting I started to get involved in programs for students of color. The first program that I was introduced to was Project Sun. This program was designed to offer enrichment to students of color located in lower socio-economic communities. The program included tutoring, field trips, and access to community leaders. Additionally, students were offered a supplemental curriculum that focused on increasing their strengths in math and science. Moreover, I noticed other benefits for these students who were participating in the Project Sun program. The students seemed to be more connected to the school, which in turn led to better attendance, increased participation in school social activities, and, most importantly, increased academic achievement.

I eventually moved to the Midwest and taught science at an upper middle class school that was 90% White. I started a program for young African American males at this school, as I noticed the school was not meeting the academic and social needs of these students. The program was titled the "Young African American Male Club." I invited guest speakers, took the students on field trips, and provided tutoring to students in order to improve their academic performances. While teaching at this school, I sometimes grew frustrated with the lack of expectations for African American students espoused by some of my White colleagues. Furthermore, I was frustrated that as the only African American teacher I was constantly being asked to sponsor underrepresented events or be a liaison for marginalized parents.

While teaching at this high school I completed my Master's degree in School Leadership. This allowed me to become an administrator in a large urban school in another school district. My administrative experiences include working in urban, suburban, and rural school districts. While working on my doctoral degree in Educational Leadership, I received the opportunity to consult nationally for an organization that worked with school districts and principals in establishing Response To Intervention (RTI) in their schools. RTI is a multi-tiered system that allows for identification and support for students who are struggling in behavior and or learning. RTI first starts in the general education classroom with screening of all students, and students who are identified are provided with different levels of interventions in order or help improve their academic performances. Working for this consulting firm has allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the issues facing education nationally and the plight of underrepresented students across the country.

My experiences in working with students of color have influenced my background, biases, and values. It is important that I disclose some of the biases regarding the education of

underrepresented students. Through my experiences, I have come to believe that many of the

educational systems found in the U.S. promote Whiteness as the norm. Furthermore, many of

the multicultural curriculums offered in schools are add-ons to the hidden curriculums that

benefit White students. Through my time in education and my experiences at Kansas State

University, I have come to value that the culture of all children should be celebrated.

Every effort has been made to ensure that I am objective while conducting this study;

however, my background influenced my decision to situate the study within the frameworks of

CRT. Given my background, caution was taken to recognize my own beliefs and subjectivities

regarding my own philosophies about the education of students of color. I was also cognizant of

the perception of the participants given my background as a teacher, administrator, and the fact

that my father was a co-founder of the program and a former director of the Equity Council for

the school district. Regardless of my personal beliefs, I remained open to the authentic

experiences and beliefs of the participants of the study. Through extended time in the field and

frequent member checking I was able to establish a trusting relationship with the participants,

which was essential to the success of this study.

Research Design

Utilizing case study, this research study was conducted during the fall semester of 2014

on a selected secondary school campus in the Midwest. As mentioned in the first chapter of the

study, the "Can We Talk" mentoring program is designed to work with African American males

in a mainstream secondary school. The implementation of the program, maintenance of the

program, and how the program helps students of color navigate the dominant structures of a

mainstream school were areas of special interest. During the fall 2014 semester, the participants

were observed during "Can We Talk" sessions, in their classrooms, and on "Can We Talk" field

trips. The participants were also interviewed in order to elicit more information about the

mentoring program. Researcher journaling, member checks, peer debriefing, and same day

write-ups of observations and interviews took place in order to ensure accuracy. For the purpose

of gaining a better understanding of the mentoring program and the culture of the school,

prolonged engagement in the field also took place.

Participant Selection and Gaining Access

For the purpose of this study, I interviewed the principal of the research site, an African

American female administrator who developed the mentoring program, two co-founders and

mentors of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program, two students – one African American female

and one African American male – who are both mentees, and two White male students who are

students at the research site but who are not involved in the mentoring program. Selecting

participants who could offer valuable insights regarding the mentoring program was desirable.

On account of this study being qualitative, purposeful sampling was utilized. Merriam (1998),

defines purposeful sampling as the "assumption that the investigator wants to discover,

understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be

learned" (p.61). This means that the researcher selects participants because they can

purposefully inform an understanding of the research issue and the phenomenon central to the

study (Creswell, 2008, p. 125).   Participants were also interviewed based on their ability to

provide information needed to address the purpose of the research (Johnson & Christensen,

2012, p. 235). In addition to purposeful sampling, participants were also selected using criterion-

based sampling procedures. Criterion-based selection determines "a list of essential attributes"

to the study and then "proceeds to find or locate" participants matching the list" (LeCompte &

Preissle, 1993, p. 70).
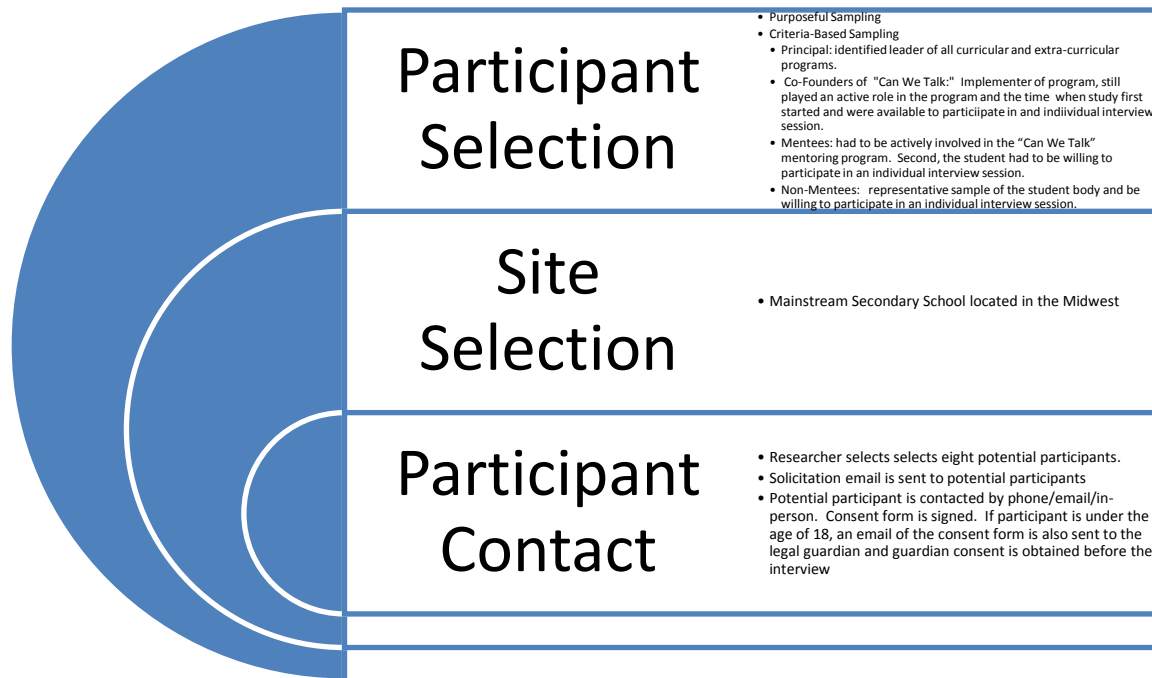
Figure 3.2 Participant Selection Process

Potential participants were chosen as follows: (a) Head Principal of the school was selected to be

interviewed because he was the identified leader of all curricular and extra-curricular programs,

(b) Co-Founders for this study were selected because at the time of the study they still

represented an active role in the facilitation of the program and were available to participate in

individual interview sessions, (c) Mentees who were chosen were actively involved in the

program. Additionally, the mentees had to be a senior and had to have participated in the "Can

We Talk" program for at least three years, (d) Non-mentees were selected as a representative

sample of the student population. The non-mentees also had to be seniors and had to have

attended the research site for at least three years.

The participants selected in this study were classified as direct and indirect participants. Direct

participants refer to the participants who consented to interviews. Indirect participants were

valuable as they added to the information about the program and the research site. Indirect

participants in this study included those faculty members and students who actively participated

in the "Can We Talk" mentoring program through attending mentoring sessions and other "Can We Talk" activities. Other indirect participants included students whom I observed while visiting the research site, and those students who directly contacted me and asked why I was at the research site. Furthermore, some of these students shared their ideas and thoughts on the culture of the school and the "Can We Talk" program.

In the first stage of selection I choose the direct participants. The first person I selected was the principal of the research site. As stated, the principal is in charge of all academic and social programs at the research site. Without the support of the principal, academic and social programs would not be sustained at a school. For full disclosure, the principal of the research site is a family friend and was more than willing to let me have full access to his school, staff, and students. This made entry into the school accessible. I first contacted the principal in person and he was willing to participate in the study. After initial contact with the principal I then made a follow-up phone call to schedule the initial interview. Before the initial interview I sent the principal the email solicitation letter (See Appendix D) to inform him of the study. Furthermore, I attached a copy of the informed consent form for the principal to sign before our meeting. During our initial meeting I brought a copy of the informed consent form in case the participant had not signed the one attached to the email. In the case of the principal, he had already signed the informed consent form (See Appendix C). Before the interview started I further explained the study, participant expectations, the potential risks and benefits to the participant, and where the participant could obtain a copy of the research when the study was completed. I then reviewed the informed consent form with the participant and answered any and all possible questions regarding the study. Only when the participant was fully aware of all aspects of the interview did I also sign a copy of the consent form. The participant was informed that he could

leave the study at any time. I then turned on the recording device and proceeded to interview the principal using a scripted guide (See Appendix E).

The co-founders of the "Can We Talk" program were purposely selected as potential participants in this study. Originally, I tried to contact each of the four founding architects of the mentoring program. After initial attempts, I could reach only three of the co-founders, so I decided to potentially select co-founders who were still active in helping to facilitate the program. One co-founder lived in another Midwest City that is approximately 4-5 hours away. He agreed to meet with me for an interview; however, due to unforeseen circumstances I ended up not ever meeting with this potential participant. This left two potential co-founder participants. Both agreed to participate in the study. I emailed the first participant a copy of the email solicitation (See Appendix D) and a copy of the informed consent form (See Appendix C). We agreed to meet at a local restaurant to conduct the interview. Before the taped interview, I reviewed the nature of the study, participant expectations, the risks and benefits to the participant, and where the participant could obtain a copy of the study when the research was completed. I then reviewed the informed consent form and answered all and any questions for the participant. Only when the participant was fully aware of all aspects of the interview did I also sign a copy of the consent form. I then turned on the recording device and proceeded to interview the co-founder using a scripted guide (See Appendix F).

The second co-founder who agreed to participate is my father. However, all protocols were followed to ensure the rigor (rigor will be discussed later in this chapter) of the study. I emailed the participant a copy of the email solicitation (See Appendix D) and a copy of the informed consent form (See Appendix C). We agreed to meet at the participant's house to conduct the interview. Before the taped interview, I reviewed the nature of the study, participant

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expectations, the risks and benefits to the participant, and where the participant could obtain a copy of the study when the research was completed. I then reviewed the informed consent form and answered all and any questions for the participant. Only when the participant was fully aware of all aspects of the interview did I also sign a copy of the consent form. I then turned on the recording device and proceeded to interview the co-founder using a scripted guide (See Appendix F).

Through conversations with the principal and two co-founders I was informed of another potential participant. The participant was the original developer of the "Can We Talk" program. This participant first thought of the program while at the Courageous Conversations Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. The participant was sitting in a session with one of the co-founders and decided that the African American males at her secondary school needed the same interventions that were being discussed in the session. As an assistant principal, she had already started a mentoring program for the female students of color, but thought the African American males could use a program as well. So, she and the co-founder came up with a plan and recruited the other three co-founders. At the time of our interview this participant was a head administrator at another secondary high school. Her school also had a version of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. I first contacted this potential participant by phone. The participant agreed to participate in an individual interview. I then emailed the potential participant a copy of the email solicitation form (See Appendix D) and a copy of the informed consent form (See Appendix C). We agreed the interview would take place in her office. Before the taped interview, I reviewed the nature of the study, participant expectations, the risks and benefits to the participant, and where the participant could obtain a copy of the study when the research was completed. I then reviewed the informed consent form and answered all and any questions for

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the participant. Only when the participant was fully aware of all aspects of the interview did I also sign a copy of the consent form. I then turned on the recording device and proceeded to interview the co-founder using a scripted guide (See Appendix F).

The first mentee purposely selected as a potential participant was an African American female. I noticed this student as I was conducting an observation on a "Can We Talk" meeting. The potential participant was on the student leadership council for the mentoring program. After several observations, conversations with the principal, and the mentors of the "Can We Talk" program I approached this student to see if she would be interested in participating in the study. The student is a senior and had been involved with the program for four years. The student agreed to participate in an individual interview. Because the student was 17, email solicitation letters as well as informed consent letters were sent to the participant as well as her parents. Once parental consent was established, the participant (mentee) and I agreed to meet at the school and the interview took place in the commons area. Before the interview was conducted, I obtained a signed copy of the informed consent form signed by the parents as well as the mentee. I then explained the study, participant expectations, risks and benefits to the participant, and where a copy of the research could be obtained once the study was concluded. Only when all potential questions were answered did I also sign a copy of the participant's informed consent. The participant was informed that she could leave the study at any time. I then turned on the recording device and proceeded to interview the mentee using a scripted guide (See Appendix G).

A non-mentee was also selected as a potential participant for the study. The student selected was a representative sample of the student population. During one of my conversations with a counselor located at the high school, he recommended this student. I then contacted the

potential participant through a phone call. The student's phone number was provided to me by the counselor. The student, a White male, was hesitant to participate after he was informed of the nature of the study. He did not want his comments about race to be misconstrued. The student is also an athlete and one of his coaches was sitting in the counseling office when I made the phone call. The coach called the student as well and informed him that it would be safe to talk to me. The potential participant's father was also a teacher and coach of mine when I was in high school, and once the participant found out who I was, he agreed to participate in the interview. The student was 18; however, I felt it was still appropriate to contact the potential participant's parents. I emailed copies of the email solicitation as well as informed consent forms to both the parents and potential participant. The participant agreed to be interviewed at the research site. The principal provided us with a conference room in order to conduct the interview. Before the interview was conducted, I obtained a signed copy of the informed consent form signed by the parents as well as the non-mentee. I then explained the study, participant expectations, risks and benefits to the participant, and where a copy of the research could be obtained once the study was concluded. Only when all potential questions were answered did I also sign a copy of the participant's informed consent. The participant was informed that he could leave the study at any time. I then turned on the recording device and proceeded to interview the non-mentee using a scripted guide (See Appendix H).

During the fall semester of 2014, I attended an advanced qualitative research methods course. In this course I was introduced to the photo/object elicitation interview style, which Denzin and Lincoln (2008) state "… belongs exclusively to the visual" (p.197). Furthermore, through their research Denzin and Lincoln (2008) found that this type of research method was utilized in a variety of fields. These fields included anthropology, communication, sociology,

and education. The researchers in these studies used photo elicitation because they had "… the common desire to understand the world as defined by the subject…" (p. 197). In my own study, I found that photo/object elicitation "… proved to be able to stimulate memories that word-based interviewing did not. The result was discussions that went beyond 'what happened when and how' to themes such as 'this was what this had meant'…" (p. 199). I used photo/object elicitation for my final three interviews. These were the second interviews with the principal of the research site, my father, and the interview I conducted with the second student mentee. When I met with the principal for the second time I asked him to bring several items that represented his time and experiences with the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. The meeting took place in the principal's office and began with the prompt, tell me about what you brought me. The interview was not scripted and I found that this led to an interview that was more conversational. Other examples of interview questions utilized during the photo/object elicitation session are found in Appendix I. The photo/object elicitation method was also used during my second interview with my father, one of the co-founders of the mentoring program. The interview took place at his residence. I started off the interview with the same prompt as I did with the principal. Again, I found this interview to be more natural; furthermore, as in the case with the principal, I felt that the participant was able to provide more information without being prompted. The last interview I conducted using photo/object elicitation was with an African American male student mentee. The mentee and I agreed to meet and conduct an interview at the school in one of the conference rooms provided by the principal. Through several observations of "Can We Talk" sessions I had noticed a student who could be a possible participant. I then talked to one of the mentors about possibly approaching this mentee to be interviewed. The mentor stated that the young man would be a good participant for the study. I

then contacted the participant and asked if he would be interested in participating in an individual interview session. The participant agreed and I sent copies of the email solicitation letter and informed consent form to both the participant and his parent. I then followed the same procedure as in previous interviews. However, this interview did not follow a scripted format. I opened the interview with the prompt, tell me about what you brought me. I concluded the interview by utilizing the same closing as with the other participants.

Research Site

The secondary school that was chosen for this study sits on 77 acres of land in the northwest section of a Midwest City. This demographically diverse high school is considered middle class socio-economically, serves approximately 1500 students, and has about 100 teachers. The student body is 50.78% male and 49.22% female. Additionally the student body is 73.90% White, 13.2% other, 7.07% African American, and 5.71% Hispanic. Presently, the school's migrant population is 0%. Furthermore, 26.51% of the students are considered to be economically disadvantaged. The school also has an ELL population of 2.04%, and 12.51% of the students are students with intellectual and other disabilities.

There were several reasons for choosing this research location. In part, the site was selected based on the researcher's personal access to the school's leadership and other personnel. The school was located within easy driving distance for the researcher, allowing for more frequent and extended access to the school environment. Due to personal connections, rapport with school administrators, teachers, facilitators of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program and students had already been established, which was helpful in gaining information that could facilitate an understanding of this mentoring program. Furthermore, this school was one of the original implementation sites of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. This means the

program was implemented based on the original recommendations of the program founders, who had worked very closely with the school principal.

Membership Role

The researcher is the key instrument in qualitative research and is the primary instrument for data collection, data analysis, and data representation (Creswell, 2007; Grbich, 2007; Merriam 2009). In a case study the researcher plays different roles and these roles may include participant, observer, reader, storyteller, advocate, teacher, and a host of others (Stake, 1995, p. 91). Merriam et al. (2001) discuss that a researcher can also be considered an insider or an outsider, and that both roles have certain advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages to being an insider may involve sharing similar backgrounds and experiences, which can make rapport and access to information easier. Shared interest and experiences can lead to deeper understandings of the issues; however, as an insider, shared interests and experiences can cause conflict, for the researcher may be too close to the situation and may miss valuable data. There are several advantages to being an outsider as well. Participants may be willing to share more personal information and reveal more to a stranger as they perceive this to be a less of a risk than sharing vital information to someone who is familiar to them. Disadvantages to being an outsider may involve differences in backgrounds, location, and unfamiliarity of the culture being studied.

Merriam et al. (2001) posit that the advantages and disadvantages of the researcher's role often become messy, fluid, and may progress from one role to another. The role I portrayed during my time at Everywhere High School was both insider and outsider. I had an insider role through my ethnicity and race. Furthermore, I grew up in the community in which Everywhere High School was located, my father was one of the co-founders of the "Can We Talk" mentoring

program, I had taught and coached in the school district, and I had personal relationships with several of the staff members at Everywhere High School. I also played the role of outsider in that I was unfamiliar with several of the students participating in the program.

As I was conducting my study I kept reminding myself of what Peshkin (1998) writes, in discussing his role as a researcher:

> I come neither to judge whether they teach well or poorly, nor to make them better than they are. I go to great lengths to establish who I am not, so that my behavior can reinforce daily who I am. (p. 20)

I remained cognizant of my subjectivities through journaling, memoing as I interacted with the data, constantly reading to ensure that I was functioning as a quality interviewer and observer, and through having frequent conversations with my dissertation advisor. For example, I discussed the following situation with my advisor (personal communication October, 2014), about which I later journaled:

> Mr. Rogers who is the new leader of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program has called me several times to get my thoughts and feelings about the "Can We Talk" program. He has asked if I have talked to my father about how well the program is going. He seems concerned about what my father thinks of how the program is conducted. He knows my father is good friends with the head principal and wants to make sure that I am relaying that the program is doing well and that he is doing a good job. He has even said that as a former principal, do you see anything that can be improved? I did not answer the question, but talked around it. Today during the affinity meeting he asked me to share with the boys some of my experiences. I did not feel comfortable, because I wanted to maintain sort of an outsider role with the student participants. I did share out and did take

some questions. After the event Mr. Rogers called and asked if I would please tell my

father how well he's doing with "Can We Talk." Again, I talked around the issue.

(Journal entry, September 15th, 2014).

Throughout the study, I contemplated my role as a researcher. I am very passionate about the

education of all children, especially children who come from underrepresented ethnic, cultural,

and socioeconomic groups. So, it is of vital importance that I reflected on my purpose at the

research site and remained cognizant of my subjectivities to ensure that I conducted a quality

study. In the next section I discuss in detail the data collection methods employed during this

study.

Data Collection Procedures

According to Creswell (2007), "New forms of qualitative data continually emerge in the

literature…" (p. 129). These forms of data can usually be broken down into four types of

information: interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials (Creswell, 2007, p.

130). Yin (2009) notes that "the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full

variety of evidence—documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations—beyond what might be

available…" (p.11).   This case study design utilized interviews supplemented by observations,

photo/object elicitations, audiovisual materials, and documents in order to gain a deeper

understanding of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program.

Member checking and peer debriefing took place after each interview and at the end of

the data analysis. Table 3.1 provides an inventory of the data documenting the approximately

500 pages of raw data generated in this study.

Table 3.1

Raw Data Inventory

Data Source	Number of pages per event	Number of pages in total
Interviews	10 interviews x 5-10 pages per interview	100 pages
	5-10 pages per interview	
Journal Reflections	3-5 pages per session	100 pages
Member Checks	1-2 pages per observation	50 pages
Observations (17)	Journal reflections per observation	34 pages
	Video tapes	70 pages
	"Can We Talk" fieldtrips	
Archival	"Can We Talk" meeting agendas	
Documents	Emails	100 pages
	Artifacts given during interview sessions and	
	observations	
Peer Debriefing	10 interview x 3-5 pages per interview	
		50 pages
Total		504 pages

Note: I created this illustration to depict the approximation of pages that were generated as raw data. A total of 504 pages of raw data were collected.

Interviews

Interviews allow us to obtain information that observations do not. DeMarrais (2004) states that interviews are "… a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study" (p. 54). Yin (2009) posits, "One of the most important sources of case study information is the interview" (p. 107). According to Stake (1995), the "Two principal uses of case study are to obtain the descriptions and interpretations of others" (p. 64). It must be understood that the issue explored will not be viewed the same by every participant. However, "Qualitative researchers take pride in discovering and portraying the multiple views of the case" (Stake, 1995, p. 64). Through interviewing, qualitative researchers are able to explore multiple realities (Stake, 1995, p. 64).

The format of interviews can be classified into either structured or unstructured. Structured interviews have interview questions already planned based on predetermined information the researcher would like to obtain. By contrast, un-structured interviews do not follow a predetermined format and issues may arise as the researcher and participant interact with one another. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe the difference between the two as:

> The structured interview is the mode of choice when the interviewer knows what he or she does not know and can therefore frame the appropriate questions to find it out, while the unstructured interview is the mode of choice when the interviewer does not know what he or she doesn't know and must therefore rely on the respondent to tell him or her. (p. 269)

For the purpose of this study, the first round of interviews followed a structured format. Employing the research purpose and questions as a base, specific questions were developed. However, during the interview, the participants' responses to the questions prompted me to ask probing or clarifying questions. Through this structure, the interviews took on more of a semi-

81

structured format. The adult participants determined the location and time of each interview, while the student participants determined the time; however, the location was provided by the principal of the school. For example, two of the student interviews took place in a conference room located in the school library, while the other two took place in the school commons area. The first seven interviews of this study were one-hour interviews. For the questions utilized for the principal, co-founders, mentees, and non-mentees please refer to Appendices E, F, G, and H.

The second round of interviews conducted with the principal and co-founder, and the first interview with the second student mentee followed a structured format of a photo/object elicitation interview. However, the structured format turned into a semi-structured format depending on the response of the participant. During these interviews in order to elicit a deeper conversation with the participants, I asked each participant to bring several objects that reflected their time and experiences with the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. The photos and objects brought to the interview were determined by the participant. The interview started with the prompt, tell me about what you brought. I had several predetermined questions; however, the participant's response determined which questions I asked, and if I needed to ask any probing or clarifying questions. For example, when I asked the principal to tell me about what he brought, he stated:

> I brought really what I thought actually the artifact from the Lawrence Journal World has been hanging on my wall kind...kinda... really represents sort of the starting point the starting point initially again was bringing in the Black community leaders which work with our Black males that that was our group that was the most at-risk in terms of all the...the data points out outside of school in terms of unemployment or incarceration or all those types of things that but in school as well they... they were the most at-risk group

in terms of not graduating or being identified for special education services um out of school suspensions and those types of things so um that that that's really the main reason artifact that's really what started it.   Is this verbatim? It's very difficult to follow – lots of extra/repeated words ...?   Maybe add in dashes or ellipsis to signal pauses or re-directs?

The combination of open-ended interviews and photo/object elicited open-ended interviews allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program designed to work with students of color in a mainstream secondary high school. Through the form of elicited conversations using photos and objects brought by the participants, I was able to have conversations generated by the participants. This allowed me to gain additional and deeper insights into the experiences of the participants. Furthermore, the photo/object elicitation method collaborated and enhanced the information of the open-ended interviews. I also used member checks to assure the accuracy of the participant's responses to the questions. Johnson and Christensen (2012) postulate that participant feedback (or member checking) is an important strategy as the researcher shares his or her interpretations of participants' viewpoints and then the participant can clear up any misconceptions if present (p. 267).

Providing the participant the opportunity to member check or clarify data adds credibility to the findings.   The notion of member checking is further supported by Stake (1995), who writes that conducting member checks helps to "… triangulate the researcher's observations and interpretations" (p. 115). Besides member checking I employed other strategies as suggested by Bhattacharya (personal communication, 2014) in her advanced qualitative methods course. These strategies included being an active listener, paying attention to non-verbal communication clues, using interactive interview methods, and employing better wait time to give the

participants more time to respond to the interview questions. Adopting these strategies along

with member checking allowed me to begin to gain a deeper understanding of each participant

and the "Can We Talk" mentoring program.

Observations

Field observations provided the researcher with another source of evidence and allowed

for authentic data to be gathered in each participant's environment. For this study, I conducted

on-site and off-site observations of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. This included

observations at the research site as well as observations of off-site activities such as college

campus visits. Observations may be organized in several ways. Lincoln and Guba (1985)

classify the observer as being in a participant mode or non-participant mode. During the

observation the researcher makes the choice to be an active or passive participant, or a

participant whose role falls somewhere between (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). In this study, my

role fluctuated between being an active and passive researcher. Originally, I decided to take on a

passive role as I observed "Can We Talk" activities; however, several times as mentors were

facilitating activities, they asked me to share my thoughts or experiences with the student

participants. This brought me into an active role. Other times, I sat back and passively observed

the participants.

The observations I conducted are categorized as descriptive observations. Spradley

(1980) describes descriptive observations as follows:

> You will make descriptive observations whenever you look at a social situation and try to
>
> record as much as possible. It means approaching the activity in process without any
>
> *particular* question in mind, but only the *general* question, "What is going on here?"(p.
>
> 73).

In other words, through descriptive observations the researcher answers the who, what, where, why, and how about the environment being observed. Observations were performed using the detailed guide provided by Creswell (2007) (See Appendix I). Spradley (1980) identifies nine dimensions that serve as guides while performing descriptive observations. The observational points used for this study relied on Spradley's (1980) nine dimensions:

1. Space- The physical place

2. Actor (participant)- The people involved

3. Activity- A set of related acts people do

4. Object- The physical things that are present

5. Act- The single actions that people do

6. Event- A set of related activities that people carry out

7. Time- The sequencing that takes place over time

8. Goal- The things that people are trying to accomplish

9. Feeling- The emotions felt and expressed

For example, in one of my observations I noted,

The students sat in a circle. Mr. Jones and Mr. Charles sat in the circle with the students. I sat just outside the circle so I could see and take notes on the session. I noted that there were 11 boys: 2 Latino: 9 Black: and 2 White. The first question Mr. Jones led off with was:

1. How many of you live w/your father in the house? Only 2 out of the 11 boys stood up The second question was:

2. What makes you a man? Mr. Jones went around the circle and each student gave their own definition of what made them a man?

The third question was:

3. What type of girl would you like to date? Again the group went around the circle and each student gave their response.

After the questions were answered, Mr. Jones discussed the physical reactions that each boy had to the various questions. He also discussed some of the answers cited by the young men. He pointed out that some of the young men to him had the wrong definition of what made them a man. For example, one student discussed that his father had 16 children by nine different women. To him being a man was selling drugs and sleeping with a bunch of different women. That is what he witnessed growing up. The young man then had to leave early for football practice. Mr. Jones explained to the rest of the students that actions like that can lead to one race stereotyping another race. The young man was Black. Mr. Jones further elaborated using himself as a personal example. He told the students that he had recently gone through a divorce. That while he was going through the divorce the judge decided that his ex-wife could move back to Atlanta. He said he told the judge that as a principal he is responsible for a plethora of kids, but what the court is telling him is that he is not responsible for his own kid. (Observation, September 11th, 2014).

After preliminary analysis of the field observation, I compared the notes with my interview transcripts and reflections to sharpen my focus during subsequent field observations and interviews. This allowed me to investigate deeper into the experiences of the participants in regards to the "Can We Talk" mentoring program.

Document Analysis

Lincoln and Guba (1985) postulate that documents and records are two different sources of data. The authors state that a record is a "written or recorded statement prepared by or for an individual or organization for the purpose of attesting to an event … a document… is any written

or recorded material that was not prepared specifically in response to a request" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 277). For example, records would include journals, reports, and affidavits requested by the researcher. Documents would include items collected during observations, transcripts, and personal journals. Records requested and obtained included mission and vision statements, goal statements, and local and state assessments. Documents obtained during meetings and through email include "Can We Talk" meeting minutes, photos, videos, handouts, and other documentation of "Can We Talk" activities. The documents and records were examined to verify the data collected during the interviews.

Researcher Journal

Merriam (1998) describes researcher journals as "… an introspective record of the researcher's experiences in the field which include 'ideas, fears, mistakes, confusion and reactions'" (p. 110). Further, it is suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) that a researcher keep three distinct journals. These include (a) a journal of day to day activities and a timeline, (b) a diary that includes introspective and reflective notes, and (c) a methodological log to document decisions or changes made in regards to methodology and research questions or purpose. Through my second advanced qualitative course I was introduced to the idea of keeping a research journal. I kept one journal and within this journal I combined the ideas of Lincoln and Guba (1985). The following is an example of introspective and reflective notes from my journal.

December 2nd, 2014

I would not say that I can do anything in qualitative research really well. However, I am learning and getting better. I am also happy that I am getting more comfortable with NVivo. I still doubt myself and I feel like it should be harder. I hate asking for help because people who have been trained act like I should already know it. I actually enjoy

coding. I thought it was some mystical process, but I really enjoy Descriptive and In-

Vivo coding. I love looking at research from different points of view: Poetry and

Inductive Analysis.

The research journal helped me to stay motivated, remain focus, and process my thoughts on my

observations and experiences while conducting the research. The journals were analyzed in the

same manner as other documents. The use of a variety of data sources increased opportunities

for triangulation, rigor, and trustworthiness. These will be discussed later in the chapter.

Data Management and Analysis

The process of data management for this study consisted of using QSR NVIVO 10

software to categorize volumes of data. The software was used to organize transcripts,

documents, interviews, observations, journals, memos, videos, and basically all data related to

the purposes of this study. Once I got the majority of the data into the QSR NVIVO 10 system,

the process of data analysis followed.

Data analysis, according to Stake (1995), "… is a matter of giving meaning to first

impressions as well as to final compilations. Analysis essentially means taking something apart"

(p.71). Stake (1985) then goes on to suggest that after we break the observation, interviews and

other forms of data down we can then start to make sense, recognize patterns, and see how the

separate parts then relate to one another. Savin-Baden and Howell-Major (2013) suggest that

data analysis consists of "… characterizing, cutting, coding, categorizing, converting, and

creating" (p. 419). Finally, Merriam (2009) posits that data analysis involves "consolidating,

reducing, and comparing that data until it takes shape and creates meaning" (p. 175). From

previous conversations and in listening to my father, the other co-founders, and the principal, I

felt like I had a pretty good preliminary understanding of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program.

However, in previous conversations and in listening to *some* associates who taught in the buildings that employed "Can We Talk," I was not sure how the program had affected the sinews of the school. For example, some of the teachers privately suggested that they did not really see a need for the program at their school. For that reason, I used QSR NVIVO 10 as a qualitative tool to organize and classify my data. QSR NVIVO 10 allowed me to manage data such as interviews, observations, transcripts, videos, and other sources of data. The software provides a quick way to interrogate using search, query, and visualization tools. I analyzed the data using inductive analysis. In her advanced qualitative research methods course, Dr. Bhattacharya (2014) described inductive analysis as the researcher moving from the specific to the general (Personal Communication, October, 2014). Therefore, I collected my data and started breaking down the raw data into useable chunks, which then turned into codes. The codes helped me to organize and add clarity to the data. While I was coding I kept in mind the research questions and methodological framework.

To record the interviews I used my phone, which is an Android Galaxy 5s. This is the latest and most technological Android phone. I downloaded the Smart Voice Recorder application to my phone, a high quality voice recorder. After each recording, I transcribed each interview, re-read the transcription, and conducted member checks and peer debriefings. Furthermore, I transcribed my written observations of the interviews and my field observations and downloaded the information into the NVIVO 10 software. I also created analytic memos in the software and downloaded videos from YouTube on the "Can We Talk" program that were coded and used for analysis. Through the process of inductive analysis, general patterns and themes began to appear. Saldana (2013) defines a code as "… most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or visual data" (p. 3).

Furthermore, in qualitative data analysis, Saldana (2013) writes, "… a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes" (p. 4). Coding broke down the data into useable pieces that could be easily identified and recognized. In the subsequent sections I will detail the analysis processes used and provide some examples of the coding methods employed in the study.

One method of analysis used in this study was descriptive coding. Saldana (2013) states that "descriptive coding summarizes in a word or short phrase—most often as a noun—the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data" (p. 88). In addition Saldana believes that descriptive coding is applicable to most qualitative studies, but is most suited for beginning qualitative researchers learning how to code data, "… and studies with a wide variety of data forms (e.g., interview transcripts, field notes, journals, documents, diaries, correspondence, artifacts, video" (p. 88). Another coding strategy was also used to help gain a better understanding of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program.

In-Vivo Coding was also used to inform this study. Saldana notes that In-Vivo Coding, "… refers to a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record" (p. 91). In this coding system the actual words of the participants make up the codes. It is suggested by Saldana that In-Vivo Coding is appropriate for basically all qualitative studies, but particularly "… for beginning qualitative researchers learning how to code data and studies that prioritize and honor the participant's voice" (p. 91).

Another strategy of analysis that informed this study was analytical memos. Analytic memos help researchers reflect and document the "… coding process and code choices; how the process of inquiry is taking shape; and the emergent patterns, categories and subcategories,

themes, and concepts in your data-all possibly leading toward a theory" (Saldana, 2013, p 41). I

applied analytical memoing as I coded transcripts of interviews, observations, videos, and

researcher notes. I followed this suggestion of Saldana's: "whenever *anything* related to and

significant about the coding or analysis of the data comes to mind stop whatever you are doing

and write a memo about it immediately" (p. 42). I followed this suggestion after I coded, read,

and re-read all interview and observation transcripts. I wrote analytical memos to document my

coding process, code choices, my inquiry process, my categories, sub-categories, and themes.

An example of one of my analytical memos is demonstrated in Figure 3.3, below:

> From this interview with Dr. White I can see why he wanted to start the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. There was an underlying anger in his interview. This stems from how he was treated in the school district. As a Black administrator he was paid less than his counterparts. He witnessed the first hand inequalities of being a Black administrator in a mostly White school district. From the interview I also got the impression that he feels that many of his White counterparts did not respect his professional knowledge as an administrator, mostly because he was a person of color.
>
> This was also the first interview where I could feel the tension in the implementation of the mentoring program. For the most part it seems like everyone acted like it was a smooth implementation of the program. That everyone got along. Dr. White hints that there was some tension in how the program was going to be facilitated. It seems like he wanted a more hands-off approach and other or one Co-founder wanted a more hands-on approach. It seems like Dr. White wanted to direct it from afar and have others implement his curriculum. Overall, he states that the program made a positive difference in the lives of kids, but strongly hints that a program is only as strong as the people leading the program and the success of a program to an extent lies on the commitment of the administrator whose school the program is trying to be implemented in. He discussed how several principals supported the program, thus the program was successful. Another principal did not support the program as much, thus the program was not as successful in his school. DO I NEED TO ADD A NEW NODE ABOUT PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTING NEW PROGRAMS?

Figure 3.3 The analytical memo example was dated November 15th, 2014. This excerpt depicts my reflections and analysis from my first interview with one of the Co-Founders in regards to his experiences with the "Can We Talk" mentoring program.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is the process of identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes in qualitative data (Braun & Clark, 2006; Thomas, 2008). Through reading, re-reading, and careful analysis of the data, patterns started to emerge; these patterns later turned into themes for this qualitative study. The themes developed from the triangulation of the data sources. Furthermore, the themes aligned with the research questions and theoretical framework guiding this study. The data analysis consisted of different phases and I incorporated analytical strategies as suggested by Bhattacharya (2014), Saldana (2013), Creswell (2007) as well as others. The analytical process is iterative instead of linear as represented in Figure 3.4 below.

Figure 3.3 This figure is a visual depiction of the Thematic Analysis Process I used to help generate the themes of this study.

Phase 1: Familiarize self with data. It is suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) that the researcher should familiarize him- or herself with the data. This is done by re-reading the

data sets and taking notes while familiarizing oneself with the data. During this phase, I transcribed interviews, checked the transcriptions for accuracy, and then sent the transcriptions to the participants to verify that the transcription accurately reflected the nature of the interview. Once I received participant verification of accuracy, as recommended by Braun and Clark (2006), I re-read the entire transcription before coding began. As I read and coded the data set, I took notes about ideas and thoughts, and when I had an epiphany I stopped and wrote an analytical memo and linked it to the data set. Re-reading the data, transcribing the interviews, and member-checking with participants helped with the analysis of the data.

   Phase 2: Creating and clustering initial codes. Saldana (2013) posits that codes are words or phrases used to summarize a portion of language of visual data. He states that data "… can consist of interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journals, documents, drawings, artifacts, photographs, video, internet sites, e-mail correspondence, literature and so on" (p. 3). As suggested by Saldana (2013) I coded line by line, utilizing various coding methods. For the purpose of this study I coded all of my data sources. In-Vivo coding as detailed by Saldana (2013) was used for all interview transcripts and researcher summaries of interviews. Additionally, descriptive coding was used for field note observations, videos related to the "Can We Talk" mentoring program, analytic memos, and documents. In-Vivo coding, also known as verbatim coding, uses the exact words of the participants (Saldana, 2013; Creswell, 2007).   Saldana (2013) proposes that descriptive coding uses a word or a short phrase that is most often a noun to summarize the most basic topic or passage of qualitative data. I used the research questions and the methodological framework of the study to code the data. As I was coding I found that there were times when several codes could be assigned to one line, statement

or segment of data. In order to stay consistent with coding, I kept a copy of the coding system next to me and referred to it if I had a question about how a piece of data should be coded.

To familiarize myself with the coding system I coded manually at first. The method I utilized was introduced to me in my advanced qualitative data analysis course. I wrote notes in the margins, highlighted and underlined the text, and used Post-it [R] notes to flag data. As my research persisted I used NVivo 10 to help manage the data and assist with coding and thematic analysis.

Phase 3: Probing for potential themes. Themes are different than codes. Saldana (2013) summarizes the difference by stating, "… think of a category as a *word* or *phrase* describing some segment or your data that is *explicit*, whereas a theme is a *phrase* or *sentence* describing more *subtle* and *tacit* process" (p. 14). In probing for themes I first began to look for chunks of data that were similar in meaning. By searching for chunks of data that were similar and coding I started to notice and identify potential themes. Basically, I started by analyzing codes from each data source and then combined similar codes, which allowed those codes to blend into initial categories or themes. It is suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) that using thematic or conceptual maps can help in the search for themes in the beginning stages. I used a thematic map to assist me in recognizing salient topics and themes I was seeing as I was analyzing the data. Figure 3.5 is one example:
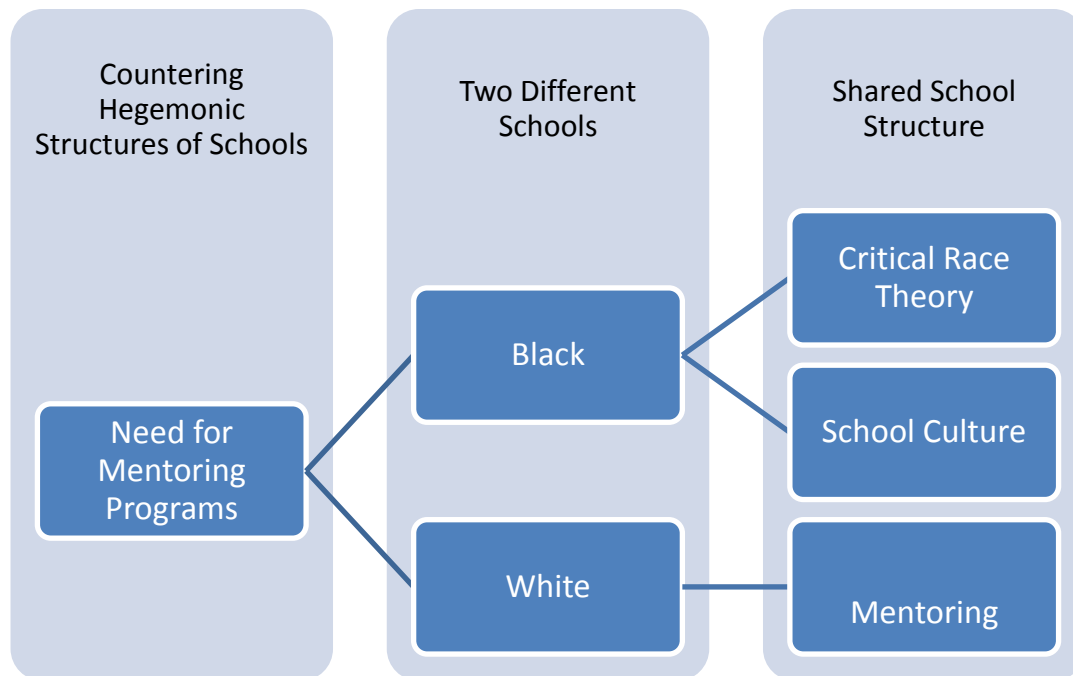
Figure 3.4 This is an example of the first thematic map I developed as I started to code the data. At this stage I evoked my research questions and methodological framework and started to combine codes into potential themes through more focused coding. During this stage I looked for more salient themes and re-evaluated the initial codes. Through more focused coding, potential themes were identified and I moved on to phase four.

   Phase 4: Checking the themes against the data: At this stage I developed themes and checked them against the data. I wanted to make sure the themes accurately represented the research that was being conducted. I reviewed all of the raw data, checking for additional data that I could have missed. Again, looking at the research questions and methodological framework, and using these to focus my gaze, I reflected back to determine if the themes were authentic to the data. The thematic map started to adjust itself and potential themes started to emerge. I have provided an example in Figure 3.6.

```
                    ┌──────────────────────┐
                    │  Mentoring Programs   │
                    │  For Students of Color│
                    └───────────┬──────────┘
                                │
          ┌──────────────────┐  │
          │Interest Convergence├─┤
          └──────────────────┘  │
              ┌─────────────────┼─────────────────┐
    ┌─────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐  ┌────────────────────┐
    │Needed to make│   │ Needed to Change │  │  "Can We Talk"     │
    │     AYP      │   │ the School Culture│  │  facilitated       │
    └─────────────┘   └─────────────────┘  │  conversations with │
                                            │     the staff       │
                                            └────────────────────┘
```
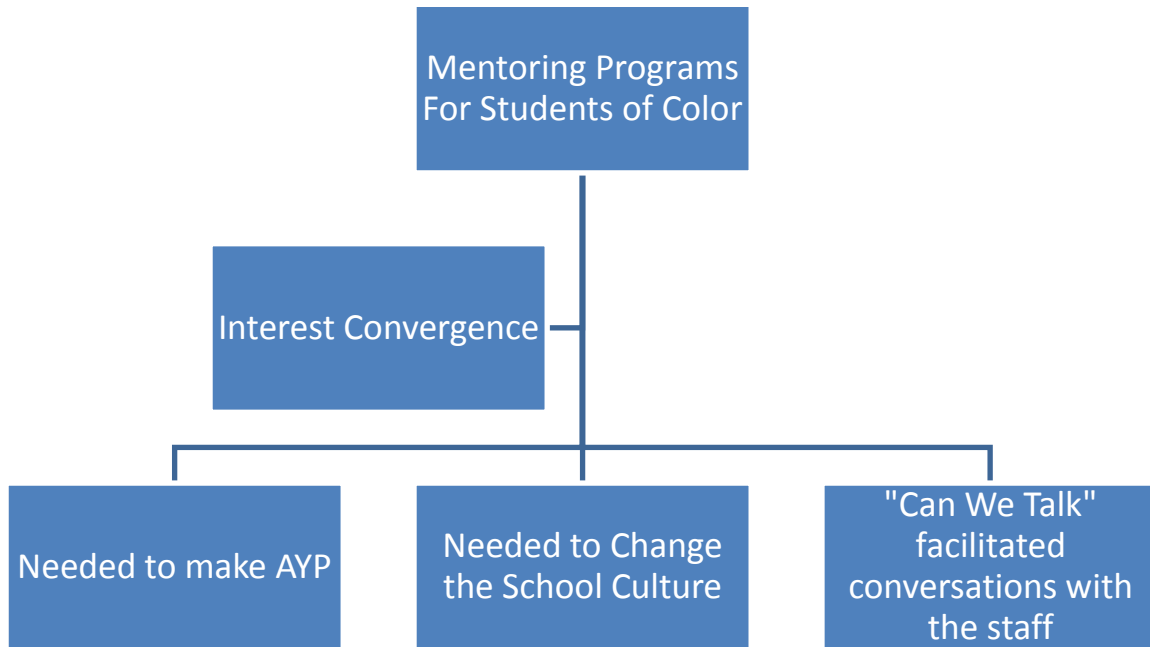
Figure 3.5 This figure demonstrates the development of the theme relating to Interest Convergence. In looking at the data interest convergence along with several themes separated themselves from several other potential themes. At the end of phase 4, I had four themes that really explained the data and the overall purpose of the research.

        Phase 5: Defining and naming the themes. During this phase I refined my themes and identified the core message of each theme. Braun and Clark (2006) suggest that the researcher should identify the substance of the theme and determine the aspects of the theme. During this stage, I reviewed data and looked at how the data and each code fit into the theme, and how the theme related to the overall purpose of the research. Furthermore, I conducted member checks to verify the themes and authenticate the experiences of the participants. The final theme names resulted from an exhaustive review of the data and were named to reflect the experiences of the participants.
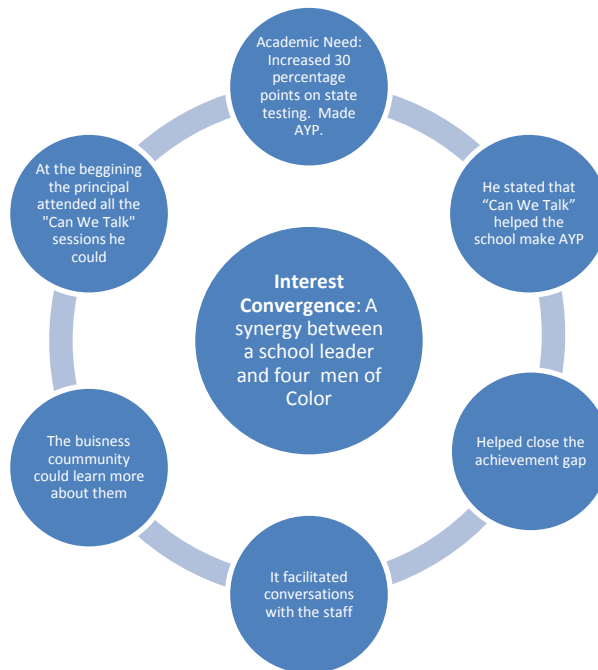
Figure 3.6. This figure provides an example of a theme created through an exhaustive analysis of the data. The center circle is the theme and the outside circles are examples of the codes used to generate the theme.

Phase 6: Final report: The last step was writing the final report detailing each of the four identified themes. During this last step I revisited the purpose of the research, the research questions, and the methodological framework to make sure the themes accurately portrayed the study. Furthermore, I made sure each of the themes represented the experiences of the participants involved in the study. The preliminary and final findings were confirmed through member checks with participants for their accuracy and rigor. Contributions and transferability closed out the final report.

Reciprocity and Ethics

As a person of color who has been a teacher, administrator, and a consultant who has worked with students of color, I had to draw a line between my role as a researcher and as a professional who advocates for the equitable treatment of students of color. Through research-

based methods of analysis, the integrity of this study was supported and validated. Furthermore, I maintained my integrity and the integrity of the study by allowing the research purpose, questions, and methodological framework to guide me as the researcher. Many times during the study I had to focus on the research methods and processes and not the preliminary products that were emerging. For example, I sometimes grew frustrated when observing mentoring meetings. It was difficult to sit there and listen to how some mainstream teachers treated the students of color and not offer any advice. In addition, when interviewing participants I had to make sure I was attentive and focused on the research questions for the purpose of the study and not ask questions designed to satisfy my personal curiosity. This was not an easy task, but I tried to focus on the research and allow it to guide my interactions with the participants. As I visited the research site and attended mentoring sessions I was conscious of what the mentors and mentees were giving me freely. Reciprocity, posits Creswell (2007), is when researchers give or pay back those who participate in the research. I demonstrated reciprocity by validating the experiences of the participants, listening to their stories, and respecting their environments. I also participated in mentoring sessions, when invited by the mentors and mentees, by offering my experiences as a person of color and as a professional educational leader.

While conducting the research for this study, I was cognizant of the issues surrounding anonymity and confidentiality. All participants completed the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board consent form approved by Kansas State University. The form included the origin of the research, why they were chosen for participation, the time commitment, the possible benefits of the study, how the management of potential risks has been considered, and how confidentiality will be approached. In addition, to ensure anonymity, only the researcher knew the actual names of the participants. Consent forms and contact information were emailed to

participants. If the participant was a student at the research site, regardless of age, the parent/guardian was also emailed a copy of the consent and contact information. At the start of each interview, I discussed the purpose of the research, consent form, and asked the participants if they had any questions. Once the participant acknowledged that they understood the purpose of the research I collected the signed consent form. All student participants regardless of age also had to provide a signed copy of the consent form from their parent/guardian. All participation was voluntary and participants were notified of where they could obtain the results of the study.

Academic Rigor and Trustworthiness

In order to create a study that contained rigor and trustworthiness I incorporated a variety of strategies that have been proven to be effective in case study research. These strategies included a sound research purpose as well as research questions that allowed for a deep and rich analysis of the data. Furthermore, I pursued purposeful sampling that followed a case study design and incorporated strategies for managing, collecting, and analyzing data. Additionally, I incorporated the advice of Lincoln and Guba (1985), who suggested that during field experiences a detailed log of daily activities, reflective log, and a methodological log be utilized. All field experiences were typed up the same day in order to increase their accuracy. Likewise, I made sure to transcribe all interviews accurately. After transcribing the interviews, I sent electronic copies to the participants to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. This member checking provided clarity for both the participant and me.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend three activities to increase the probability of producing credible research findings. The three strategies include prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation of data sources. Prolonged engagement in the field is

the time a researcher spends in order to achieve the purpose of the study. I invested considerable time conducting an exhaustive review of empirical studies in order to gain a better understanding of the educational and social issues affecting students of color. In addition, I delved into the primary literature centered on mentoring programs for students, especially for students of color, and what I found is that there is a need for more research in this area. I also dedicated time to conducting several interviews with participants, and spent several months persistently observing participants in their environments. Persistent observation is to "… identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant … and focusing on them in detail" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 304). Moreover, I engaged in an extensive saturation of the data through an iterative process of data analysis. This was outlined in the previous section on thematic analysis.

Triangulation was also utilized during the analysis of the data. Triangulation is the corroboration of results from multiple data sources to confirm findings (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Merriam, 2009). For the purpose of the study, I triangulated findings through multiple sources of data, which included observations, interviews, journals, analytic memos, videos, documents, and other sources of data. Yin (2009) writes, "the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence—documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations beyond what might be available in a conventional historical study" (p. 11). One of the processes qualitative researchers use to ensure credibility and rigor is reflection. Reflexivity "… means that the researcher actively engages in critical self-reflection about his or her potential biases and predispositions" (p. 265). I practiced reflexivity by keeping a personal journal in which I would write to clarify my experiences, assumptions, and thoughts regarding the research. In addition, whenever I was reading or coding and an idea, assumption, or thought came to me I immediately stopped and created an analytic memo. This allowed me to further reflect on my experiences

when it came to this research project. One of the last processes I engaged in was peer debriefing.

I engaged in peer debriefings with two peers during my research in order to review and discuss

the research process and findings.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) peer debriefing is the "process of exposing

oneself to a disinterested peer" for the purpose of "exploring aspects of the inquiry that might

otherwise remain only implicit in the researcher's mind" (p. 308). Engaging in the peer

debriefing process allowed discussions of findings and provided affirmation that the research

findings were credible. The application of the above techniques provided the necessary rigor and

credibility to the study.

Chapter Summary

In Chapter 3, I reviewed the rationale and methodological framework for this study. Next I offered the methodology used to help complete the research and my subjectivity statement. Additionally, I provided detailed descriptions of the research design, rationale, and selection for the research site, and the participant selection process. I then outlined the data collection methods and procedures. The data collection included interviews, participant observations, analytic memos, journaling, videos, and document analysis. Tables and figures were inserted to support and provide descriptions of the development of the findings. The final sections of the chapter provided a discussion on reciprocity, ethics, academic rigor, and trustworthiness. In the next chapter, I will provide descriptions of the participants who helped me complete the study.

Chapter 4 - Participant Profiles

A description of the participants will allow the reader to learn about the participants' experiences as described by the researcher and the participants. Descriptions will include the participants' personal background, physical traits, and information regarding their experiences at Everywhere High School and the "Can We Talk" mentoring program, and finally where the interviews took place. Combined, the adult participants in this study have over 100 years of teaching and administrative experience in both public and private schools. The student participants are all seniors and have attended Everywhere High School their entire high school careers. In order to gain an objective understanding of the "Can We Talk" program, several additional participants were included. These individuals include other mentees who were observed during field experiences, staff involved with the mentoring program, staff not actively involved with the mentoring program, and students not involved with the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. I did not actively seek out these additional participants; however, if a staff member or student volunteered information about the "Can We Talk" program I actively listened to the information they provided.

In order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity for each participant, the information reported does not reveal or identify them. All descriptions contain general profiles of the participants and descriptions of where they were interviewed. Each participant has a unique and varied story, and each depiction is written according to his or her individual and unique experience. Therefore, it is important that the reader carefully assemble a portrait of the individual and then see how these individual portraits combine to paint a picture of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program from the participants' point of view. Table 4.1 provides the selected demographics of the participants.

Table 4.1

Participant Demographics

Participants	Position	Race	Gender	School	Education Level
Mr. South	Principal	White	Male	Everywhere High School	M.Ed. Educational Administration
Dr. Old	Principal	African American	Female	Omnipresence High School	Ph.D. Curriculum and Instruction
Dr. White	Co-Founder Can We Talk Mentoring Program	African American	Male	Consultant	Ph.D. Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Butler	Co-Founder of Can We Talk Mentoring Program	African American	Male	Assistant Director Jobs for America's Graduates	M.Ed. Educational Administration
Sophia	Student Participation	African American	Female	Everywhere High School	Senior
Jackson	Student Participation	African American	Male	Everywhere High School	Senior
Aiden	Non-student Participant	White	Male	Everywhere High School	Senior
Mason	Non-student Participant	White	Male	Everywhere High School	Senior

Mr. South

My appointment with Mr. South was scheduled to take place in his office at Everywhere High School. The meeting was to take place in the morning, so I collected all of the items for the meeting the night before. Even though Everywhere High School is approximately three miles from my house, I did not want to forget anything and have to drive back home. As I drove to Everywhere, I thought about the interview and how I wanted to phrase the questions in order to elicit the maximum information. When I turned onto the main street in front of the high school, I noticed that the construction workers had made a ton of progress on the new developments. Everywhere High School was built on the land of a former farm. As a matter of fact, for years, a large cornfield sat in front of the high school. Lately, they had been developing the land to meet the growing needs of the city, which has continued to expand to the west. In front of Everywhere High school now sits a miniature shopping center. The shopping center contains a Taco Bell, a Starbucks, a frozen yogurt place, a Sprint store, and a Burger Stand. To the left of the miniature shopping center sits a multi-million dollar performing arts center. Across the street and to the right of Everywhere High School sits a newly constructed Walmart. I pulled into the main parking lot of the school and noticed there was actually parking right in front of the school. I gathered my recording equipment and note pad, and headed into the research site. It was a warm sunny summer morning. I entered the school through the main entrance. I was surprised not to see any of the summer school students in the hallway. They were actually in class. However, I did see a school resource officer in the hallway who had just exited the main office. As I entered the main office, I noticed two administrative assistants and another resource officer. He was complaining about exercising and the administrative assistants were verbally teasing him. I approached the first administrative assistant and asked if the principal was in. She said,

"Yes, but you should proceed at your own risk." She said, *"They were just going over graduation rates for this year's senior class."* I then proceeded to the principal's office. The principal's office is in a different location than it has been in the previous years. In the past, the principal's office was located on the left side of an interior hallway off of the main office. The office was very spacious and had big picturesque windows where one could look out onto the grounds of Everywhere High School. Presently, Mr. South's office is down the right side of the hallway and is located in an old storage closet that he had cleaned out. The past principal's office has been converted into a conference room where staff can hold parent-teacher conferences, meetings, and IEP's. Mr. South stated that he wants to be more accommodating to staff and families, and that his current office is more the size of the other administrators in his building. He noted the office better fits his personality.

The office walls have a fresh coat of yellow paint. A small round table is in the center of the office with three chairs surrounding it, one of which is a chair on wheels that Mr. South uses to role from the table to a computer desk and back. On the back wall is a picture that discusses achievement, and on the computer desk are individual pictures of his children. This office is small and there are no windows.

Mr. South is a White male, approximately five and seven inches tall and weighing approximately 140 pounds. He has sandy brown hair and penetrating blue eyes. The day of his interview, Mr. South is dressed in business casual attire. He is wearing a green polo shirt and brown dress pants. Recently, he has started running more in order to get in better shape, and he informs me that he had run a half-marathon in Colorado this summer and that he plans to run another one in the next couple of weeks.

I have known this principal for a couple of years so we already have a pretty good rapport. This past and current relationship has allowed Mr. South to be very honest with me about his feelings and thoughts. He greets me with a smile and a handshake. He then informs me that he is looking at graduation numbers and that he needs to get some teachers to understand that they are here for all kids and not a select few. We then talked about administrative tasks, students, and our families.

Mr. South was born in the Midwest approximately 30 miles west of Everywhere High School. He stated that he had very limited experiences with people of color. In his elementary, junior high, and high school experiences he said maybe he had encountered three Black students. Mr. South shared with me that at his first teaching job the school was approximately 85-90% White. He was a math teacher. During his first administrative experience he encountered more students of color, but he laughed as he stated that the school was still 70-75% White. His first job as a head administrator took place in a school that was 98% White. Presently, he states that this school is approximately 72% White.

Mr. South was selected for participation in this study as he is the head principal at Everywhere High School. He is one of the primary architects of the "Can We Talk" program, and is one of the main reasons the program was implemented and is being maintained in the school. Mr. South has been involved in education for over 20 years. The last 18 years have been in the role of a school administrator. As we were about to begin the interview process the associate principal peaked in the office to say hi to Mr. South. He asked Mr. South to stop by and see him after our meeting as he wanted to inform him about the data they had gone over this morning. The associate principal is a White middle-aged male. A former track and cross

country coach, he is dressed more business professional. He is wearing a blue dress, brown tie, and brown suit pants.

I explained the interview process and gave Mr. South the informed consent form. He read over it, signed it, and then I signed in the witness area. I then read the script to him, turned on the tape recorder, and we began the interview process. During our conversation Mr. South shared that when he took the job at Everywhere High School he thought the reason the school had not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) was due to their special education population. He soon realized this was not the reason. He stated:

> I interviewed for the position thinking we ha… had the challenge was special ed, but when I first arrived here indeed the challenge was special ed, but more so ... walking into the special education classrooms… there were maybe nine or ten kids per hour in a classroom, but if there were ten kids, seven of them were Black and out of the seven six would be males. There was one point in time… I think it was my second year where over 1/3rd of our Black … quickly it became auh... the focus wasn't necessarily on special ed… it was on students of color, and cause that was what was filling our special education classrooms… likewise the same issue at the… um you could walk into the advanced classroom or the AP advanced placement classrooms… you see mostly White students, so you saw two different schools.

After the recorder was turned off Mr. South and I continued to discuss the "Can We Talk" program. He lamented the fact that all of the original co-founders of the "Can We Talk" program were no longer involved with the program. He explained that due to other commitments and their present jobs the original co-founders were no longer able to be part of the program. He also shared his concern that the program was no longer following its original premise of serving Black male students. We then exited his office and walked towards the main office. I told Mr. South in a couple of weeks I would transcribe the audio, and that I would check with him to make sure my transcriptions were accurate.   I also informed him that I would be contacting him to set up a second interview. I thought and asked myself, if he did not know

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me would he have been so accommodating and direct with his responses? I then exited the building through the front door. As I was leaving, I noticed the parents were starting to pull up to the front of the school to pick up their students who were attending summer school.

The second interview also took place in Mr. South's office and lasted approximately one hour. During this interview I employed the photo/object elicitation method. This interview was very informative as the photo/object elicitation allowed the participant to take more ownership of the interview. Mr. South brought several photos and objects with him to this interview. During this interview Mr. South expanded on several of his previous statements. My first question to Mr. South was "tell me what you brought." From there I was quiet as Mr. South went through his photos and objects. He was very detailed in his explanations and thoughts. For example, Mr. South stated:

> I brought really what I thought actually the… the artifact from the Lawrence Journal World has been hanging on my wall kind… kinda really represents sort of the starting point… the starting point initially again was… was bringing in a… the Black community leaders which work with our Black males…that was our group that a was the most at-risk in terms of all the… the data points out outside of school in terms of unemployment or incarceration or all those types of things… that but in school as well they… they were the most at-risk group in terms of not graduating or being identified for special education services… um out of school suspensions and those types of things… so um… that… that… that's really the main reason… artifact that's really what started it…

To this first question alone, Mr. South spoke for several minutes. During this interview I felt I really got into the heart of Mr. South. His responses and thoughts were rich and detailed. After the interview, I thanked Mr. South and told him that I would transcribe the audio and check with him for accuracy.

Dr. White

Per our conversation, I agreed to meet Dr. White at the Big Biscuit. Big Biscuit is a local eatery that caters towards breakfast, and I wondered why we were meeting here. I was hoping

for a place that was a little quieter so that I would be able to record the interview. I gathered my stuff and headed to the meeting location. It was partly cloudy and I was wondering if it was going to rain. I parked in the parking lot and proceeded to walk into the meeting area. I noticed that the diner was playing music (50's and 60's diner music to be specific) in the background and the place was quite busy. Actually, I was a little concerned that my recording equipment was going to pick up all of the background noise and I would not be able to hear the interviewee.

Dr. White arrived approximately seven to ten minutes after we were supposed to start; therefore, I was concerned that he had forgotten me. The waitress then approached us and we proceeded to a booth in the back of the restaurant. There was a little girl who was about a year old sitting in a booth about two to three tables away. She was acting like a typical one-year-old. She was banging her spoon and fork together, laughing very loud, and she knocked the salt and pepper shaker off of the table several times. We must have looked very interesting to her because she kept waving and trying to talk to us. I knew I was going to pick her up in the recordings.

Dr. White is an African American male in his late 50's or early 60's. However, he could easily pass for a person in his late 40's or early 50's. His physique is of a former athlete, and as a matter of fact he competed in both football and track at the collegiate level. I constantly see him at the gym exercising to stay in shape.

At the time of our interview, his hair was neatly cut, and he was wearing a stylish pair of black-rimmed eye glasses. Dr. White was wearing a red and brown checkered sweater that sort of reminded me of a Mr. Roger's sweater, yet more stylish; he was also wearing a well pressed pair of brown suit pants and dress loafers. Dr. White and I talked for about 10 minutes before the recording process begin. We mostly discussed my dissertation, his experiences in obtaining his doctorate, and what I hoped to gain going through this process. He has been in the field of

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education for over 30 years. I then handed Dr. White the informed consent form and we proceeded to conduct the interview.

I have known Dr. White since I was young boy, so I have heard him discuss his childhood before. Dr. White was born in the South and when he was five his family moved to a city in the Midwest. Dr. White shared that he did not do not well in kindergarten and that he actually struggled up until the sixth grade. He then encountered a teacher who helped him to "*see*" the value of education. He also shared that he had coaches who took an interest in him and that his coaches were positive role models for him.

During our interview, Dr. White shared that he had become an elementary teacher after he graduated from college. Dr. White said, *"It was very hard coming through the system as a young Black teacher, especially in the Everywhere School District."* As Dr. White was talking, I could tell he was remembering some of the negative experiences he had experienced in this school district. At times I could see his frustration and hear the anger in his voice. This was evident when he shared, *"... as a building principal, I was the lowest paid building administrator um in the district even though folks came in the same time I did um making more money."*   Dr. White talked about several experiences such as this, and these experiences were some of the precipitating reasons for him in helping to start the "Can We Talk" program.

After the recorder was turned off, Dr. White asked the waitress if he could order a bowl of oatmeal with some fresh fruit on the side. Several minutes later, the waitress brought over a bowl of thick oatmeal (too thick for my taste), and Dr. White added the fruit to the oatmeal. While he was eating the oatmeal, we discussed our experiences in the pursuits of our doctorates. He shared that universities are making it so expensive to obtain advanced degrees that some universities and colleges are losing out on some really good candidates. I shared that frustration

with him and that I was scared, but I was too near graduation to turn back. When he finished his oatmeal, we stood up to leave the diner. The grandmother and mother said that they hoped the little girl did not interrupt our interview. We all laughed and Dr. White and I proceeded to step out into a cloudy summer day. As we parted, I told Dr. White that I was happy with our interview and that I would transcribe the audio and send it to him so he could check for accuracy. Dr. White's interview was very thorough; therefore, I informed him that we would only conduct a second interview if after he read the transcripts he found they were inaccurate.

Dr. Old

I drove to city about 30 miles West of Everywhere to interview Dr. Old, who is the principal at Ubiquitous Urban High School. As I drove to the school I took notice of the neighborhoods that surrounded the high school. Being a former principal, I was aware that security measures had increased in high schools, especially high schools in lower socio-economic areas, as this school is. I turned on the street on which the school is located. I noticed several houses seemed to be empty and boarded up. The businesses located close to the school included a Dollar Store, a thrift shop, and an automotive store. The stores all had bars on the windows and looked like they were in need of repair as well. I pulled in and parked in the lot right in front of the school. As I walked through the parking lot, I noticed the cameras on the light poles and two police cars parked right in front of the main entrances. When I entered the school, I passed through one set of doors and signed in. I was then buzzed through another set of doors. I noticed that the students were in uniforms; they did not have the same wardrobe freedom as their peers at Everywhere High School. The students at this school were required to wear green polo shirts with the school's insignia. The boys also have to wear black dress pants, while the girls are allowed to wear black pants or black skirts. I proceeded to the main office. After

entering the main office I was greeted by one of the administrative assistants, who checked to make sure I had an appointment with Dr. Old. She walked from around her desk to escort me to Dr. Old's office. Before entering the principal's office, I noticed the sign on her door, which read, *"enter the principal's office"* in Spanish. Dr. Old looked up and greeted me with a smile as I walked into her office. Given the demographics of her high school, I asked if she spoke Spanish. She said no, that she knew some conversational Spanish, but was far from fluent in Spanish.

Dr. Old is a five feet five inches tall, healthy, ebony colored female, who seems ageless. I could not get a read on her age. Dr. Old has black hair with silver highlights. Her hair is starting to become more silver, but is fashionably cut.   On the day of the interview she was wearing stylish black-rimmed glasses and large silver hoop earrings. Dr. Old was dressed in business attire – a mauve shirt accentuated with a dark purple scarf, a black sports coat, and well pressed black dress pants.

She informed me that she has been in the field of education for over 30 years. Her office is located down an interior hallway off of the main office. Her office looks like a typical principal's office. She has a big principal desk and two chairs in front of her desk where guest can sit. She has a big window that looks out to the front parking lot. However, I did notice the bars on the windows. We spent several minutes in small talk during which she shared with me that her daughter and I attend the same university. After several minutes of small talk, Dr. Old and I moved on to the interview process.

Dr. Old entered kindergarten in the late 1950's at the age of four in the state of California where most of the faculty at her school were Black. By age six her family moved to a town in the Midwest where all of the faculty members were White. This was a culture shock for a young

African American female student who had come from an educational environment that was rich and supportive for Black students. Dr. Old now found herself in an educational environment where the teachers had very low expectations for students of color. As a matter of fact, during her senior year, Dr. Old and several other students of color led a student walk-out of their high school to protest the way students of color were being treated. One of the educational experiences Dr. Old vividly remembers from high is an exchange she had with her high school counselor who recommended that she attend secretarial school. Specifically, Dr. Old stated:

> I encountered a counselor who… um a recommended that I attend secretarial school. She didn't know me, didn't hadn't reviewed my transcript… didn't know anything about me. I wanted to be a nurse at that time, but she told me that I wasn't college material, and so she recommended that I go to secretarial school, and I found out later she had told quite a few of my other female classmates the same thing. I think five of us have gone on to earn our doctorate and (laughs) interviewing them for my dissertation… they all said she was the impetus to drive them to prove her wrong.

Dr. Old shared that, before her position at this high school, she served as an assistant and later as associate principal at another high school. She noted that she began her career as a high school English teacher. I recruited Dr. Old to participate in this study after talking to several other adult participants. They informed me that Dr. Old would be able to provide background and historical context on the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. Dr. Old is one of the co-founders of the mentoring program and is the individual who decided on the name "Can We Talk." She stated, *"… the young men of color needed a program where they could talk."*

When the interview was completed, I informed Dr. Old that I would be transcribing her interview and that I would send the transcription to her to check for accuracy. Furthermore, I informed her that her interview was very thorough and that we would only conduct a second interview if, after reading the transcript, she felt that she needed to provide clarification.

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Mr. Butler

Mr. Butler (my father) is a 68 year-old dark ebony color African American male. He stands about six feet tall and weighs approximately 250 pounds. He has a deep voice that is often compared to the actor James Earl Jones. Mr. Butler is a former athlete who participated in track and played collegiate and professional football. As he has aged, one can see the damage years of playing football has done to his body. He is also one of the co-founders of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. Presently, he is the assistant administrator of a state directed program that helps prepare high school students for employment after they graduate. Mr. Butler enjoys his job, which allows him to travel throughout the state helping at-risk high school students' graduate and develop plans for after graduation.

Born in a major city in the Midwest, Mr. Butler is the only child of two parents who grew up on the south side of Chicago. Both of his parents had junior high educations, so they worked very hard and instilled the value of education to Mr. Butler. His father was a mechanic and his mother worked for the public school system as an elementary cook supervisor for over 40 years. As a matter of fact, his parents worked hard enough that they were able to purchase an apartment building on the south side of the city.

Mr. Butler grew up in the racially segregated public school systems of his hometown. He said:

> Um…I went to school primary school on the South Side of Chicago… um elementary school it was all Black, and it was cool… we had a good time and learned a lot. I went to high school… I went to two high schools… one was all Black, and the other one was predominately White. Uh… obviously at the Black school… we had no racial issues, when I went to the White school… we had racial issues, fights all kinds of craziness going on, and there was no mixing of the races period… not in the 60's.

A friend and I were invited to dinner at my sister's house with Mr. Butler, my mother, and my nephew. On the way to my sister's house my friend and I discussed our doctoral experiences and the differences in our respective institutions. My friend is a doctoral student at another university, and is presently conducting her research in the town of Everywhere. During dinner I informed Mr. Butler that I would like to complete his interview downstairs after dinner. After we finished dinner, Mr. Butler stated that he was ready to complete the interview. As Mr. Butler went downstairs, I went out to the car and grabbed my recording information and folder. I then joined Mr. Butler downstairs. I went over to the computer and printed off the guide sheet for the co-founders and the informed consent form. Mr. Butler and I sat at the poker table that had not been taken down from the night before. I explained the interview process and handed Mr. Butler the informed consent form. After Mr. Butler signed the consent form we started our conversation.

During our interview he shared his motivation for helping to organize and implement the "Can We Talk" program in several schools. He said, *"I was really dismayed to see how many young Black men number one were not finishing school, number two were going to jail at a phenomenal rate in Everywhere."* Mr. Butler was the director of the Equity Council for Everywhere School District and noted that for years he noticed that African American males were struggling academically and socially in the school system. He was interested in starting a mentoring program after he was approached by Dr. White and Dr. Old. Our conversation lasted a little over an hour.

After our conversation was over, I turned off the recording device and Mr. Butler shared with me that starting, implementing, and maintaining the "Can We Talk" program was very difficult. As he began to share with me some of the reasons for the difficulty, I immediately

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determined that we should have a second conversation in order to explore these new revelations. Additionally, I informed Mr. Butler that I would be sending him the transcripts and that I would like him to check for any inaccuracies. I also let him know that I would be contacting him to set up an additional interview.

The second interview took place in Mr. Butler's bedroom. The bedroom is quite spacious. The walls of the bedroom are painted a dark ocean blue. The floor is a wood floor that is stained deep reddish brown. A large king- sized bed sits in the center of the room, and at the end of the bed is a large white rug. On both sides of the bed are sets of dressers, which are stained the same deep reddish brown color as the floor. A little further over on the right side of the room sits a bigger dresser with a large vanity mirror. This dresser is the same color as the little dressers and the floor. To the right of the dresser is a big picture window with large white curtains. The window looks out on to the backyard of the house. To the right of the windows is a door that leads to the master bathroom. On the left side of the room is a big walk-in closet. The bedroom also contains two chairs at the end of the bed. One chair is a big brown lazy boy recliner and the other chair is a dark brown stained rocking chair. In front of the rocking chair is a light brown folding T.V. stand.

For the second interview I utilized the photo/object elicitation method. As I entered Mr. Butler's room I sat in the recliner at the foot of the bed. Mr. Butler sat in a rocking chair. He looked like a Black Santa Clause without the beard. He looks older than he did a couple of weeks ago. He shared with me that he is tired from all of the traveling and the demands of his new job. We talked a few minutes and I asked Mr. Butler to pull out the photos/objects that he had for our conversation. He located several photos/objects and we started our conversation. As in other interviews, I started the interview with the question, *"Tell me about what you brought*

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me." Mr. Butler displayed and described each of the items he brought for our interview. For

example, the first item Mr. Butler displayed was the program from their first "Can We Talk" end

of the year celebration. Mr. Butler was very proud of this item as he noted it was developed by

one of the first mentees of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. Based on our last interview, I

asked Mr. Butler to elaborate on some of the difficulties of starting a mentoring program. He

said:

> "Can We Talk" was a struggle… um dealing with the administrators, some of the
> teachers, some of your co-workers, parents, children… it was like they did not
> understand, they understood about race and prejudice, but they had no deeper
> understanding of how to deal with it, and how to teach their kids how to deal with it, and
> how to break that cycle of never being successful… of going to jail or drugs it.. it was
> disheartening.

He further shared sometimes it was frustrating because he could see the issues, for

example, Black male students failing certain courses or going to jail, and that as a mentor, he

could not always address them, because the district did not always see *"…how totally*

encompassing diversity has to be for it to totally be successful."

After the interview, I thanked Mr. Butler for his time and told him that I would send him

the transcripts for his verification. I then left Mr. Butler's room and headed for the kitchen,

where I found some leftover barbecue in the refrigerator. After borrowing some of the ribs, I

proceeded to leave my parents' house.

Sophia

I gathered my materials for the interview and headed up to the research site. The day was

very hot as the area is under a heat advisory. As I walked into the research site, I noticed the

research participant was already at the location. We greeted each other with a smile and

proceeded to walk over to the commons area. As we walked over to the commons area I noticed

two of the custodial staff working in the area. They were cleaning tables, moving tables, and buffering the floor. One of the custodians was a young female (22-27) and the other was a heavy-set middle-aged male. Both custodians were White. We sat at a table far enough away as to not bother them, and more importantly, I did not want their activities to interfere with my interview. However, as we sat down I noticed that the male and female custodian decided to work in our area. We ignored them and proceeded to move along through the interview process. Before we started the actual interview we had a brief conversation. The participant told me that her father was a lawyer and I told her I knew that as my sister is a local attorney as well. We talked about how hot it was and how the start of school was occurring soon. The participant then pulled out the informed consent form I had emailed her parents. She stated that her mother did not know where to sign the consent form so she just signed it under the signature line.

The participant who is an African American female is entering her senior year at Everywhere High School. She has shoulder length straight black hair and is in very good shape. She stands approximately five feet four inches tall and looks like an athlete. As she handed me the informed consent form that she has also signed, she informed me that she is 17, but would be turning 18 in the fall. She further shared that she is on the cheerleading squad and on the track team for Everywhere High School. I said good thing that her parents had actually signed the form. I then pulled out the informed consent form I had brought with me and had her sign it, and then I also signed the additional consent form. I then turned on the recording device and proceeded to interview the participant.

During our interview Sophia shared with me some of her experiences with the "Can We Talk" mentoring program, and how the program has had a tremendous impact on her academic

and social life while at Everywhere High School. I asked her how she became part of the

program, and she said:

> My… my freshman year Mr. Charles was just in the commons, and uh… he was just
> asking people if they wanted to come to the meeting…and I really just didn't know what
> it was about… but I had to sit here for an hour, so I was like I have nothing else to do…
> so I might as well go, and my sister also told me about it… so I just kind of got hooked
> after that (starts laughing a little).

Her specific involvement in the program and how the program affected her both

academically and socially will be discussed in the next chapter.

After the interview, I thanked the participant for participating in the study. I also

informed her that I would send a transcription of the interview for her to look over and to

validate if the information is correct. Furthermore, I informed her where she could locate the

dissertation when completed. I thanked her again and stated that her interview was pretty

thorough, and that I would contact her to go over the transcript, and we could go over any

clarifications if needed at that time. The participant then gathered her stuff, I gathered my stuff,

and we then exited the research facility. I let the female participant leave first; I felt that gave off

the right perception. As a middle-aged (40) male I did not want it to seem inappropriate walking

out of a school building with a 17 year-old female participant. As I was leaving, the female

custodian said to have a nice day.

When I walked out I noticed that it was a bright warm sunny day. I knew that the

participant's father was a successful attorney so I expected her to be walking to the Audi SUV

that was parked in the direction that she was walking. I was very surprised when she instead got

into a big pick-up truck that was parked on the other side of the SUV. I think it was a Chevy. I

was just surprised that a Black female would be driving a big four-wheel pick-up truck. I then

thought oh yea, her father is an attorney and probably put her in a big truck for safety reasons. I then got into my car, watched the participant pull off, and then pulled out myself.

Jackson

I drove up to the research site and parked in the handicap spot. I have my father's handicap hang tag, and I used it because I could not find any parking in the visitor's parking area. It was a partly cloudy day and I was in a hurry to get into the school building. As I gathered my stuff to walk in the building I noticed that I had not brought my computer with me. My computer had the photo/object elicitation questions I wanted to use for the interview. I could have proceeded anyway, but I decided to make the five to seven minute trip back to my house to obtain my computer. I drove home, obtained my computer, and came back to the research site. I walked into the building and in being stressed I forgot the name of the young man I was interviewing. All I could remember is that he was from Haiti. I walked in the front office and asked the secretary if I could speak to the head principal, Mr. South. The secretary replied that she had not seen him since that morning, but that his secretary was down in the cashier's office, and that I could check with her to locate Mr. South. I asked her if she had seen the assistant principal, Mr. Jones, and she stated that she had seen him earlier but not since that morning. I proceeded to walk down the hallway of the main office towards the cashier's office. I located the principal's secretary who informed me that Mr. South was in observations, and that she did not know when he would be available. I walked out of the cashier's office and proceeded down an internal hallway towards the assistant principal's office. As I approached his door, I saw that he was in a meeting. I then asked the athletic secretary and the assistant principal's secretary if a student had come to the office looking for me. At that time the assistant principal stepped out of his office to inform me that the young man had been down to the office and was looking for me.

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He told the secretary that the student was in a ceramics class and that it was OK to go obtain the student. The attendance secretary then stated that she would go get the student.

After a couple of minutes she returned with the student. I asked where we could meet. The athletic secretary stated that we could meet in the teacher's workroom, but that there would be teachers moving in and out of the room. I told her we needed a quiet place as the interview would be getting recorded. She then told us to use the conference room in the main office. However, I informed her that I thought an IEP meeting was taking place in that conference room. I had noticed the meeting when I was walking through the office. Being a former teacher and school administrator, I recognized the meeting that was taking place. The athletic secretary then stated that she would call the library to see if we could meet in one of their conference or classrooms. She called the library and they confirmed that they had a space for us.

The student and I proceeded to walk down to the library. I noticed all kinds of decorations, but I did not see anything representing the different student demographics of the building. As I peeked into several classrooms, I noticed teachers teaching, students checking their cell phones, and students working on group projects. On the way to the library, the participant stated that he was in a hurry this morning and had left his three objects on the table at home. He said, *"I can remember two of the objects but I cannot remember the third."* I said that was OK, and we would work with what he remembered.

When we arrived at the library the two librarians greeted us and one of them led us off to the right to a conference room. As I was setting up, I realized that I had forgotten the recording device in my car. I handed the participant the informed consent form and asked him to read over it before I got back. I then ran to my car to obtain the recording device. When I got back he was still reading the informed consent form. I gave him a little more time and then went over the

consent form with him. He signed the consent form. I witnessed it and then told him a little about me, my history, and what led me to this dissertation topic.

The mentee then told me he knew my father and that every student missed him, and that he had never heard one student have anything negative to say about my father. We then talked about what his future plans were, which consisted of going to either Boise Community College or Oregon County Community College. I asked why and he said he wanted to go to junior college to get ready for a four-year school. I asked why one of those two. He said he was familiar but would have to conduct more research in order to find the one that best fit him. I asked him if he knew the three objects that he was going to bring with him, and he said he could only remember two. At that point I handed him a piece of paper and asked him to write them down. As he wrote them down, I took notice of his physical appearance.

Jackson is a middle to dark-skinned African American male. He stands approximately five feet seven inches tall. His hair was neatly cut in a up-to-date style, and he was wearing a blue polo shirt with a pink polo horse logo, black shorts with white vertical and horizontal stripes, white socks pulled up to mid-calf, and white athletic shoes. As he was writing down his objects, he said that he remembered the third object. I then thanked him and started the recording device.

This is the first student with whom I had incorporated the photo/object elicitation style of interview method. This style worked really well with this student. I used the same opening question as I had used with the two previous participants. I asked the mentee to tell me about what he had brought me. This interview was very powerful. I could see the emotions in his face as he described the objects. Additionally, I could see the happiness in his eyes as he recalled some of the people that were connected to the object. Unfortunately, I could also see the sadness

in his eyes as he talked about some of the people who were no longer in his life on a daily basis. One of these people was his father, who had stayed in Haiti. He said he missed his father and had not seen him since he was approximately two. That is when his mother and he came to the U.S. However, he said he does get to talk to his father sporadically on the phone. As a father of a young son, I felt my heart ache for this young man. I could not imagine being away from my son for so many years. The mentee shared with me that he had been a member of the varsity wrestling team at Everywhere High School since his freshman year. When I asked him to give me an example of how the "Can We Talk" mentoring program has had an effect on him, he said, *"... without "Can We Talk" I really wouldn't know what to do right now about college and also without Mr. Jones I probably wouldn't have taken my ACT's this year."*

The role "Can We Talk" has played on the academic and social career of this student will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Aiden

I printed off my material and headed over to Everywhere High School. I encountered this fourth participant in the Commons area. There was a plethora of students sitting in the commons area when I arrived. Usually, there are not so many students sitting in the commons area at this time. The participant explained to me that it was picture day and that was why so many students were sitting in the commons area. We then proceeded to the office area where we encountered the assistant principal. He was entering the head principal's office. After he came out, I asked if we could use the conference room in the main office for the interview. He stated that we could. The student and I then proceeded to the conference room. However, as we got to the conference room another meeting had already started. The participant and I then proceeded to the library where we used one of the four library conference rooms.

Before the interview, I shared a little about myself with the student.   The student

informed me that he knew who I was and that he knew my father and my nephew. The student

and I then went over the informed consent form and he handed me a copy of the form already

signed by his mother as well as himself. I had emailed the informed consent form and several

other documents explaining the research several days prior to our meeting.

This first non-mentee participant is a White male who is approximately six feet and two

inches tall. He is a member of the varsity basketball team. He has played on the basketball team

since his freshman year; as a matter of fact, he is a two-time all-conference basketball player.

Furthermore, the participant has an excellent academic record. He is a member of the national

honor society, the principal's honor roll, and scored a perfect score on his ACT.

On this day he was wearing stylish white t-shirt with a logo that I was not familiar with

(probably due to my age), a pair of in-style blue jeans, and the latest pair of Nike cross-trainer

shoes. He also was wearing an expensive watch on his left wrist. With his blonde hair, blue

eyes, perfect smile, and athletic frame, the participant fit the stereotypical image of a high school

student athlete.

After I obtained the informed consent form, I turned on the recording device and the

participant and I started our conversation. During our conversation, the student informed me that

he did not know much about the "Can We Talk" program until Charles, the site director,

approached him the day before to inform him about the mentoring program. The participant

informed me that Charles noticed the participant and me talking a couple of days before in the

commons area. He informed Charles that I had asked him to participate in my study. Charles

then asked the young man to watch the "Can We Talk" promotional video in the library. The

student then informed me that he found out that the program was designed to help students of

color succeed academically and socially in school. Furthermore, he shared with me that the program has helped reduce the achievement gap at Everywhere High School. I asked him what he knew about the program before he watched the video. He shared that he basically knew nothing about the program. He had heard it mentioned on the announcements but had never discussed the program with any students, teachers or administrators. As a matter of fact, he thought the program was only for Black students prior to watching the video

After the tape recorder was turned off I asked the participant about his use of the term "students of color." He stated he learned the term from watching the promotional video, talking to Charles, and in reading the informed consent form before signing it. I told him that was the appropriate term to use and that he was ahead of the game for using this term. We then talked about his upcoming school year and his upcoming basketball season. I told him that I was going to send him the transcription to look over. I explained that I would transcribe the interview word for word and what I planned to do with the information he provided. The participant's interview was very thorough, so I informed him that we would need to meet again only if he found any inaccuracies in the transcript. Furthermore, I felt that his interview had been tainted by the site director. The implications of the site director's conversation with this participant will be discussed in the next chapter.

I then parted ways with the participant and headed out of the research site. However, I wondered how the student's answers would have differed if Charles had not interacted with him. I also wondered why, if the program had been there for seven plus years, more students of the dominant culture were not aware of the reasons for the program.

Mason

I went to the research site at approximately 10:15 am. As I entered the research site I noticed a plethora of students moving through the commons area. I encountered the assistant principal in the commons area and asked him what was going on. He told me that the students were returning from an assembly. The assemblies are broken into two sections. The first assembly this morning was juniors and seniors.

As the juniors and seniors were moving through the commons area I noticed a big young man wearing a (Name deleted) University polo. The student then approached me and asked if I was the person who was going to interview him. He asked if he was supposed to come with me now or just go to class. I told him to go to class and that I would go talk to the administration about getting him a pass. I did not want his teacher to count him absent. While I was standing there with the assistant principal who is now in charge of the 'Can We Talk" program, I noticed that they were using the electronic banner in the school to promote the "Can We Talk" program. There was a scheduled mentoring meeting for that afternoon at 2:15.

I wanted to make sure that I was following the proper protocols of the school. The principal gave permission to have one of the counselors call the student out of the class to complete the interview process. The student and I first tried to use the conference room; however, there was a teacher in a parent meeting. The head principal then moved us to the conference room in the library. Before we started the interview process, the student and I talked about college sports and the fact that his father had taught and coached my brother and me. Presently, his father is now coaching at the middle school level, and is coaching my nephew.

Mason is also a White male who is a senior, and has attended Everywhere High School since his freshman year. He stands approximately six feet-five inches tall, and weighs

approximately 230 pounds. He is a member of the varsity football team, a merit scholar, a

member of the principal's honor roll, and has accepted a scholarship to play football at a major

university. On this day the student is wearing a polo shirt that represents the university he will

be attending, a pair of blue jeans, and the latest pair of Nike cross-trainers. He has brown hair,

blue eyes, and looks like a major college athlete.

Before I turn on the recording device, the participant and I went over the purpose of the

study, and he handed me a copy of the informed consent form, which was signed by the

participant and his parents. I then turned on the recording device to start our conversation.

During our conversation the participant shared with me that he thought:

> … it was just for Black people and auh... I was never really I don't know I... I didn't
> really think I was invited I... I mean... I didn't really know anything about it... I thought it
> was just…ahu… for like Black people... just to talk, and just that stuff... I really didn't
> know anything about it.

The student also stated that he had never really had any discussions about the "Can We

Talk" mentoring program with any students, teachers, or administrators. He informed me that he

had heard the program mentioned on the school announcements, but it was hard to hear the

announcements with so many students talking. I asked this student if he had ever had any

interactions with any of the mentees of the program. Again, the student said not really; however,

he did inform me that he had heard some negative comments about the program. He shared with

me that some of the students in the program were upset because,

> …the "Can We Talk" students would come back bragging about leaving school, going on
> fieldtrips, and eating out. Some of the other students thought it was not fair, that these
> students were eating out… while they had to stay in class and complete work.

After our conversation was over, I walked with the mentee down to the main office in

order to obtain a pass back to class. The student informed me that he was concerned with

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confidentiality and the only reason he agreed to meet with me was because of my relationship with his parents and coaches. I assured the student that his identity would remain anonymous. Furthermore, I informed him that I appreciated his candid nature and the honesty with which he answered the questions. I informed him that I would be transcribing the conversation, and that I would send it to him for verification of accuracy. His interview was pretty thorough, so I informed the participant that we would have to meet again only if he found any inaccuracies in the transcript. The student was given a pass and he returned to class.

When the student returned to class, I walked through the commons area towards the front doors of the research site, and I took notice of the facility and watched groups of students interact with one another. As I was leaving, I was taking a snap shot of each group in order to ascertain whether or not any of the groups consisted of students from mixed racial or ethnic groups. Sadly, as I left and walked towards my car in the parking lot, I did not see any mixed groups. Again, I had a sense of puzzlement: if the "Can We Talk" program is doing so many wonderful things, then how come there was not more diversity within the groups I saw?

Researcher Thoughts

During my conversations with the participants each one shared very intimate and powerful stories. In reflecting back on stories of each participant, I wanted to capture some of the powerful words each shared. The interviews of each participant were transcribed and these transcriptions were then downloaded into the NVivo 10 qualitative software system. As noted in Chapter Three of this dissertation, NVivo 10 is a qualitative software program that allows researchers to organize their data. One of the especially useful features of NVivo 10 is it allows the researcher to interrogate data using the search query. In order to use this feature, I opened the NVivo software and clicked on the query tab located at the top of the page. Next, I clicked

on the word frequency tab, which brought up another box. In this box, I selected the sources on

whom I wanted to run a word search query. I selected from my internal sources, the transcripts

from the interviews, and my interview summary observations. I ran the query for the most

frequent 1000 words with a minimum of three letters. Figure 4.1 displays the results of the

query.

Figure 4.1 Word cloud of words used by the participants during their interviews.

Summary

This chapter provided a context for this study by describing the research site and the "Can We Talk" mentoring program through the eyes of the participants. Descriptions of the participants helped the reader to gain a better understanding of the social and academic issues faced by each participant in regards to their experiences and interactions with the "Can We Talk" mentoring program at Everywhere High School. Also provided was a summary of the demographic data of the participants. The rich information collected through in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to develop a better understanding of the research site and "Can We Talk" mentoring program. The next chapter will discuss the results of the study.

Chapter 5 - Findings

This study is grounded in the methodological framework of Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT originated from Critical Legal Studies (CLS), which manifested during the civil rights era to challenge the fundamental concepts of law, property, and privilege in the U.S. legal system (Lynn & Adams, 2002, p. 88). CRT is based on several tenets and these tenets have continued to evolve and can be readily applied to a plethora of social institutions that claim to be based on neutrality, objectivity, color blindness, and meritocracy. According to CRT, such institutions actually camouflage the interest of the dominant culture, thus leading to institutional and cultural hegemony.

One social institution in the U.S. used to promote social and cultural hegemony is the educational system. Schools often marginalize the cultures of non-dominant members of society. The tenets of CRT offer a framework to explore and counteract the marginalization of non-dominant cultures and people of color in institutions that are based on false ideologies such as color blindness and meritocracy. In the case of this research, several tenets of CRT were used to explore the "Can We Talk" mentoring program designed to work with African American male students in a predominantly White educational setting.

The findings in this chapter provide an ephemeral representation of the participants' perspectives, beliefs, principles, and experiences as they relate to the implementation and maintenance of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. I refer to these representations as ephemeral because the mutual understanding of the participants' experiences as well as mine were filtered through my cognitive thoughts and methodological framework as I conducted this study. It would be erroneous to claim that I captured the fixed nature of the program or that my results can be replicated. Nevertheless, what I do claim is a rich and thick description of the

participants' experiences. In addition, I co-constructed narratives with the participants, which are subjected to change as the participants interact within a school and mentoring program that both continue to evolve and expand in order to meet the growing needs of a diverse student population.

My goal in conducting this case study was to share the participants' authentic experiences in a manner that resonates with the reader. Focusing on the research purpose, questions, and methodological framework helped guide me as I was managing, reducing, and analyzing tremendous amounts of raw data. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How are the tenets of CRT manifested in the dimensions of the school implementing the mentoring program as perceived by:

A) The principal,

B) Leaders of "Can We Talk" (directors of the program, mentors),

C) And the students?

2. How did "Can We Talk" shape school culture (shared meanings of symbols, artifacts, and behaviors) as perceived by:

A) The principal,

B) Leaders of "Can We Talk" (directors of the program, mentors),

C) And the students?

This chapter provides a case study analysis and detailed look at Everywhere High School in terms of its implementation and maintenance of a mentoring program designed to work with male students of color. Everywhere High School's case study analysis is divided into four themes: (a) interest convergence: a synergy between a school leader and four men of color; (b) experiential knowledge: enhancing lives through the sharing of my experiences: (c) race: not just

a Black thing anymore; and the final theme, (d) through the sharing of our stories we gain our voices. The chapter concludes with a summary of findings.

Research Site

I am excited as I drive up to Everywhere High School to begin my first official day as an educational researcher. I have been fortunate to work in a variety of educational settings, including juvenile correctional facilities, and urban, rural, and suburban schools. As I drive up to Everywhere High School I notice some distinguishing characteristics in the campus that distinguish it from other suburban high schools, even though many have the same features and similar designs. Everywhere High School is not the exception; it is located in a middle to upper middle class socioeconomic area. On one side of the building is a new development of eateries catered to high school students that have an open-lunch period. Nestled on another side of the school is a residential area whose open backyards meet the school grounds. Lastly, several athletic fields surround the school. This includes the football, baseball, track, and soccer fields each outfitted with the latest amenities designed to recruit student athletes and their families to the Everywhere's athletic programs. Yet, with all of these typical suburban features, Everywhere's own personality still shines through.

As I drive up to Everywhere High School following the road that turns into the first set of parking spaces, I see several small groups of students in the field in front of the building as well as several groups of students conversing by the front doors of the school. I am surprised by this fact as it is still summer and I assumed many students would still be on their summer break. Regardless, what I do like about visiting schools in the summer is that I do not have to fight with students and or their parents for the limited parking spots. Today, I find a parking spot right in front of the school.

It is a hot and windy summer day as I walk to the front of the school. I hear one student complain about having to be in summer school, but she needs to make up credits in order to graduate on time. Entering the school, I am welcomed by signs asking all visitors to check in at the front office, banners displaying various state and national awards for academic excellence, and posters reminding the students of all the extra-curricular events that will be start in a couple of weeks. As I continue to walk towards the office I pass through the student commons area that is illuminated with artificial and natural light. Honestly, Everywhere High School genuinely feels welcoming to guests. I walk to the front office where I am greeted by two teachers and one of the school resource officers. All are very friendly, and I inform them that I am here to observe the "Can We Talk" leadership meeting. The administrative assistant sitting closest to me informs me that the meeting is in the library and that Mr. South, Mr. Jerome, and my father are already down in the library waiting for the student leaders to arrive. The school officer tells me, "Hurry down there because the pizza for the meeting has arrived and high school kids can be dangerous when competing for free pizza." I am really excited; I get to watch the "Can We Talk" program in action.

Everywhere High School serves approximately 1500 students from grades nine through twelve. Students who are not considered White make up approximately 29 percent of the student population. Like several other schools in the district, Everywhere High School has implemented and maintained the "Can We Talk" mentoring program, which is designed to work with students of color. Just outside the office the hallway to the right leads to a group of classrooms located on the first floor. The hallway leading forward or to the left leads the visitor into the commons areas. Proceeding left through the commons area the visitor would be able to access the two gymnasiums, swimming pool, music hall, and cafeteria. Moving straight through the commons

area one would find a set of stairs leading to the second floor or another hallway leading to another set of classrooms and the library, which is located on the first floor. Today, I go right. The campus is quiet except for the few classrooms that are occupied by the summer school students and the few teachers. I encounter a few summer school students and teachers on my way to the classroom where the "Can We Talk" meeting is taking place. Before I can make my way to the classroom a bell rings, signaling the end of the summer school day. At that point, several groups of students scramble out into the hallway excited to enjoy what is left of their summer day. Through the rush of students' laughter and conversations, I finally reach my destination and participants.

"Can We Talk": In the Beginning

The "Can We Talk" program was created for a myriad of reasons. Mainly the program was created in order to help male students successfully navigate the hegemonic structures present in some schools. However, to understand the nature of the "Can We Talk" program, we must first understand the desires of the co-founders in the creation of the mentoring program. Dr. White spent the bulk of his educational career in this school system. Dr. White states one of the reasons he became involved in the program was:

> Of all of the precipitating things, with me, being a leader in the Everywhere Public Schools… I would see a number of my students… um ... from the elementary level not graduating from high school over the years, over the year, over the years, not coming out on the other end, and I often wondered what was happening to them, and it so… it of kind like made me realize then that I knew there was a problem going on. I just couldn't quite identify what the problem was as to why they were not coming out and graduating. Once I went to the high school it… I… it became very… very clear why some of these students were not coming out on the other end (heightened tone in his voice)… um sometimes the whole idea of building... the ethos of a building… the milieu… just makes it very difficult for some students to feel connected in the school, and being… Seeing the value of coming out on the other end, that to me was a key piece for me to realize (slowing down to ponder), then that it's not happening for some kids in that process.

One of the main groups Dr. White noticed not graduating from this high school were African American males. According to Dr. White, the phenomena of African American males not graduating had been a topic of concern and discussion for years among some in the local Black community. So, after years of having conversations among themselves, Dr. White and the other co-founders decided that they needed to help facilitate a change in the schools in order to help the young men of color. Thus, they teamed up to form the "Can We Talk" mentoring program.

One of the main advocates for the genesis of the mentoring program was Dr. Old. Dr. Old's reasons for starting the "Can We Talk mentoring program were the same as the other co-founders. After years of working in public schools, she was well aware of the social and academic achievement gaps that were affecting African American males. As a matter of fact, Dr. Old had previously started a program for female students of color and had noticed that their academic and social success had improved after the implementation of the program. Dr. Old thought that a similar program for the males could increase their chances of being successful in school as well. One of the motivating factors for Dr. Old in implementing the "Can We Talk" program was the silencing of the voice of the Black male students. She states:

> you know, because that seemed to be what the boys were missing out on, an opportunity to really speak up, and share their frustration, but also show their skills and their intellect… um… they didn't really have a lot of freedom to do that at Omnipresent High School, then I realized (searching her thoughts)… um… that's kind of been a historical issue there (shaking her head at the thought) within the city and at the school (confirming her statement)… um… of the suppression of the voice of the Black male…

Dr. Old, who decided on the moniker for the mentoring program, was motivated to give the African American males a voice in the school. Through their individual and collective voices the boys would then gain a level of motivation and confidence to succeed in school. However,

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she knew the boys needed to hear the voices of adult males who had been in their shoes. They needed to hear and see males who looked like them and who had successfully navigated the school system. One of adult males who could fit this role was Mr. Butler.

Mr. Butler had vast experiences in working with students of color as well as community members before becoming involved with the "Can We Talk" program. Some of his experiences include coaching and facilitating youth sports leagues, serving on the boards of several community organizations, serving as a principal for several charter schools, working as a consultant for private educational firms, and also serving as the Director of the Equity Council for the school district in which Everywhere High School is located. According to Mr. Butler these insights gave him the opportunities to see the plight of African American male students. Mr. Butler's motivations for getting involved with the formation of the "Can We Talk" program were how his own kids were treated, and how Black students are still treated in schools today. He describes his motivation by saying:

> It goes back to the mid 80's when I saw my kids coming through the system (thinking out loud)… um at the Catholic school. They were at and then how they came and how they were treated, and how we reacted to them in the public schools and to see how the Black males were being treated and the circumstances they were coming from and they all had social challenges, academic challenges that were not being met.

He continued, explaining another reason that he get involved was that he was dismayed by the number of Black males not finishing school and the numbers of Black males being adjudicated in the city in which he choose to live. To help facilitate changes and give the Black male students an opportunity to succeed, Mr. Butler along with several other Black individuals formed the "Can We Talk" mentoring program.

"Can We Talk"

        The "Can We Talk" program was the brainchild of Dr. Old and Dr. White, who

were sitting in a Courageous Conversations conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. Specifically,

they were sitting in a presentation where another Midwestern school district was addressing the

needs of Black male students. Dr. Old stated that this presentation made her think about the

issues the Black males were experiencing in her school. Consequently, the presentation inspired

Dr. White and her to design a plan to help the Black males at Omnipresent High School. Dr. Old

recalls:

> We attended the first... um summit… um on Courageous Conversations in New Orleans,
> Louisiana and so Mr. Craig Butler, Dr. Willie White and I had gone representing
> Everywhere Public Schools and I think Dr. White the University of (Midwest
> University)… and so we attended a session in which educators from… um ... a Minnesota
> High School, I believe had a program in which they addressed Black males and their
> unique issues. I was an administrator at Omnipresent High School, and I recognized you
> know some of those same things that they talked about were issues for the boys at
> Omnipresent, so Dr. White and I attended that session, and we started talking… and
> ended up sitting beside each other on the airplane ride back, and… um said why… why
> can't we do that at Omnipresent High School. Why can't we work with the boys, so…
> um started thinking and writing some notes, so when we got back we immediately set out
> on the task formulating that group… um, and… um, I just came up with the title "Can
> We Talk"…

Dr. White also cites the presentation as one of the seminal factors in the creation of the

"Can We Talk" program. He says:

> I went to a session in New Orleans with the Pacific Educational group. There was a
> program that…um… that when, I went to a session regarding working with African
> American males. All this time I realized that African American males were a key group
> not coming out of the high school on a regular basis, so when I saw that program Dr. Old
> and I were sitting in the same session, and we're looking at each other as the presentation
> was going on, and we realized than this is something we may want to explore further. On
> the way back… on the plane sat down and mapped out a plan…what we can do to make
> this thing happen, so we agreed upon having bringing some people in to have these
> conversations about what could be done as a result of what we saw in workshop. That
> involved you know Craig Butler, that involved Ed, that involved Bud, those are the guys
> I've been talking with over the years about what could we do as community members to

bring about the change we want, so that in turn led us to… um to starting this program with the support of Dr. Old who was at the high school… um associate principal she was very… very instrumental in allowing us to get this thing off the ground and providing the leadership we needed during that the time. So, that's how the program… um it was kind of like ...auh... the infant idea… to becoming a reality over a period of time. That kind of gives... ya a little break down about that process… ya know.

Mr. Butler echoed the statements of Dr. White and Dr. Old. He says that he watched how Black males were treated in the schools for years and that:

I would talk about it with Willie, Ed and I would talk about it… Bud and I would talk about it, we all would talk about it excitement in his voice). Willie went to New Orleans with Beryl Old for the conference on a summit on race through the Pacific Institute Glen Singleton and they came back Willie and Beryl came back with the idea, we talked about it, we put it together, and (with pride in his voice) we made it happen…we made it happen.

The "Can We Talk" program started at Omnipresent High School, which is the other high school in the Everywhere School District. Dr. Old, who was serving as one of the associate principals at Omnipresent High School, helped to ensure the implementation of the mentoring program at this location. The success of the program soon spread to other schools in the district. One of the schools that became interested in the program was Everywhere High School. Mr. Butler recalls the principal from Everywhere High School attending one of their sessions and asking for the program to be implemented in his high school. Mr. Butler in one of his interviews said:

Um… we were doing the "Can We Talk" program at Omnipresent High School and Mr. South from Every, the principal at Everywhere High School came over observed, heard that we had good things going on, and talked to us about bringing it to his school. I wasn't really keen on the idea, because I know how… I knew how Everywhere High School was and they were not very receptive to such… such a program. I didn't think but Mr. South said that he would make it happen if we were there… he would work real hard to make it happen, so I told him ok we'll try it, and that's how we got there… we tried it.

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Dr. White also remembers the principal from Everywhere High School attending one of

their sessions. He also expressed many of the same concerns as Mr. Butler for implementing the

"Can We Talk" program at Everywhere High School. However, the principal at Everywhere

High School was committed to making the program work at his school. Dr. White remembers

the implementation of the program at Everywhere High School:

> Everywhere High and I know Charles was very interested in the idea of having what was
> going on… to move students of color, especially Black males along that process so he
> and another lady a Kris a came over and sat in on one of our sessions at Omnipresent
> High School. They sat in on the session and decided… hey this is what we really want to
> do at Everywhere High School as well. They then in turn solicited the support of Mr.
> South along the way um… um to get him… um… um…this is a possibility here, so let's
> get involved in this whole thing. When Mr. South got the word on it… he then in turn
> then decided this is something they wanted to do. He went to one of the session…
> workshops, and when he came out of that workshop… um with Pacific Educational
> Group. He actually saw the total value in what we were trying to do. He got really
> involved in it as well. He actually saw that initially, but that training kind of gave him
> the real insides as why it should be going on at Everywhere High School. Therefore it
> leads to where we are right now at Everywhere High School, having him be one of the
> spearheading factors in that particular process.

One of the primary reasons for the implementation of "Can We Talk" at Everywhere

High School is Mr. South. Mr. South needed to develop a practical plan for meeting AYP while

giving Black males of color a chance to be successful in school. Mr. South was determined to

make sure Black males would be successful in his school. He stated that the special education

situation needed to be fixed and that the Black males as a whole needed to be engaged.

Mr. South received the opportunity to attend the first Beyond Diversity Training offered

by his district. Mr. South saw this as a great opportunity to learn some strategies on how to

better engage the students of color at Everywhere High School. He would take these strategies

back to help the African American male students. While at this seminar Mr. South met two men

who had started the "Can We Talk" program at Omnipresent High School. Mr. South stated that

he received an eye opening experience during this training:

> we're on this color line (with a thought of self-reflection on his face), which basically asked serious questions… um 26 questions, and you rate yourself on a line, a five, three or a one, a perfect score is 26 time five or 130 that would be a perfect score. Several of us, all of White males, had perfect scores of 130 and you look around this color line… and Mr. Black and Dr. White and another Black male who has more degrees that I have as well who's the special education director for the district scores a nine and how does Dr. White and Mr. Black with a couple of Master's degrees and Mr. District who was part of the group who hired me how did they get nines. This said to me that we really didn't have a clue. So, I knew something had to get done. I knew it was going to be tough for some of my staff.

Mr. South then approached two of the co-founders of the "Can We Talk" mentoring

program about bringing their program to his school. Mr. South was elated when the men agreed

to come to his school. Mr. South stated, "*Dr. White and Mr. Butler were willing to engage me in*

conversation, they were open to having the conversation, and we all expressed a joint interest in

helping the Black males of Everywhere High School succeed."

Mr. South had several concerns before the implementation of the "Can We Talk"

mentoring program. One of the concerns Mr. South had was his own lack of experience in

working with students of color. Mr. West had been in several different schools before arriving at

Everywhere. He stated:

> …prior to Everywhere, (hesitant to share his experience), the greatest… really my only experience with diversity, and I'm gonna guess (shrugging his shoulders), I don't know… I don't remember exactly it was probably somewhere in the neighborhood 70 to 75% White. Um… 20 to 25% to 35% students of color, but in a school of 1400, you know… that's still a number of…of bodies, so you can see color.

His other two administrative experiences prior coming to Everywhere were at small rural

schools. These schools were 95 to 98% White. Mr. South also stated that he grew up in the

suburbs. Mr. South said that he could only remember attending school with two Black kids. In

middle school, Mr. South said, *"we picked up one more [Black student], so I can only remember three Black kids, really no Hispanic kids or Latino kids or an Asian kid going through the system."*

He further posited that his undergraduate teaching courses did not prepare him for the growing number of diverse students he was going to eventually encounter. Finally, Mr. South was concerned with how his staff would react to the establishment of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. According to Mr. South, most of his staff is White and have been taught through their pre-teaching and teaching professional developments to be colorblind. How would they react? Despite these concerns, Mr. South was determined to succeed in bringing this program to Everywhere High School. In the next section I discuss the thematic findings for the "Can We Talk" program in Everywhere High School.

"Can We Talk" In Everywhere High School

In order for "Can We Talk" to be successful the co-founders of the program and Mr. South knew that their interest would have to converge. Mr. South wanted a practical plan in order to make AYP. The co-founders wanted to help the young Black men navigate the system in order to have success in the school both socially and more importantly academically. Due to his lack of experience in working with programs designed to focus on males of color, Mr. South was concerned how the young men of color would react to this idea. Mr. South explained:

> how do we begin those conversations… and never had a bad experiences with any student, including students of color, so I wasn't of-course worried or scared or intimidated or nothing like that… they were great kids and we had good relationships individually… already but... but collectively in addressing as this group of our Black boys.

However, according to Mr. South, the young men needed to know that based on their academic performances, collective decisions were being made about them as a group.   This

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would be the impetus to begin the conversations. Dr. White and Mr. Butler were confident that they would be able to connect with the young men because they were examples of Black males who had been successful. Mr. South elaborated on the importance of bringing the Black males of Everywhere together. He said:

> when you break up a school of this size with eleven or twelve section of U.S History or Modern World History or those types of things the opportunity for a student to be the only one or maybe one of two students of color of their own race I won't say a color but their own race, their own particular classroom is… is pretty… there lots of opportunities where they may have been the only one or one of two uh… uh (caught in his own thoughts), so to be able to collect them in a group where they can see each other, (voice getting excited about the ideas) we can see them, we could have conversations, they could create, they could talk about um… matters that… that… that directly impacted them, that we could own it as a group of adults, own the issues about education… to start to create a voice, a collective voice, which could kind of be heard individually out in the hallway and stuff…

As stated earlier in this chapter, the "Can We Talk" program is designed to work with students in traditional educational settings. This section reflects the themes developed from the experiences of the participants as they implemented and participated in the "Can We Talk" mentoring program at Everywhere High School. Four themes were identified through data analysis: (a) Interest Convergence: "A synergy between a school leader and four men of color;" (b) Experiential Knowledge: "Enhancing lives through the sharing of our experiences;" (c) Race: "Not just a Black thing anymore;" (d) Through the sharing of our stories we gain our voices. Through these themes, I provide an understanding of the participants' experiences, concerns, struggles, and successes as they interact with the "Can We Talk" program at Everywhere High School.

Interest Convergence: "A synergy between a school leader and four men of color"

Remember when Mr. South took the position of principal at Everywhere High School and the school had not made AYP in three of the last four years? One of the reasons Mr. South was

hired was due to his experience in helping schools reach and maintain AYP. Due to his

friendship with my father I must disclose I had known Mr. South for some time and had talked to

him on several occasions. Many of these discussions had centered on education: our experiences

as educators, the state of education, and our thoughts and ideas on the education of students of

color. So, on a hot summer day in early June, I walked into Everywhere High School for my

first interview with Mr. South. Based on our past relations I was reasonably sure that Mr. South

would be open and give me a deluge of information about his experiences with the "Can We

Talk" program. When I walked into the office Mr. South was sitting in the main office waiting

on me. Mr. South who is a middle-aged White male greeted me with a big smile and a firm

handshake. Mr. South is always smiling. We proceeded to his office where he congratulated me

on my progress towards my dissertation and stated he looked forward to reading my work when

it was completed. After a series of background questions, I asked Mr. South how the "Can We

Talk" program had come to pass at Everywhere High School. Mr. South explained:

> so when I was doing my homework for the... for the position at Everywhere High School
> uh they had not made adequate yearly progress. Three of the previous four years and it
> was because of their sub group most notably special ed… uh… the racial sub groups…
> well besides Blacks. We really have no racial sub-groups in terms of having that 30 or
> more students that you have to have at a grade level our Black student population. Our
> it's sub groups about every other year about the half the time we will have 30 or more in
> a tested population, so anyway it was special ed that was really the area that impacted
> Everywhere High Schools lack of success in meeting AYP…

However, after he accepted the job he realized that the problem was not special education

issue but a racial issue. In a later interview Mr. South confirmed his prior statements to me. He

said:

> …when I first got here the data that I looked at preparing for the interview showed that
> there was a huge disparity this school did not make adequate yearly progress the three of
> the four years before I came and... and the reason for that was the special education
> population huge disparity between our special ed population… and their performance on

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test versus the general population students that disaggregated group was just not doing well. I came with the notion of... of that being the area I needed to work on I had prior experiences working with special education at one my previous administrative stops, so a my conversation with my wife as we talked about this opportunity, was did I want to start over again…work on it again… we had some successes. When I got here and started visiting the special education classrooms in comparison to a…a advanced placement classroom so to speak, it…it wasn't about special education, it was about race, and as the opportunity created itself to get in tune with some district wide opportunities to… to really put more of a face on what that means in terms of this is a race issue not a special ed issue.

Mr. South stated that from a *"practical standpoint we needed to develop a plan for meeting AYP,"* so he started to strategize ways in order to help his current school make AYP.

Recall the "Can We Talk" program had already been implemented at Omnipresent High School and was having great results in terms of the academic and social achievement of the Black male students. However, the program was not established at Everywhere High School. The former principal and the administrative team at Everywhere High School felt there was not a need for the mentoring program. The co-founders had informally discussed bringing the program to Everywhere High School but received feedback that Everywhere was not interested in the program at the time. As a matter of fact, the "Can We Talk" program also had issues getting accepted at Omnipresent High School. The head administrator at Omnipresent also did not see a need for the mentoring program. However, Dr. Old convinced him that the program would be in the best interest of the school and the Black male students. Specifically, Dr. Old remembers her experiences in working with the head administrator at Omnipresent High School, and she recalls:

> … you… you have to sell what you know is best for kids and I think that's what really has been the strength of the program because the students are benefiting from it and when the students feel good about themselves and they want to perform well then it benefits the school all the way around but if you're not sensitive to the needs of young men of color you don't always see that right off so I was kind of pushy and then I was older than him so at times I would boss him around and tell him what were gonna do and he let me, so

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um… I think that helped with Dr. Who until he could get to the place where he could see the benefit of the program for himself.

One of the first things the mentors did at Omnipresent High School was to show the young men of color their test scores. Dr. Old stated that some of the boys were *"shocked to see that these low assessments scores represented them…"* She said, *"after the implementation of the program the Black male state assessment scores went up 16 percentage points the following year."* As a matter of fact, she was so encouraged by the success of the program that she implemented the program at the high school where she was appointed the head administrator.

Due to the success the program was having at Omnipresent High School, several representatives from Everywhere High School started to attend the sessions. When Mr. South was appointed the new principal, several of the employees at Everywhere approached him about bringing the "Can We Talk" program to their campus as well. After several conversations with employees who had attended the sessions Mr. South decided to attend one of the meetings himself. Mr. Butler says, *"we were doing the Can We Talk program at Omnipresent High School and Mr. South from Everywhere, the principal at Everywhere High came over and observed, heard that we had good things going on…"*

Mr. South and the co-founders both had a shared interest in having the program at Everywhere High School. Mr. South needed a way to address and have conversations with his Black male students. Furthermore, Mr. South explained:

> when you are raised in a color blind society which most White people are in my opinion um… you just don't want to bring a lot of attention to race. You are not trained to bring a lot of attention to race. So, purposefully collecting auh… students of color all in this case… all Black males for the purposes of saying out loud you guys are not achieving academically the way you should and then owning and taking responsibility for that…

In addition, Mr. South hoped the program would lead to improved academic performance among Black male students, and in turn decrease the achievement gap between White students and students of color. If the program worked it would give Everywhere High School a means to making AYP, which is one of the main reasons Mr. South had been hired by the school district. Another benefit of having the mentoring program at Everywhere High School according to Mr. South was*,"... the "Can We Talk" program ... is a visible attempt at having conversations with kids about race, culture, and education."* The program through the mentors also gave Mr. South an in-road into the surrounding community of color. In an interview, Mr. South stated, *"I learned that to work with community members of color that sometimes it is necessary to communicate in additional ways."* For example, Mr. South stated *"that it is important to recruit parents especially when trying to introduce a new program into the school setting."*

For the first "Can We Talk" meeting he sent out a letter inviting the parents of Black male students to an informational meeting at Everywhere High School (See Appendix J). The meeting took place in the commons area of Omnipresent High School. To the dismay of Mr. South, "*…the first time we had a parent meeting nobody showed up* (hear the disappointment in his voice)*. It was over at Omnipresent High and then um we…we had nobody from Everywhere auh couple parents from Omnipresent."* Through conversations with the co-founders of the mentoring program, Mr. South said he learned the following:

> I learned from that was that when we… we communicated with our parents of color or the families, we had to use non-traditional approaches. They didn't respond to announcements or…or letters… home or all that stuff so we… we… actually hand delivered these letters door to door to door (motioning his hand as though he was handing me a letter). The first year after, we had not response. Actually the year we had no response, just a few weeks later, (with hope in his voice), we did it again. We did go door to door hand inviting people… and we had over 100 (showed enthusiasm in his voice and body), so we went from 0 to 100 in just a few weeks so… we changed the way we communicated…

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For the co-founders it was a blessing that Mr. South wanted to have the program in his high school. The co-founders had been looking for opportunities to engage the African American male population at Everywhere High School. Even though the co-founders wanted their presence in Everywhere High School, they were still reluctant due to the past encounters they had with the previous administration. Furthermore, Mr. Butler said, *"it was important to get into the school to help the Black males because they were not getting the same opportunities as the White Students."* He also said the relationship that he and Dr. White have with Mr. South is one of the primary reasons the co-founders were willing to establish the program at Everywhere High School. Dr. White described his relationship with Mr. South as:

> very amicable relationship with um a Mr. South believe me it was one where I felt invigorated. I felt very much invigorated um… to the point, where he was so committed to it making sure it worked in his building… um, him seeing the value of what we're trying to do is what made it very… very… um… a very positive relationship I can work with him indefinitely.

Mr. Butler supported the comments of Dr. White. He stated that he found working with Mr. South to be:

> …outstanding… he was very…very supportive a very.... very creative and made us feel welcomed…made the students feel welcomed…um bent over backwards to work with the kids of color to make sure that they had opportunities…where they could be successful, and that was a good thing. Without him it would not have been possible.

One of the primary reasons the co-founders really wanted to get into Everywhere High School was that they did not witness Black males coming through the educational system in Everywhere School district.

The principal and co-founders worked together in several facets to make sure the program was implemented successfully. First, Mr. Butler stated that Mr. South and the district demonstrated their support by:

by allowing…us…um open access to the kids. Allowing us to be in the building conducting our program during the time that school was going on. We were allowed in the building when classes were going on when… um…um (snapping his fingers), oh I can't remember the name of that inter-term, seminar and we became part of the school structure and routine by being allowed to present during seminar when the kids had time during the school day to participate with us.

Dr. White stated that was a big factor in the early success of the program. He also said that the superintendent was supportive because they presented the superintendent with *"a vehicle to convey"* a commitment to equity. This visible commitment to equity allowed the co-founders to gain access to school funds, transportation, students' families, teachers, and most importantly the Black male students. One of the benefits of the program for Mr. South was the program helped him stress the importance of teaching to all students. When "Can We Talk" first started it was during the seminar period, a time many teachers could not attend. Mr. South did with the mentors of the mentoring program put the meetings on podcasts so that the teachers could watch the meetings in their classrooms. The second thing Mr. South did was work with the co-founders to develop a schedule that benefitted both the school and the mentoring program. The mentoring program was moved to before school during the time teachers were already on duty. Mr. South said, *"this allowed anywhere from five to fifteen teachers to show up to the meetings."* Dr. White said, *"every time they would do a presentation a number of staff started attending the sessions and that it was astronomical."* Mr. Butler said:

> one of the a facilitators at Everywhere High School started putting the meetings… taping the meetings and putting them on the T-drive, and um… where the teachers would have access… through to it through the auh computers in their classrooms and it turned out that a lot of them were watching it… um… watching the computer to see what was going on and they really liked what they saw and they started participating… they started relating to the minor the kids of color from a different perspective and that's perspective was more inclusive of the… the… learning process and the kids responded (with pride in his voice)… it... it was(with a big smile on his face)… was really cool to see.

One of the most important interests Mr. South had was in changing the culture of

Everywhere High School. A change in culture would facilitate the academic gains of the Black

males, in turn helping Everywhere attain AYP. Mr. South stated that after the implementation of

the mentoring program there were three changes he wanted to happen:

> we improved about 30 percentage points um over our first couple of years in terms of state testing. We made AYP we got things shored up there so… so where it was a little over 50 percent of our Black students in either reading or math passed the state assessment and uh we jumped up to and continue to grow a little bit especially in reading and little bit of slippage in math um but still you know that achievement gaps been narrowed and again we knew the kids could... could do it all along we just needed them to see the importance and the value and the... the desire to perform well that that so that would be one that academic realm.

He began to discuss the second change he wanted to witness at his school:

> The second one is again… and I just alluded to that earlier was…was for the kids to see themselves in… in… uh...wider range of possibilities than what they did in the past, so now they could see themselves doing all the things that our White kids or our Asian kids see themselves doing… going on to college, being an engineer, or you know, whatever it is um… (raising his hands in the air)… the sky's the limit for them…

Mr. South continued with the third thing he wanted to see happen for African American

males:

> ...um, but the, the third thing to was… was… even during their school experience their now involved in, in other activities we did not have. To create "Can We Talk" as an avenue for participation but… but, they're joining other clubs, extracurricular activities, their on student council, they are leaders in our building in other capacities other than "Can We Talk". Um… our discipline rates have just plummeted, um our pro out of school suspensions and in school suspensions um… (raises eyebrows with pride) just dramatically decreased and it's because the climate and culture of the school is so much better that our (taking ownership), our kids feel like they have support in working out differences and they interact better because of the healthier climate, way important to but, the interaction between the adults and the kids, um… the adults understanding um, that… that the need for all of our kids to have a voice and looking for opportunities to show respect for or… or allowing the class to have interactions with other cultures and that kind of stuff is continues to improve but, but there again, (expressing empathy and pride) our achievement gap is decreasing and we have kids going um… um… we got we got kids doing greater things then they ever have.

The Co-founders had several interests, including being able to interact with the Black

male students in order to change their futures, the way they were perceived at the school, and

most importantly the way they perceived themselves. Mr. Butler sums up these interests by

giving an example of a couple of students he worked with through the "Can We Talk" program:

> I can think of a couple of kids, Blake Pattson at Everywhere came in as a shelter kid. First
> day in the session, he spoke up… he was very hostile (he chuckles and shakes his head
> side to side) let me know in no un-certain terms that he could kick my butt if he wanted
> to and I turned around and told him little fleas like you I eat for lunch and uh if you don't
> want to get your ass kicked, don't you mess with me! And he said whoa, wait a minute,
> you ain't supposed to be talking to me like that! I said, and I told him, I said, in here, if
> you disrespect someone, than you open yourself up to be disrespected too, and he said
> maybe we should… so we became friends and uh it worked out really well. He
> graduated, he comes back, and he's working full time and going to school, so I'm very
> proud of him.

Mr. Butler talked about many students, but he remembered one student in particular at

Omnipresent High School. He said:

> I can think of another kid at Omnipresent High School… auh... Robbie Wright… um I
> had him in class a lot. I thought he was a good kid and that he was hanging with the
> wrong people… and he started coming to "Can We Talk" and we talked about him going
> to college, and he said he didn't think so… and I told him if you really want to go we can
> get you in and we did and he graduated. Now he works for me in another program.

The interests of Mr. South and the co-Founders further converged in the recruiting of

students into the "Can We Talk" program. Mr. South wanted to attract more students of color

into the program because of the measured results in helping the school make AYP. The co-

founders wanted to recruit more students into the program because they witnessed positive

changes in the culture of Everywhere High School. In addition, the co-founders wanted to

validate that the program was making a positive difference in the academic and social

achievements of the Black males. Mr. South and the co-founders approached the district about the students earning academic credits for attending a required number of "Can We Talk" sessions. This would allow Mr. South and the mentoring program to recruit more students and their families. Due to the results of the program, the district approved students earning credit for attending the mentoring program.

After analysis of the data, I met with Mr. South, Mr. Butler, Dr. White, and the assistant principal who is now in charge of the mentoring program. I shared with them the potential themes for this dissertation. The first theme I introduced to them was the interest convergence theme. Mr. South looked at me and said, *"You're darn right it started through interest convergence."* Mr. Butler and Dr. White both agreed that the program got into Everywhere High School only because of the mutual interest of both parties. Without the combined efforts of Mr. South and the co-founders, specifically Mr. Butler and Dr. White, the program would not be settled in Everywhere High School. The combined interest of both parties led to a substantial change in the culture of the school, and now it is more accommodating to the needs of students of color. In the next thematic description I will continue to look at the "Can We Talk" program at Everywhere High School. Specifically, I will gaze upon the experiential knowledge of the mentors of the mentoring program.

Experiential Knowledge: "Enhancing lives through the sharing of our experiences"

Through the sharing of their experiences, the co-founders and other mentors have the capacity to change the social and academic experiences of students who interact with the "Can We Talk" program. However, to be able to have an impact on the social and academic fortunes of the students, the co-founders first had to share their experiences with the principal, Mr. South. Mr. South knew Mr. Butler and Dr. White from previous educational activities, but stated he

really got to know them at the first Beyond Diversity workshop being conducted by the Pacific

Educational group. Mr. South said, "the most unbelievable thing that really engaged me in

conversation with them though was number one they were open to having the conversation."

Mr. Butler said one of the reasons that he was willing to have conversations with Mr. South is

"that he showed an authentic interest in really listening to the experiences of people of color."

One of incidents that demonstrated to Mr. South that he needed to listen to people of color in

order to help his male students of color happened at the Beyond Diversity workshop. He

described the incident as follows**:**

> (with a dazed look in his eyes)…we're on this color line which basically asked/answered
> serious questions…um… um… 26 questions, and you rate yourself on a line a five, three
> or a one. a perfect score is 26 time five or 130 that would be a perfect score… um and
> several of us, all of us, White males had perfect scores of 130… and you look around this
> color line and um 130, 120, 110, 90's, 70's whatever all the way around and.. and Craig
> and Willie and a another Black male who has more degrees than I have, as well who's the
> special education director for the district scores a nine and how does some with Dr. White
> and Craig with a couple of Master's degrees and.. and… and… Kevin (special education
> director, who is an African American male) who was part of the group, who hired me,
> how did they get nines? This said to me, that we really didn't have a clue. So, I knew
> that something had to get done.

During their conversations inside and outside of the workshop, Mr. Butler and the other

men shared their experiences of having to navigate the system in order to be successful. They

also shared their experiences of having interactions with Whites who marginalized them.

Furthermore, they shared their stories of interacting with law enforcement, stories about, for

example, being pulled over for no reason, being asked to display their ID's during routine

interactions, and being asked what they are doing in certain parts of the town.   After hearing

some of the experiences of the men of color with law enforcement Mr. South stated:

> I was just pulled over, I guess, ah I didn't really have any qualms. I didn't (raises his
> voice with concerns). I might be wondering… gosh… am I going to get a ticket?… or
> not? …or if I had an emergency of the side of the road, I would be happy if someone

pulled over to help out law enforcement. I understand that's not necessarily the case for people of color.

Through these conversations with men of color, Mr. South said, *"I started to gain a better understanding of the need of the program for students of color."* He went on to say, *"the students of color at Everywhere needed a place where they could just talk, and where they could receive mentorship in how to deal with some of the experiences they were having at Everywhere High School."*

The main goal of "Can We Talk" co-founders is to work with male students of color. The best thing according to Mr. Butler was interacting with the students. During one of our interviews, I asked him to walk me through a typical session, day, or experience of someone participating in the "Can We Talk" program. He said:

> I had help with Charles, from Charles Thomas at Everywhere High School so we would kind of put together ahu…an agenda and go from it. It was a little more prepared, a little more auh involved because Charles was a security guard and he had a lot of time and a lot of interaction with the kids and we used that to our advantage… auh… at a I would typically walk in he would have the agenda on the wall… ah a projection from the computer and we would follow that… ah… I remember one time we had a group of Black, older Black citizens from Everywhere community to talk about segregation and integration and what it was like… ah… we had a Black gentleman who was an anesthesiologist at Galemont Vail and he came in his last name is Tolfree.

During our sessions together, I asked Mr. Butler to share some of the other conversations that occurred during the "Can We Talk" program. Specifically, I wanted Mr. Butler to elaborate on some of the topics that were being discussed with the students during the mentoring sessions. He said what they really wanted to do was:

> By letting the kids, having a group of kids explaining it to them why we're here uh, what we want to get accomplished, how we want to get it accomplished, letting them know where they are right now, academically and socially, and is this where you want to be and letting them know right now how they score on test and is this what you want to portray, and then letting them know the right now what the incarceration rate of our kids and our people are and how the law treats us differently than they treat everybody else and you

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need to know that, you need to be able to see and to understand it, especially if you are a young Black male or Hispanic male or American Indian male, you need to know that and then you need to know how to deal with it on an individual and a group basis.

Besides sharing his experiences and tips with the students, Dr. White was also considered

to be the curricular person for the program. During one of our conversations, Dr. White

(laughing) stated:

> I was kind of like more or less the curriculum guy you know, auh setting out the process of what we were going to do each and every um... um... a month ah what's going to be our themes. We laid out certain themes that were going to be happening throughout the course of the program. So my job, my background being curriculum and instruction, I'm the one that kind of laid the thought, brought the ideas up, decided how we wanted culture… get those thought patterns presented to students and what process sequence of order we wanted to use… ok, so you kind of sequence and order things the way you want them to kinda go throughout the course of the year.

As stated earlier, the students in the mentoring program can earn credit for participating

in the "Can We Talk" program. Additionally, the students have to complete a certain number of

documented requirements to earn credit. Dr. White and the assistant principal currently working

with the "Can We Talk" program developed an independent study curriculum (See Appendix

M).

The primary purpose of the "Can We Talk" program was to have an effect on the lives of

students of color. Through conversations with students the real impact of the mentoring program

could be felt. In a conversation I had with Sophia, I asked her how the mentors have helped her.

She said:

> I think Mr. Charles pushed me a lot. I think he did and then Mr. South as well. He was not like, always there, but he's always known… and I always like… want to do good and then now, recently, Mr. Jones pushes us a lot… to me especially.

She further said that through the program she had received the opportunity to work with and meet students from other schools. Some of the students from other schools are people she would not normally interact with. The "Can We Talk" helped her to break the stereotypes she had about others who came from other areas, especially students who came from schools located in lower socio-economic areas. During our conversation I asked her to provide me with other examples of how the mentoring program had helped her. She told me:

> Mr. Jones … talks about college, where we should go um… how we can get scholarships um… to keep our grades up, stay focused. Mr. Charles does that as well he pushes us on grades really hard cause if we don't meet the grade expectation we're not gonna…he's not gonna… let us leave for like… the college visits or the student exchanges uh things like that.

The second student mentee interviewed for this research was Jackson. Originally, this student was from Haiti and had come to the U.S. with his mother. The student was a senior who had not seen his father since he was a young child. He has conversations infrequently with his father, so mostly he relies on his mother and a family he met as a young child. He said, *"… my dad hasn't been there to guide me at all since I've left Haiti and my mother being Haitian doesn't know nothing about the public school system, going through college, the process or any of that stuff."* Through our conversation the student shared that the mentoring program had taught him that he needed structure. I asked him to explain this more to me and the student shared:

> …hmm well for one, especially this year, I've started to do all my homework. I just can't afford to slack off or anything. Honestly, um, I've become or became more responsible within the four years that I've been here, starting to take life more seriously and head on um… hmm that's about it.

The student further shared that the "Can We Talk" program had helped him socially and academically in Everywhere High School. He shared:

Socially, I've became a lot more open with people, like especially White people… no matter how bad that sounds, but I remember freshman year the only White people I knew were the ones that I went to elementary and junior high with and those were my really close friends, the rest were just Black people that I'd met. I had similar interest with, like we played common sports such and such but, after joining "Can We Talk", Charles won't… just gave us the insight that we should just be a unity in this school… like not everyone should be separate or should separate each other for race or class or anything like that, and class plays a major role in this school also because I myself not poor… poor, but I wouldn't consider myself as um… what's the word…. Um… wouldn't consider myself as rich either. I'm just lower class basically and people in my grade especially just try to see each other as we're the same instead of, I'm better than you because I have more money or I drive a car and you ride the bus to school.

One of the major components of an effective mentoring program is the ability of the mentors to develop positive relationships with the mentees. Jackson discussed the importance of the relationship he had developed with Mr. Jones. He shared a recent story of Mr. Jones. The student said that Mr. Jones had recently talked to him about his future. He said that it was obvious that Mr. Jones wanted the best for him and that Mr. Jones wanted *"…to see what I can become because he sees the potential I have which I myself don't really see which is a problem but he sees it."*

Mr. Jones has taken over the daily operation of the "Can We Talk" program and has infused some new activities into the mentoring program. The student participants are very excited with some of the new activities that Mr. Jones has brought to the program. For example the male participant from above said:

Um honestly, the sessions have changed throughout the years. This year, to me, has been the best year so far cause you can just see how much effort Mr. Jones is putting in and how much care he has for the students in "Can We Talk" and just the whole school. Actually, but, um a normal session will just be conversation about something in our lives that we normally wouldn't talk about or something that has been on our mind that were just too scared to say within um those outside doors. Basically, and um… would you like to know the conversation? Recently we had auh… the all-boys conversation which was really interesting hearing from everybody else seeing that I wasn't just the only kid that didn't have a father figure in his life and just learning about being safe um sex um all those things that really fall in to growing up and being a man… um… we've also talked

about college and without "Can We Talk", I really wouldn't know what to do right now in college and also without Mr. Jones. I probably wouldn't have taken my ACT's this year.

The "Can We Talk" program mentors worked with the student participant leaders early in the summer to develop an agenda for the first semester. The approved agenda was then sent out to administrators, teachers, parents, and most importantly students. The agenda gave a synopsis of the activities and allowed the students to plan for the upcoming events. The co-founders also shared their knowledge with the staff at Everywhere High School. How the staff would interact with the mentoring program was a concern with for Mr. South. As a matter of fact some of the staff was concerned about how the program would affect the behavior of the students. Mr. Butler stated:

> when we first started over at Omnipresent High School, a staff would come and ask what are you all doing? What are you talking about? Auh…auh, are you inciting the kids or what?... and I would tell them with a straight face we're planning a revolution and they would look and kind of worry about it… and I said listen we're planning a revolution in terms of our kids being aware of what they're walking into when they walk into this building.

However, once the staff witnessed how the program was helping the students interact with the school building, they became very interested in tapping the knowledge of the mentors in order to be more successful facilitators for students of color. Mr. Butler said the teachers started participating in and with the program, and that the teachers started, *"relating to the minority, the kids of color from a different perspective and that perspective was more inclusive of the…the learning process and the kids responded it…it was…was really cool to see."* Dr. White echoed the statements of Mr. Butler. He said:

> … in the sessions at Everywhere High, there were always teachers there sitting in on our sessions… whether being held during the um... um… um… a, um… um… auh during um

…um seminar time or during la, la, late arrival time, there were always teachers there, ya know?... um sitting in and participating and being involved in that process.

Dr. White further describes encounters he would have with staff while walking in the hallways at Everywhere High School. He mentioned how teachers would ask him:

would you kind of come and talk to him? So on numerous occasions, I would come in and talk to a student because they have a difficult time in trying to get a student to see the value of why they need to get their homework turned in.

One of the most important concepts that Mr. Butler and Dr. White shared with the teachers was the importance of developing relationships with the students. Dr. White posited, *"… it's all about relationships and until that teacher actually did understand that value of that relationship then it became … it becomes very difficult for them to get the results they want."* However, through the implementation of the "Can We Talk" program at Everywhere High School some of the teachers were able to see the value of the program, and Dr. White was thrilled that teachers were constantly approaching the mentors asking how they could be of service to the program.

The co-founders and other mentors of the "Can We Talk" program, through their experiences and knowledge, were able to help improve the social and academic fortunes of the students of color at Everywhere High School. They first shared their knowledge with Mr. South, passed their knowledge on to the students, and finally to the teachers. The success of the program with the African American male students led to other students being interested in the program. This included students of other cultures, races, ethnicities, and genders. In the next section I discuss the globalization of the "Can We Talk" program.

Race: "Not Just a Black Thing Anymore"

The original premise of the "Can We Talk" program was to work with African American males who attended a majority White High School. As noted this segment of the student population was struggling to keep up socially and more importantly academically with their White peers. In conversations with Mr. South, he stated:

> our Black males that… that was our group that… auh… was the most at-risk in terms of all the …the data points out outside of school in terms of unemployment or incarceration or all those types of things that… but, in school as well, they (concerned look on his face), they were the most at-risk group in terms of not graduating or being identified for special education services… um… out of school suspensions.

He credited these reasons along with the Black-White academic achievement gap and Everywhere High School not meeting AYP requirements for bringing in the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. Another reason why it was important for Mr. South to bring in the mentoring program was due to the lack of experience of the staff and him when it came to educating students of color.

In our conversations Mr. South suggested that some staff members struggle when interacting with students of color. This is not due to them not wanting to be outstanding educators, but instead to the fact that they have not been prepared in how to educate students who come from different racial, ethnic, and social backgrounds. I found this to be true of some staff members as I interacted with them during observations. For example, I performed an observation shortly after a racial incident occurred between Omnipresent High School and Everywhere High School. In this incident some of the students from Everywhere High School vandalized the football field at Omnipresent High School. Specifically, they drew phallic symbols in the center of the field and they wrote, "Home of the Niggers." I was interested in how the Everywhere High School community would react, so I attended the "Can We Talk"

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session that particular morning. I have included a piece of my observation from that morning in (See Appendix K). Even though the number of faculty and students attending the meeting surprised me, I was not surprised at the demographic make-up of the audience. From my very first observation on the "Can We Talk" mentoring program, I noticed that the program was no longer just for African American males, as there were students of all races and genders in the first meeting I observed. An excerpt from my first field experience (See Appendix L).

After observing several sessions, I asked Mr. South about the change in the "Can We Talk" student demographic. He stated that originally the program at Everywhere High School *"started just focusing on males of color... um ... that would be my first year at Everywhere we had it but by the end of even that first semester they included females and all races including White."*

It was common to see various demographic groups at Everywhere High School attending "Can We Talk" sessions. However, some White students still thought the program was just for students of color. This was evident in interviews I conducted with two White male students who were not part of the program. Both students were athletes, considered to be popular, and were at the echelon of their class academic rankings. The first student, Aiden expressed that he knew about the "Can We Talk" program but thought it was mostly a *"Black"* thing. When asked what he knew about the program, he said very little and that he had heard the program mentioned on the daily announcements a few times. He further stated that he had not been to a "Can We Talk" session, but that he knew the program was designed to help decrease the achievement gap between Black students and White students. I asked him how he knew this and he said he had seen the promotional video on the "Can We Talk" program when he was sitting in the library one day.

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Mason another White male student I interviewed, who is a senior, stated:

> I really haven't heard a whole lot about it, um at first I mean I… I thought it was just for Black people and a I was never really, I don't know I… I didn't really think I was invited. I… I mean, I didn't really know anything about it. I thought it was just auh for like Black people just to talk and just that stuff I really didn't know anything about it.

The student also said that he had not really had any discussions about the "Can We Talk" program; he had heard the program mentioned on the school intercom system, but other than that he really did not know much about the mentoring program. One of the last questions I asked the student was if he had any friends or knew any students who actively participated in the program. He said:

> Um… not… um… not really… um… I just… I just remember like we'll be in class and then they'll, I mean there's a couple times they're be like Black kids in our class that will just leave and then… I don't know…. I hear that they went out and ate somewhere or something, and then ah, that's really the only thing I've… you know, I've interacted with just seeing people in class and like them leaving.

However, other White students are very familiar with the program. As a matter of fact the student president of "Can We Talk" is a White male senior. After one of my observations I approached this student as he and another student were discussing "Can We Talk." The other student is a White female who is a senior at Everywhere High School. I asked them both what made them want to attend "Can We Talk" sessions, and how they became part of the student leadership team. The female student told me that *"her family had really low expectations about her attending college."* She explained that she had participated in extra-curricular activities and had maintained a good grade point average. However, her parents did not really think she was college material. Nevertheless, she was sitting in the commons area one morning and Mr. Charles asked her if she wanted to attend a "Can We Talk" session. She said she really liked the session and that the mentors made her feel that she could be successful. She has been part of the

mentoring program for the last three years, and she said that the "Can We Talk" program

inspired her to go to college. As a matter of fact she has been accepted to several universities

and plans on attending college in the upcoming fall.

The "Can We Talk" student president echoed these thoughts of the young lady. He said*,

"I was sitting in the commons area and several of my friends got up to attend a 'Can We Talk'

session, so I followed them to the meeting." He said the students and the mentors made him feel

welcomed. He had been a part of the mentoring program since his sophomore year, and he was

voted by his peers to be the student president of the organization his senior year. The student

stated that the program had given him opportunities that other programs in the school had not.

He received the opportunity to go on college visits and get help with his ACT exam, and because

of "Can We Talk" he would also be attending a university the following fall. I asked these

students how their fellow White peers treat them. They said for the most part the other White

students were "pretty cool" with them being in the "Can We Talk" program. They did hear some

comments, but for the most part they ignored them. The female student said that "Can We Talk"

is so diverse in its make-up now that the students who say negative comments are in the

minority.

Sophia who was interviewed said that members of the "Can We Talk" program have

worked really hard to break the stereotypes of the program being specifically for Black students.

She said:

> Oh, OK the students at Everywhere High School…they don't really…. I mean they didn't
> in the past… didn't know what it was but, recent or this past year, my junior year, we
> have been doing a lot of interviews or like talking to a lot of students just about the
> group, trying more people involved other than like just African American students… so
> that people wouldn't think ii was a Black thing cause that was what everyone thought…
> it was until we started telling them and putting it in the newspaper about what it was and
> stuff like that.

Jackson stated that having a diverse student group had helped him to realize the

importance of getting along with all students. He specifically stated that:

> I've became a lot more open with people… like especially, White people… no matter
> how bad that sounds, but I remember freshman year, the only White people I knew were
> the ones that I went to elementary and junior high with and those were my really close
> friends. The rest were just Black people that I'd met, I had similar interest with, like we
> played common sports, such and such, but after joining "Can We Talk", Charles won't
> …just gave us the insight that we should just be a unity in this school… like… not
> everyone should be separate or should separate each other for race or class or anything…

After observing several "Can We Talk" sessions and talking with students participating in

the program. I asked Mr. South, *"why the program had changed."* He suggested that the

program had changed to include all of the diverse perspectives of the school, so that students

could learn to respect and communicate with others who are different. To further the

conversation, I asked, *"How the program is still designed to help African American male*

students?" Mr. South responded:

> That's… that's a great question, that's one I struggle with quite a bit actually…uh…
> we've had a number of conversations over the last three years about… uh… about that
> very topic. They're a couple of us, me included, when I say us, I'm one of a couple of
> people who really, uh… it's in some ways yearning to go back to that that group as our
> target group …um… simply because our…our Black males are still at-risk more than
> other students are, not so much now in terms of graduating, but the opportunities after
> high school, and just the world they are facing… you know… just think about Ferguson
> Missouri, its all those things that can happen, incarceration rates, un-employment rates,
> we all know those kinds of statistics that out there… there still the most at-risk population
> that we have in this building outside of …so the adults now… are going out now, and
> really inviting our young Black men to become part of the program. We hope by offering
> them opportunities like gender specific groups our Black males will become more
> engaged…

Through observations, interviews, and interactions with the participants I gained an

understanding that the "Can We Talk" program is no longer just designed to just meet the needs

of African American male students. The "Can We Talk" program is now providing services to

all demographic groups at Everywhere High School. In the next thematic description, I explore

how the student participants gain their voices through the sharing of their stories.

Through the sharing of our stories we gain our voices

The success of any mentoring program is measured by the successes and

accomplishments of the mentees who participate in the program. In the eyes of the adults, the

"Can We Talk" program is very successful. However, to truly measure the success of the

program I wanted to see how the program impacted the daily lives of the students involved with

the mentoring program. I wanted to see how the opportunities provided by the mentoring

program had changed the students, thus giving them a voice. However, along with gaining a

voice comes changing perceptions; students start to become more aware, and most importantly

they start to display a sense of empowerment.

In my conversations with the Sophia, she said that one of the big traditions at Everywhere

High School is athletics. Furthermore, she said that the school spirit has fallen off in the past few

years at the school, but with*," 'Can We Talk' I think having strong leaders who are*

academically focused and we're also involved in other activities like clubs and sports that

always helps to keep the tra... traditions alive." The mentoring program has done a great deal

for this student both academically and socially. Academically, she says the programs mentors

talk to other students and her about staying focused academically. For example, she stated that:

> Mr. Jones does that frequently, he talks about college, where we should go…um… how we can get scholarships…um…to keep our grades up, stay focused. Mr. Charles does that as well, he pushes us on grades really hard, cause if we don't meet the grade expectation, we're not gonna… he's not gonna let us leave, for like the college visits, or the student exchanges…uh… things like that.

During our conversation I asked her if the "Can We Talk" program has made her more

focused towards school.

She replied:

> Yea, I think it has with you like see the statistics, and then like…like the in the United States that are going on, like racism, and anything like that… it really helps to know where should I go to school, and how much is this going to costs, and…um how many people are going to be there, and like are they going to judge me… just like the different areas of the United States.

Another benefit of being involved in the program is the social opportunities the program provided for this mentee. One of the highlights mentioned was her opportunity to attend a speech by Michelle Obama. Sophia said, *"We went, I myself and another person got to go with Mr. Charles and Mr. Jones up to yea the ceremony that she was speaking at the graduation, I thought that was really cool."* The "Can We Talk" program allowed this mentee to come into contact with other students she would probably never interact with. This was done through student exchanges with other schools. She said the exchanges allowed students to *"Break stereotypes and build bridges with other schools like…we went to Schlagle and we…um… we went to Schlagle, and we got to know all these people that we would never probably have associated…"*

During our interview I noticed Sophia smiling as if she was recalling a fond memory. I asked her to elaborate on why she was smiling. She said that "Can We Talk" had given her the opportunity to be a mentor that the program had given her an opportunity to give back. I asked her to share that experience with me. She shared:

> Recently … we went to Kenne... ya … Kennedy, and we were like help helping the younger students, and we each had a classroom to go to, and we would go read to them, and we would go help them with their homework, and that was really fun, and we got after then… after we did all of the homework, and stuff we got to like go outside and play with them… that was a good experience.

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Jackson paralleled many of the sentiments of the first mentee. He said that the mentoring program had helped him immensely both academically and socially. He mentioned that the program had taught him the importance of doing all of his homework, and with this being his senior year he could not afford*," to slack off or anything."* The program according to this student has also helped him in his interactions with teachers. He said that some of his teachers *"... don't push you like they push the other students considering I'm the minority..."* However, the "Can We Talk" program has shown him how to come to school prepared every day and to identify the teachers those teachers that … *"will really push you those that like care those that are not just here to get paid you can truly tell that they care…"* These are the teachers he stated that helped him get through some of the tough classes in which he struggled. Socially, he said the mentoring program had given him the opportunity to work with students he would not have interacted with normally. One of the most powerful stories he shared with me occurred during a *"real talk"* session. He said:

> …Um honestly, the sessions have changed throughout the years… this year to me has been the best year so far, cause you can just see how much effort Mr. Jones is putting in, and how much care he has for the students in "Can We Talk." just the whole school actually, but… um a normal session will just be conversation about something in our lives that we normally wouldn't talk about or something that has been on our mind that were just too scared to say within… um those outside doors basically, and… um would you like to know the conversation… recently we had a the all-boys conversation, which was really interesting hearing from everybody else. Seeing that I wasn't just the only kid that didn't have a father figure in his life, and just learning about being safe… um sex… um all those things that really fall in to growing up, and being a man… um… we've also talked about college, and without "Can We Talk," I really wouldn't know what to do right now in college, and also without Mr. Jones, I probably wouldn't have taken my ACT's this year.

The student said part of the reason for the success of the program is the relationship the mentees have with the mentors. Specifically, he mentioned the relationship Mr. South had with his students of color. He posited, *"Mr. South is so close and nice to the students that are*

minorities it…it shows us that he cares and that he's not just here to get a paycheck he's here

because he loves it."

I wanted to see how the mentors viewed the success of the program, not in terms of

meeting AYP or lowering discipline rates, but how the program in their eyes had really

empowered the students. Mr. South said that through the program the students had received the

opportunity to visit places like the Negro League Baseball Museum, Brown versus Board of

Education, and countless colleges. The "Can We Talk" program further has allowed Everywhere

High School to link the students of color to the business community. Mr. South suggested it was

purposeful in linking the students of color with the business community. However, Mr. South

suggested the most important concept of the program was that it created, *"a voice a collective*

voice which could kind of be heard individually out in the hallway and stuff to then they felt more

empowered and more welcomed."

Mr. Butler also said that some of the benefits of the program cannot be measured in terms

of test scores and graduation rates. Mr. Butler said the "Can We Talk" program:

> made a difference in the schools, it brought up the cognitive level of the kids of color in
> terms of realizing that in order to survive you have to know the dominant culture inside
> and out, and they were just going along, and not really paying attention to that, until it
> was brought to their attention. The other thing was that it taught them some of their
> history, and so many of our kids don't know the history their history… auh as a family,
> as a race, and when they started learning about the n-word, when they started learning
> about the integration process, and the…the things that you have to go through in order to
> be successful… if you are a person of color, and they just became more aware and more
> cognitive of the world around them.

Through the "Can We Talk" mentoring program the mentors received opportunities to

share their experiences in order to enhance the academic and social opportunities of the mentees.

The mentees on the other hand received the opportunity to expand their horizons both

academically and socially. Furthermore, through the mentoring program the mentees developed

a sense of empowerment that allowed them to join other activities outside of the "Can We Talk" program. Additionally, the mentees received opportunities to attend speeches, visit colleges, and interact with the business community that helps support the town in which Everywhere High School is located. The mentoring program allowed the participants to share their stories with others hence giving the mentees a voice in their social and academic experiences at Everywhere High School.

Summary

Mentoring programs designed appropriately and with fidelity have the opportunity to meet the needs of a diverse group of students. Due to increased accountability measures, schools are looking for innovative ways to meet the needs of all students. Mentoring programs have proven to be beneficial to youths and are expanding rapidly (Wyatt, 2009). In order for a mentoring program to be successful, it "should use existing support systems and family systems, enhance and support cultural dynamics and professional relationships, identify the qualities of resiliency, illustrate the cycles children move through as they develop, and develop a program philosophy" (Townsel, 1997, p. 127). All of the above suggestions were present in the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. In Chapter Five, I presented the findings from this study. I provided a description of the research site, and an introduction to and description of the participants. I have provided the reader with a detailed description of Everywhere High School culture and their history of implementing the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. Next, I presented the participants' experiences in interacting with the "Can We Talk" mentoring program, and how the program impacted the overall culture of Everywhere High School as well as the mentors and mentees who participated in the mentoring program.

Chapter 6 - Discussions and Implications

As a former teacher, former principal, and educational consultant, I have known and have become aware of the challenges teachers, principals, schools, and districts face on a daily basis to implement district procedures, and federal and state legislative mandates in the areas of providing a quality education to all children. Starting with the NCLB (2001) act, districts faced increased scrutiny in terms of providing a quality education to all children, especially children who came from marginalized cultural, ethnic, socio-economic, and racial groups. As a teacher, I was aware of the legislative actions and how they impacted my daily responsibilities. For example, in my science class there was a push to incorporate daily activities that stressed writing, reading, and math comprehension. I was even given predetermined lessons around state testing in which I was to spend the first 20 minutes of my science class teaching either language arts or math. These lessons were designed to hopefully increase our achievement scores, so that our school could continue to make AYP. However, as an administrator and consultant who primarily worked in urban settings, I became acutely aware of the need to make AYP, and the struggles some schools had in recruiting and maintaining quality teachers, and more importantly providing an education to students who came from marginalized groups. With mandates designed to eliminate the achievement gap between White students and students of color schools and districts were further faced with having to develop ways to meet the needs of all students. As a teacher, I always found it easy to connect with all students regardless of their backgrounds, however, as an administrator and consultant, I noticed that some teachers could not always make these connections. Nor did they have the knowledge or professional training in order to do so. Many teachers who were White and who come from mainstream backgrounds did not know how to socially connect to their students of color. The fact is the teaching force in the U.S. remains

largely White, middle class, and female (Milner, 2013; Andrews, 2012; Ladd & Fiske, 2008).

This lack of connections has and continues to lead increased discipline infractions for students of

color along with decreased academic achievement rates (Milner, 2013; Banks & Banks, 2010;

Ladd & Fiske, 2008). Although teachers play a crucial role in the achievement of students, so

does the location of one's home, money, and parental background. Through my experiences as

an administrator, consultant, and in conversations with others about education, I started to

inquire how schools and districts are meeting the needs of diverse student populations.

Specifically, given my background which was detailed in chapter four, I was interested in how

some schools were meeting the needs of students of color. One of the strategies gaining

popularity was the initiative of mentoring programs. With my father and several of his

associates being involved in a mentoring initiative, I wanted to see how this one specific

mentoring program designed to work with students of color had impacted the social and

academic fortunes of these students in one high school that was predominately White. In chapter

four, I presented the experiences of several participants as they implemented, maintained, and

interacted with the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. These participants were purposely

selected based on a set of pre-determined criteria in order to provide an in-depth understanding

of their experiences in the participating in and with the "Can We Talk" mentoring program.

Through the methodological framework of Critical Race Theory, The main question guiding this

study is: What is the role of leadership in mentoring programs designed to work with students of

color? Sub questions essential to answering the main question include: the following questions

guided this study:

(1)   How are the tenets of Critical Race Theory manifested in the dimensions of the

school implementing the mentoring program as perceived by:

A) The principal,

B) Leaders of "Can We Talk" (directors of the program (mentors),

 and

C) The students?

(2) How did "Can We Talk" shape school culture (shared meanings of symbols,

artifacts, and behaviors) as perceived by:

A) The principal,

B) Leaders of "Can We Talk (directors of the program),

and

C) The students?

Connections to the Methodological Framework

The methodological framework for this study was based on Critical Race Theory (CRT).

CRT is an emergent theory (Hughes & Giles, 2010), meaning its tenets evolve and meet the

needs of an ever evolving society. CRT takes into account and challenges societal practices that

marginalize people of color. In education, CRT challenges the narratives of White supremacy.

Furthermore, it challenges school curriculums that are often culturally designed to promote

White sovereignty by focusing on what works for many White students (Knaus, 2009). In the

following sections, I discuss the findings of this study in connection to the methodological

framework of CRT.

Connections to Critical Race Theory

As previously stated in chapter two, the CRT framework places an emphasis on the

intersection of race, ethnicity, and the entire academic and social structures of schools. In

addition, CRT offers a way to understand how professed race neutral structures in education

actually help form boundaries and further promote White supremacy in schools. As Knaus (2009) noted, the use of CRT exposes how mainstream schools promote Whiteness in terms of teaching practices, curriculums, and school designs that bolster White culture while marginalizing the culture of students of color. However, CRT can also be used by exceptional practitioners create programs, such as mentoring programs for students of color in schools, and in learning environments were the cultures of students of color are valued and their voices are heard. The participants selected for this study have provided the opportunity to examine one such mentoring program within their unique contexts.

In the beginning of the study, I asked the participants to describe the culture of their school, and to describe their interactions with and in the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. This was discussed in order to see how the "Can We Talk" program had affected the culture of the school from the perception of the participants, likewise, I wanted to see if this mentoring program had an effect on the academic and social success of the students of color who choose to participate in the mentoring program. I conducted interviews and observations with the participants over a five-month period. I then returned to meet with the participants for further clarification on data collected, accuracy of interpretations made, and for verification of hunches, which extended the total duration of interacting with the participants to seven months. During the data analysis stages, I began to see verifications as well as some discrepancies between the participant's statements, my observations, and the data collected. In the following discussion I will provide a summary of the participant's experiences with the "Can We Talk" program, while comparing findings gathered through observations, interviews, and other forms of collected data.

Question 1: How are the tenets of Critical Race Theory manifested in the dimensions of the school implementing the mentoring program as perceived by: Principal and Co-Founders

As noted in chapter four, Mr. South came to Everywhere High School with the reputation of helping schools acquire and maintain AYP. He was confident in this ability, and due to his analysis of the data, he assumed that Everywhere was not making AYP because of the special education population. However, the reason was due to the history of Everywhere High School tracking students of color, especially male students of color into lower academic areas and into special education. As noted by Dixson and Rousseau (2005) Latino and African American students are unduly placed on lower academic tracks, and thus are not afforded the same educational opportunities. Mr. South stated that he wanted all students regardless of race and ethnicity to afford the same social and academic opportunities while attending Everywhere High School. While Mr. South's actions seem to align with this statement, the analysis of the data pointed out that Mr. South was actually practicing interest convergence. As noted in chapter two and four, interest convergence contends that White elites will tolerate the advances of people of color when it benefits their own individual or group interest. In other words, people typically do things that are in their own self-interest. In a meeting with Mr. South, Mr. Jones, Mr. Butler, and Dr. White, I informed Mr. South of my intuition and findings. He stated that I was correct, the main reason he sought out the help of the co-founders, and helped implement the "Can We Talk" program into Everywhere is that he needed help in increasing the academic achievement of the African American males.

The notion of interest convergence was further supported by Mr. Butler and Dr. White. At our meeting, they confirmed that the main reason they agreed to help Mr. South was they

needed a way into Everywhere High School. When Mr. South approached them, they

understood this was a way to help the male students of color successfully navigate the

hegemonic systems that were in place at Everywhere High. Mr. Butler, Dr. White, and the other

co-founders also wanted to validate their mentoring program. During our conversations, Mr.

Butler and Dr. White shared the frustrations of working with administrators in the Everywhere

School District who did not understand the need for a mentoring program designed to work with

students of color. They wanted to validate or share the success the "Can We Talk" program had

at other schools. By successfully helping the students of color at Everywhere High School make

AYP, the "Can We Talk" program would be validated. I recall my first meeting with Mr. South,

he discussed how the test scores of the students of color had increased since the implementation

of the "Can We Talk" program. Due to the increased test scores of the students of color,

Everywhere High School had made AYP the last couple of years. An additional convergence of

interests of Mr. South and the co-founders had to do with the teachers of Everywhere High

School. Mr. South needed a way to facilitate conversations centering on race and education with

his teachers, and the co-founders wanted to be able to interact with the teachers on a professional

basis regarding the education of children of color. This was confirmed through interviews and

observations. When the "Can We Talk" program meetings started to be broadcasted on the

school's podcasts, many of the teachers started watching the meetings. Dr. White and Mr. Butler

noted how teachers would approach them daily inquiring how to interact with students and what

were the best strategies to use in order to facilitate better communication and academic

performance from the students of color. The mentoring program allowed Mr. South to have

professional trainings in diversity, some of which were facilitated by the co-founders of the "Can

We Talk" program. The program also gave Mr. South the courage to confront certain teachers who did not see the need to change how they facilitated lessons in their classrooms.

District Support

Another reason for the successful implementation and maintenance of the "Can We Talk" program at Everywhere High School was the support the program received from the Everywhere School District. Through interviews, observations, and the gathering and analysis of documents, it was noted that it was in the best interest of the school district to support the "Can We Talk" program. In order for the district as to make AYP, its schools must make AYP. If schools repeatedly fail to make AYP, then districts eventually do not make AYP. This could result in the forfeiture of federal and state monies received by the school district. In conversations with district personnel, it was found that the "Can We Talk" program was the only program in the district specifically designed to work with students of color. The superintendent of the school district is on record stating that one of his main goals is to support programs that promote and facilitate diversity. Furthermore, the superintendent stated that he wanted to reduce the achievement gap between White students and students of color, increase test scores among all student demographics, and maintain the districts AYP status. The "Can We Talk" program provided the school district with a way to meet its goals. Actually, the district promoted the "Can We Talk" program as one of its diversity initiatives on its website.

Students

When I first choose to complete my study over the "Can We Talk" mentoring program, I was under the assumption that the program was designed for African American males. Initially, the program was designed to meet the unique needs of African American males in mainstream high schools. However, when I started my observations, I noticed the program had opened its

doors to all students. My first observation was on the student leadership team of the mentoring

program. Present at this meeting were several females and males from various races and

ethnicities. My jaw almost hit the floor when the student body president of the "Can We Talk"

mentoring group stood up to address the leadership team. He is a White male, who is a senior at

Everywhere High School. One of the tenets found throughout the CRT literature is the sharing

of the voice in order to get Whites to understand the experiences of people of color. Everywhere

High School is a predominately White high school with a small percentage of students of color.

Knaus (2009) notes that CRT must be applied to predominately White schools because CRT

recognizes and addresses the silencing of White students who speak to other realities, and who

can shed a light on the impact of Whiteness and White racism on White people.

I found this to be supported throughout my observations and interviews. One observation

I recall was the discussion on interracial dating. A White female discussed an incident where her

Black boyfriend and she were sitting outside leaning on her car. She described how she was

upset that her father had told her that he did not want her dating a Black boy. As she was crying

several people passed by, and one of them decided call the police. When the police arrived, they

handcuffed the young man and put him in the back of the patrol car. They then informed the

White female that she did not have to be afraid anymore, and that they were going to arrest the

young man for domestic violence. Even after she explained the story to the officers, it took a

verification of his license, a on the scene background check, and her mother coming home from

work to get the young man released. Other White students during this observation told of further

stories of being called names for having Black friends and for listening to 'Black' music. One

White student discussed how his mother had told him that he was going to get a reputation for

being a 'wigger' if he kept associating with Black kids. I was privy to several discussions as such throughout my time interacting with the "Can We Talk" program.

I was confronted with one surprising situation during my observation between Mr. Jones and two White students who were actively involved in the "Can We Talk" program. The students stated that the "Can We Talk" program had actually made them feel part of Everywhere High School.   Both students stated that the program had given them courage to get involved in other programs at Everywhere High School. One of the most powerful statements I witnessed during this observation was when the students discussed how they would not be attending college if it were not for the "Can We Talk" program. Together these students describe how their families had told them that they both were not college material. What was upsetting, both students internalized this belief. It was not until they joined the mentoring program did that belief start to change. These two students have both applied and been accepted to four year colleges. Without the "Can We Talk" program these students might not be attending college.

The Need for Mentoring

The "Can We Talk" mentoring program was designed on the notion, that four African American adult males could share their experiences and help students of color successfully navigate the hegemonic structures of traditional schools. A tenet at the heart of CRT is an appreciation of storytelling. Through storytelling, those who have been historically marginalized can express their insights on the structures of society, and how these structures impact their daily lives. By sharing these insights, marginalized individuals can provide counter narratives to the narrative that has been propagated by the dominant culture. Through observations and interviews, I was able to gain a better understanding of how the mentors of the program shared

their experiential knowledge with the mentees, while at the same time providing counter narratives to the dominant narrative.

Mr. Butler noted in his interview how he wanted to share with the students how hostile society is towards students of color. He also felt that it was necessary to share with the students the incarceration rates for males of color. Through the "Can We Talk" mentoring program Mr. Butler hoped to decrease the phenomenon of students of color being adjudicated in the town of Everywhere. His passion for sharing his knowledge with students was verified when a former mentee named Ryan (pseudonym) visited the "Can We Talk" students. Ryan shared with the students that his father had been killed do to his involvement with gangs. He further shared that he had two brothers, one was incarcerated and the other one had been shot while Ryan was attending Everywhere High School. Ryan's mother had died of cancer so he was placed at youth home during his last couple of years of high school. He informed the students that he was an angry young man, but had decided to participate in the mentoring program. Ryan noted that the knowledge the mentors shared with him changed his life. He listened to the shared experiences from the mentors, especially Mr. Butler, whom he developed a strong mentoring relationship. Mr. Butler told Ryan he had a choice and that he did not have to follow the path of his father and brothers. Ryan said that the knowledge he gained through the mentors allowed him to graduate from high school, enroll in college, and that he would be graduating with a 'solid' job in the spring. Through my time I heard countless stories how the mentors had shared their knowledge with mentees and that this knowledge had enhanced the social and academic experiences of the students.

Mr. Butler also shared how the program would bring in older citizens of color to share their knowledge and experiences with the "Can We Talk" participants. These participants shared

stories of segregation, how they navigated the system, most importantly these citizens shared the stories of they fought so that current students of color could have increased access to social and academic opportunities. Mr. Butler voiced that by sharing their collective histories, the students of color would have a better idea of the importance of achieving academically at Everywhere High School. During my observations the mentees were constantly stating how they used the knowledge of the mentors to successfully deal with situations they encountered in their daily activities. For example, I witnessed an encounter with a mentor and a mentee. The mentee shared that he had become infected with a sexually transmitted disease. This particular infection made it difficult for the mentee to sit down for prolonged periods. The mentee shared this situation with one of the mentors. The mentor shared with the student how to deal with the issue, what information to share and not share with the teachers, and how to ask when the student needed to leave class. A couple weeks later, I asked the mentor about the student. The mentor informed me that the mentee was doing very well, and that the mentee actually thanked him, because the mentee could not share his/her condition with anyone else.

Question 2: How did "Can We Talk" shape school culture (shared meanings of symbols, artifacts, and behaviors) as perceived by:

Principals and Co-Founders

Dr. White shared his main goal in co-founding and participating in the "Can We Talk" mentoring program was to help students successfully graduate from high school. As noted in chapter four, Dr. White shared that he had been an administrator at the elementary level, and that he had watched his former students enter the high school but not graduate. He wanted to share his experiences with and knowledge of the school district in order to help the students graduate from Everywhere High School.

The other thing that Dr. White wanted to accomplish at Everywhere High School was to be able to share his knowledge with the staff and administrators. Dr. White shared that outside of content knowledge, teachers have to be able to develop relationships with their students. This is part of the disconnect with students of color and some White teachers. Several teachers attended "Can We Talk" meetings and workshops conducted by the co-founders.

The Principal, Co-Founders, and Staff of Everywhere High School

Mr. South was one of the faculty members who participated in the "Can We Talk sessions. Mr. South shared that the sessions were very valuable to him both personally and professionally. He stated that he had never had a bad experience with a student of color, but he had never been taught how to interact with students of color. Mr. South shared that very few educational courses in college instruct teachers on how to successfully facilitate classrooms with students of color. He said most educational courses espouse the colorblind theory to teachers, and further teach teachers to ignore the differences within their classrooms. Another teacher, a White female, said she did not understand the need for programs like "Can We Talk" until she had her own children who were biracial. She said that her children struggled socially and academically in the school system, because they were physically different than the other students. She said after coming to Everywhere High School and learning from the co-founders she has gained tangible knowledge how to relate instructionally to students of color. She is now one of the female mentors for the program.

Dr. White noted for the program to be successful not only did the students need to learn how to successfully communicate with the staff, but that the staff had to successfully learn how to communicate with the students. He said after the program started to have data driven results that teachers started participating in droves. He said teachers were always coming up to the co-

founders asking them how to relate to students or to visit their classrooms to give them feedback on their instruction. Dr. White said it was inspiring to see teachers really reaching out to work with students. Furthermore, it was also inspiring to watch teachers use the knowledge they had gained through the "Can We Talk" program to help students of color improve academically.

One of the concepts I was looking for was how had the "Can We Talk" program influence the voices of the students of color in Everywhere High School. During one of my early conversations with Mr. South, he stated one of his goals was to create a collective voice. He wanted the voices of the students of color to be heard throughout Everywhere High School. Mr. South shared with me that after the implementation of the mentoring program that the students of color started to view themselves differently. He said they started to espouse the same goals as the White and Asian students at Everywhere High School. He said the students did not only discuss becoming professional athletes and music artist, but that the students also discussed being business owners, architects, lawyers, teachers, and doctors. Mr. South said he noticed the students of color joining other organizations. He said the students started participating in activities that had traditionally been White at Everywhere High School. For example, students of color were running for student offices and participating in student council.

Mr. Butler, former school district Equity Council Director, confirmed Mr. South's comments. He noted, before the "Can We Talk" program, the students of color did not participate in the school programs outside of the basketball team. Mr. Butler noted that after the implementation of the program the students started to have a voice. He said they started talking about going to college. He further complemented the students for participating in student council, the Spanish Club, the business club, and that the students started participating in student council and running for school wide positions. Actually, the student body president of

Everywhere High School is an African American female, who is a participant of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. To foster the voice of the student mentees, Mr. Butler noted how the co-founders would place the students in positions of leadership. For example, the students developed the logo for the "Can We Talk" program and the students were required to develop the program and the agenda for the "Can We Talk" end of year celebration. Mr. Butler said this was to give the students experience in program development and management. He said he wanted to the students to learn and teach them responsibility. Mr. South also discussed how he invited the "Can We Talk" students to participate in some of the leadership committees at Everywhere High School. Members of the "Can We Talk" program served on the school improvement team and on the principal's advisory council. During one of our conversations, Mr. South shared how the "Can We Talk" students had been the first group to work with Everywhere's Leadership Education Achievement Partners. LEAP is the business partners of the high school. Mr. South said that the "Can We Talk" students were the first groups of students allowed to interact with the LEAP partners, these opportunities lead to the students receiving donations for the "Can We Talk", and "Can We Talk" mentees earning business scholarships and internships. Mr. South said he strategically planned this on purpose, so that the community could see the positive aspects of the mentees and the "Can We Talk" program.

Students: Mentees of "Can We Talk"

The "Can We Talk" program also provided all students with opportunities to attend different events. These events included mentoring other students, volunteer work with different community organizations, field trips to different local businesses, and field trips to different colleges and universities. I attended several of these trips with the "Can We Talk" program. After a visit to a university, I overheard two White students talking about the benefits of the trip.

The student said his parents would not have had the time to drive this far to visit this school with him. He stated that without the mentoring program he would not know the paper work to fill out, the scholarships to apply for, the financial aid requirements or who to contact at the admissions office. Through my time observing this program, I was surprised by the number of times I heard White students discuss the positive benefits of being involved with the mentoring program.

One of the unexpected benefits of the "Can We Talk" program being inviting to all students are the conversations. Many times I witnessed students of all races, ethnicities, and genders discuss and problems solve issues. Many times White and Black students would share observations with each other or how they dealt with a particular problem. The students did not always agree, however, through these multiethnic conversations the students were able to have a more global view of the situation. By including White students, based on my perspectives and observations, the program actually provided more real world authentic experiences for all, on the other dispelling many of the race based myths that have been perpetuated in society.

Through conversations, the mentees who participated in the study shared with me how the experiential knowledge of the mentors also benefitted them. Sophia shared how the mentors influenced her to succeed in school. She said the mentors were constantly telling and demonstrating to her how to be successful in school. She shared how the mentors taught her how to problem solve situations, and not to judge people based on un-documented stereotypes. Further, she discussed how the mentors taught her and other students how to apply for scholarships, and what to look for as they visited possible colleges they might want to attend. One of the highlights of the program for Sophia was visiting a local elementary school and work with younger students of color. She said she was able to use the knowledge she had gained through the mentoring program and share it with the elementary students. She discussed with the

students the importance of completing their schoolwork. Additionally, she gave them strategies on how to relate to other students and teachers. This would not have been possible without the "Can We Talk" program.

Jackson said the mentors taught him the importance of having a plan, and how to be more structured not only in school but also in life outside of school. He said the knowledge he gained through the program is going to allow him to be successful after high school. The student further shared that the program had taught him the importance of being academically focused. He is religiously completing his homework this year. One aspect the program has taught him the most is how to work with all teachers. Even the teachers who he can tell do not really want to be there or have trouble relating to students of color. In the past, he would struggle with the teachers who did not really care, but he said the mentors taught him how to be successful anyway. Through my observations and interactions with other students in the "Can We Talk" program the motif seemed to be to succeed anyway. The majority of the students were able to share how a conversation, something a mentor stated, or how the shared knowledge of the mentors had helped them be more successful at Everywhere High School.

The student mentees also discussed how the program had given them a voice. Sophia noted how she had received the opportunity to work with students from other schools to plan "Can We Talk" events. She stated that this gave her an opportunity to work collaboratively with others, a skill she will need in college and in the profession she chooses after college. She discussed how the "Can We Talk" students, especially the leadership group had to design program agendas, meet with the principal and teachers on various communities, and work with the LEAP partners on various initiatives. Furthermore, she discussed how the "Can We Talk" members were now involved in other activities besides track and basketball. She smiled as she

informed me that she was a cheerleader, a member of the track team, on student council, on the principal's advisory committee, and that she was on the school's honor roll. She said that you did not see many students of color participating in these groups, and that "Can We Talk" inspired them to get more involved in the school community. However, she did note that students of color are still in the minority when it comes to participating in school organizations.

Jackson also discussed how the program had given him a voice at Everywhere High School. He said without the program he would not have had the belief he could succeed academically in some courses. Additionally, he said through the program he had developed the courage to meet other students outside of the "Can We Talk" program. When he first enrolled at Everywhere High School, he stated that he did not really interact with White students. However, after the program he learned that he had to take students on individual basis. The student also shared that after he became involved in the mentoring program that he joined other school organizations. He shared that he had participated in the principal's advisory council, student council, the school improvement team, the wrestling team, and the student council. One of the most important things the student mentioned was the fact that he now sought help from teachers outside of class time. He said he wanted to keep improving academically, and that the program had taught him how to interact with teachers in order to elicit their help with his courses.

In order to verify the information garnered through the interviews, I performed several observations to see if "Can We Talk" members were involved in other school activities. Through observations, I did verify that "Can We Talk" students were indeed participating in other organizations. These organizations included the student council, the principal's advisory council, the school improvement team, and they were in enrolled in honors and advanced placement courses. Unfortunately, I also verified that the students were in the minority in these

organizations. Given the demographics of Everywhere High School this was not unexpected,

however, given their low numbers, I wondered how much their voice was actually being heard

on these different committees. The most important thing I guess is that they are now on the

committees and can share their voices and experiences with others who are also on the

committees.

Oh No Findings

One of the troubling things I detected during my time at Everywhere High School were

the teachers who did not see the need for the program, and who still believed in the color blind

ideology. During an observation, I heard a staff member explain that he did not see the need for

the program. He said that programs like "Can We Talk" teach students that they are different,

which can lead to issues and students viewing themselves as not equal. He said the program

teaches students that they can have built in excuses, such as color. This staff member said that

he has successfully worked with all students for over 20 years, and that he never saw color in any

of his students, he just saw kids.

I performed an observation of a "Can We Talk" meeting after a major racial incident

between Omnipresent High School and Everywhere High School. A large number of students

and staff attended this "Can We Talk" session. During the group activities, I had the opportunity

to walk around and listen to conversations. In one conversation, a teacher discussed how the

conversations would not really change anything in the long run. I stopped and asked the teacher

what he meant by that statement. I must disclose at this time that I had a relationship with the

teacher outside of Everywhere High School, so this personal relationship might have added to

the frankness of the teacher. He shared with me that he thought the program did not really add to

the school, and that the program was designed to make the school and district look better,

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because they were catering to the to the families of the students of color, and it gave the school district some positive public publicity. Another teacher whispered that he thought Mr. South was just some White boy sipping the political agenda Kool-Aid. Comments such as these gave me a better understanding of how much the "Can We Talk" program is actually needed at Everywhere High School.

One observation that mystified me was the observation I performed on the homecoming assembly. This observation was by accident, as I was leaving a "Can We Talk" activity, I noticed students leaving the auditorium. I went into the auditorium to witness the next assembly. I sat in the auditorium for approximately 20 minutes waiting for the second assembly to begin. While waiting for the assembly, I took field notes on the homecoming candidates. All of the homecoming king and queen candidates were White. I later discussed this with Mr. South, who informed me that based on his recollections that there were at-least two biracial females on the homecoming candidate list. However, I revisited my notes on the observation and verified that none of the homecoming candidates were of color.

Through observations and document analysis I was able to verify that the voice of students of color was increasing at Everywhere High School. However, I also witnessed honors and advanced placement courses where students of color were not present or were limited in number. I even visited an Advanced Biology course where there was one student of color. The teacher of the course was an African American teacher. Actually the teacher was from a country located in Africa. I asked the teacher how many students of color were typically in his courses. He told me that students of color for the most part did not have the academic skills to be successful in his course. Flabbergasted, I asked him about the young Black male presently in his class. He informed me that the student was actually from a country in Africa, and if students of

color from the U.S. acted like this student they would be more successful. I must disclose that I have a relationship with this teacher outside of Everywhere High School, and that I was very surprised how he viewed students of color with U.S origins. I also noticed that the school did not have very many visible decorations that supported diversity. In isolated areas and in some classrooms I visited, there were visuals that supported diversity and people of color, but for the most part the school reflected the dominant cultural group.

Connections to Literature

There has been a proliferation of mentoring programs in the U.S, especially in the field of education (Cavell et al., 2009; Randolph & Johnson, 2008; Rhodes & Dubois, 2008; Dubois et al., 2002; Hickman & Wright, n.d). In addition, empirical evidence suggests that while mentoring programs can have positive results for mentees and mentors, they must be implemented and maintained with fidelity (Dubois et al., 2002; Arwood et al., 2000; Townsel, 1997). This is supported by the findings of this study in regards to the implementation and maintenance of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program.

There were several reasons for the infusion of the "Can We Talk" program into Everywhere High School and many of the reasons center on the current status of students of color. First, students of color are more likely to be placed in lower academic tracks, and referred to special education services (Banks & Banks, 2010; Gordon et al., 2009). Second, students of color are more likely to receive harsher discipline rates as compared to their White counterparts. Third, students of color are more likely to be instructed by White teachers, who have little to no training in the facilitation of lessons to students of color.

Students of Color in Special Education

One of the reasons Mr. South wanted the "Can We Talk" program in Everywhere High School was the proliferation of Black males in special education courses. He noted that during classroom observations he witnessed very few students of color in the advanced placement or honors classes. However, when he visited the special education classes, he would see a number of students of color. During my observations at Everywhere High School, I also noticed this phenomenon. I witnessed some advanced placement and honors courses in which there were no students of color. In conversations with the student participants, one of the mentees stated that he did not have the belief that he could succeed in these types of courses. Part of the reason the student did not feel that he could succeed was that he had been given the message through his schooling experiences about his inability to succeed in school. Sealy-Ruiz and Green (2010) note that these experiences could lead to self-doubt and produce a negative sense of being in students of color. Later in the chapter, I will discuss how the "Can We Talk" mentoring program helped to alleviate this issue at Everywhere High School.

Discipline Rates for Students of Color

Numerous studies conducted on students of color have concluded that students of color are more likely to experience stiffer disciplinary measures in schools (Milner, 2013, Butler et al., 2012; Banks & Banks, 2010; Gordon et al., 2009; Ladd & Fiske, 2008). Sadly, this phenomenon starts as early as pre-school and continues through the high school years (Ladd & Fiske, 2008). In conversations with Dr. White, Mr. South, and Mr. Butler this trend also occurred in the Everywhere School District. At Everywhere High School, Mr. South noted his disappointment in the disciplinary numbers at Everywhere High School and the numbers were very similar to the

trends reported in the research. In looking at the documents that detailed the discipline rates at Everywhere High School, I also found that students of color, especially male students of color had slightly numbers of higher rates of disciplinary infractions. However, I will discuss these numbers and their relation to the "Can We Talk" mentoring program later in the chapter.

Quality of Teachers

Empirical research also indicates that students of color are more likely to attend schools with other students of color, be instructed by teachers who are White, teachers newer to the field of education, and teachers who graduated from universities that are ranked lower in terms of their teacher preparation programs (Milner, 2013; Andrews, 2012; Sealy-Ruiz & Greene, 2010; Ladd & Fiske, 2008). The majority of the teachers at Everywhere High School are White. There are 150 staff profiles at Everywhere High School. However, there are approximately five staff of color employed. This includes one assistant principal, one counselor, two teachers, and one para-professional. Many of the students of color have never had the opportunity to be taught by a faculty member of color. This means many of the students have to navigate social and cultural structures of the dominant demographic at Everywhere High School. In contrast to the teaching staff encountered by many students of color, the staff at Everywhere High School for the most part is highly experienced, and due to its location and clientele Everywhere High School is able to be highly selective in the teachers it recruits and employs. Nonetheless, very few of these teachers have experiences in facilitating lessons to students who differ from them in terms of race, ethnicity, and socio-economic class.

Leaders of "Can We Talk" (directors of the program (mentors)

The "Can We Talk" mentoring program was based on the notion that four African American men, who have successfully navigated the hegemonic structures of society, could help

instill a belief system of academic and social success in students of color. As noted by Davis (2007) mentoring cross-race is beneficial, however, it is more beneficial for students of color to see other people of color in positions of attainment. It is also noted by Gordon et al., (2009) that exposure to men of color who have been successful both professionally and personally could increase the motivation and educational opportunities for boys of color. This allowed for the initial success of the "Can We Talk mentoring program.

Role of Families

Another factor that led to early success of the mentoring program was the co-founders and the principal seeking parental support. For any program, particularly a mentoring program, targeting students of color in a majority White school parental support is essential. Randolph and Johnson (2008) note that parental support enhances the results of a mentoring program. Wyatt (2009) posits that mentoring programs that do not have parent support run the risks of being short-term interventions, because the parents have not been taught to do anything different. Previously, as mentioned by Mr. South and Mr. Butler, it was a struggle to attract students to the mentoring program. It was also a struggle to attract their parents to the program as well. Mr. South said the first parent meeting was a disaster, however after their initial failure, the mentors and the principal varied their ways to make parental contact. For example, they went and personally visited the homes of students of color. Furthermore, they provided day care and dinner for the families who attended the informational meetings. By altering their methods of contact, and providing daycare and dinner the co-founders and the principal were able to attract increased numbers of parents. Utilizing the new methods led to more students of color attending the "Can We Talk sessions. Mr. Butler and Dr. White both discussed how parents of the students

would seek out their advice on how to deal with administrators, teachers, and how to address social and academic needs of their children at Everywhere High School.

Need for Structure

According to Arwood-Barton et al. (2000), the most successful mentoring programs are structured and organized. In addition, they also suggest that the mentoring program have planned times within the daily schedule to ensure regular mentor-mentee contact. According to Wyatt (2009) regular contact with mentors will allow for continuous academic, personal, social, and professional development in mentees, especially in male mentees. Through interviews and observations on the "Can We Talk" program, I found that the program followed the research recommendation. In the first year, the program did not have a regular meeting schedule. The mentors met with the mentees before school, after school, and at other various times. To increase the number of students that could attend the meetings, the principal, Mr. South incorporated a time into the school schedule for the "Can We Talk" program to have regularly scheduled meetings. The program had already had gains in both the academic social realms for students of color at Everywhere High School, but after the schedule change where the mentors and mentees had regular scheduled visits the program had dramatic increase in mentee self-esteem, social networks, academics, and a decrease in behavioral infractions of the students who participated in the mentoring program.

The Status of Students of Color at Everywhere High School after the implementation of "Can We Talk"

Everywhere High School like other schools in the U.S. is not exempt from the flaws of the larger society. The Black male students at Everywhere High School were being assigned into lower tracks and transferred into special education courses at phenomenal rates. Part of the goals

of the "Can We Talk" co-founders was to establish as noted by Gordon et al. (2009) a school context where the academic success of Black males was not an exception but an expectation. Seely-Ruiz and Greene (2010) postulated in their research that school-mentoring programs could serve as a sense of strength as mentees navigate the structures of schools, and construct positive social and academic identities. Through the investigation of the "Can We Talk" program, I found this to occur continuously for its mentees. These positive self-images allowed all students, not just students of color, to have increase self-images both academically and socially. Through conversations with Mr. South and others associated with Everywhere High School, I was able to ascertain that the number of Black male students assigned special education status has consistently dropped. This is a direct result of the co-founders of the mentoring program as suggested by Rhodes and Dubois (2008), establishing close, lasting connections, and positive developmental changes in in their mentees. However, my investigation also revealed that the number of students of color at Everywhere High School being assigned to remedial courses and special education is still an issue that needs to be addressed.

Students of Color Discipline Rates after the Implementation of "Can We Talk"

The "Can We Talk" program was also able to address the issue of students of color, especially, males of color being subjected to increased disciplinary rates at Everywhere High School. As noted earlier, students of color received greater numbers of office referrals at Everywhere High School. These referrals led to students of color being suspended both in school and out of school at higher numbers than their White counterparts. Wyatt (2009) posits that students who are exposed to greater numbers of disciplinary infractions are more likely to depart from school earlier. This in turn hurts their academic achievement, and students of color who leave school early are more likely to have prison records. Students of color entering the

high schools in Everywhere and not coming out on the other side was one of the motivating factors for Dr. White getting involved in the mentoring program. Mr. Butler stated during one of our conversations, one of his motivating factors of getting involved in the "Can We Talk" program was the number of students of color he witnessed being sent into the judicial system. After the implementation of the mentoring program, Mr. South noted that there was a dramatic decrease in the number of office referrals for students of color. Furthermore, he said that the number of in-school and out of school suspensions dramatically decreased at Everywhere High School.

Through my own analysis of the data, it appeared that the "Can We Talk" program had promoted social change within the Everywhere High School community. The program also facilitated a more reciprocal relationship between the students of color and that White staff at Everywhere High School. I was able to witness this relationship on numerous visits to Everywhere High School. Specifically, I witnessed a conversation with Mr. Jones, a White female teacher, and a student of color. The teacher came to a "Can We Talk" meeting and waited for the meeting to end, and then approached a student who had gotten in trouble in her course earlier in the day. The three of them talked about responsibility, and how the teacher wanted the student to do well in her course. The situation was resolved with the student apologizing and the teacher and student both smiling at the end of the conversation. Mr. Charles who also observed the interaction, noted in years past the teacher probably would have written up a referral, and the student then would have been subjected to the school disciplinary procedures. So, the program has lowered the discipline infractions, however, I assume there were several factors involved in the decreased number of referrals. One, the program had helped Mr. South alter the culture of the school. Two, the program facilitated a change in how students

of color and the White staff viewed one another. Three, the program opened up channels of communication between the students of color and the White staff. Four, the program increased the connectivity of the students of color to Everywhere High School.

White Teachers Views of Students of Color

One of the last facets that the "Can We Talk" program addressed at Everywhere High School was how the mostly White staff viewed the students of color. Sealy-Ruiz and Greene (2010) noted, that the identified achievement gap between students of color and White students could be traced to teacher perception. They posit that teacher perception can interfere with a teacher's ability to be effective with students of color. In addition, teachers tend to relate to students if they have the same cultural norms as themselves. Many White teachers find that they are teaching children who are different from them in terms beyond ethnicity, class, race, and in linguistic diversity, and who view the world culturally different (Sealy-Ruiz & Greene, 2010). Through observations and interviews, I found this to be true at Everywhere High School. Mr. South discussed the need to help his teachers understand that they are here for all students and not a select few. Dr. White and Mr. Butler also discussed a need to help foster within the teaching staff at Everywhere High School the belief in the academic abilities of students of color.

Student Mentees of "Can We Talk"

This topic came up in both interviews with the student mentees. Sophia discussed the importance of having adults that believed in students. She also noted how the adults caring inspired the students to be more active in the learning process. Jackson discussed how some White teachers had low expectations and did not really push the students of color academically. The student also stated he could tell which teachers cared about him as a person and wanted him to improve academically. However, he stated you could also tell which teachers did not care and

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were just there to get paid. Jackson noted that the "Can We Talk" program helped him to be able work with and around teachers that had low expectations for him. He said that you had to show the teachers that you were serious about school, and show them that you cared how you were doing academically. He said he demonstrated his preparedness by having his homework completed, regular attendance, and actively participating in class.

Through the Eyes of the Researcher

Through my own observations, I noticed that many of the teachers espoused a belief in the fact that all students could learn. Further, the academic gains and the decrease in the achievement gap at Everywhere High School seemed to underlie this fact. However, in other conversations I was privy to at Everywhere High School, not all teachers seemed to believe that all students could learn. Some of the teachers still believed in meritocracy and color blind ideology, which Banks and Banks (2010) note are both myths. For example, I heard teachers state that they do not see the color of their students, and that they treat all students the same. Other teachers stated that it is up to the student to get the most of their academic experiences. Through hard work all students can achieve certain levels of academic and social success. These comments stress the need and importance for further and increased levels of diversity seminars at Everywhere High School.

Conclusions

In this study, I wanted to gain a better understanding of one mentoring program designed to work with students of color in a majority White High School. The purpose of this research was to identify how a principal, co-founders, and mentees of the "Can We Talk" program describe their experiences in implementing, maintaining, and interacting with a mentoring program designed to work with students of color in a high school located in a city in the

Midwest. The research questions explored the participant's experiences in implementing the "Can We Talk" program as well as how the program had an influence on the culture of Everywhere High School.

The results of and understandings discovered in this study have shown the commitment the principal and co-founders had to the students of color as they worked diligently together to implement the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. In chapter four, I discussed the findings of this study and the experiences Mr. South, Dr. White. Mr. Butler. Dr. Old and the two student mentees shared. Although, most of the participants were located on the same school campus, with the exception of Dr. Old, who also has experience in working in the Everywhere School district. However, their experiences are quite distinctive. Mr. South provided his experiences from the perspective of a high school principal trying to find a way to support his students of color while at the same time making AYP. Dr. White, Dr. Old, and Mr. Butler provided their experiences from the perspectives of people of color who have experiences in navigating the hegemonic systems of traditional schools. The two student mentees provided the perspective of students of color trying to navigate the structures of a majority White secondary school. Through their experiences, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program at Everywhere High School.

Exploring the experiences of the participants through the culture of Everywhere High School to implement and maintain a mentoring program designed to work with students of color allowed me to understand the struggles, successes, and supports that were provided to the participants.

The Principal

Mr. South had to work very hard in order to get the "Can We Talk" program established in his school. The culture of Everywhere High School at first did not support a mentoring program composed to work with students of color. However, Mr. South had the expectation that once the program was in place, the culture of Everywhere High School would evolve to support such an initiative. One of the first things Mr. South did was to attend a diversity workshop with two of the co-founders of the "Can We Talk" program. This allowed him to establish a relationship with Dr. White and Mr. Butler. Another action Mr. South took was to attend a workshop facilitated by Dr. White and Mr. Butler on the mentoring program. Mr. South was hoping this demonstrated to the co-founders that he was serious about supporting the implementation of the "Can We Talk" program into Everywhere High School. Recall from chapter five, the main reason Mr. South wanted the "Can We Talk" program at Everywhere High School was that he needed a way to increase the academic achievement of his male students of color in order to make AYP. Also recall, that Mr. South did not know a way to start to the conversations with his students of color about the need to increase their academic achievements. In order to facilitate this conversation, Mr. South needed the co-founders to speak to his students of color. One of the benefits for Mr. South of the "Can We Talk" program settled into his school was that he was able to find a value in mentoring programs for students of color. He also gained an understanding of the support systems that needed to be in place to support students of color.

In addition to the experience of finding value, Mr. South started to establish a culture of expectation at Everywhere High School, that all students regardless of their race, ethnicity, and socio-economic class would be instructed equitably. This expectation was demonstrated by

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providing teachers with in-services on diversity. Furthermore, Mr. South had the co-founders present strategies during teacher workdays on how to communicate as well as facilitate lessons to students of color. One of the biggest outcomes Mr. South did was to change the school schedule, so that the "Can We Talk" program could have an established and regular meeting time. This demonstrated to the staff that he fully supported the "Can We Talk" program and that they would be expected to do the same. Mr. South also demonstrated his support by attending "Can We Talk" sessions. In addition, he attended field trips with the "Can We Talk" students, and paid for substitute teachers so that his teaching staff could attend a few of the trips as well.

Of great interest was the relationship between Mr. South and the co-founders. The relationship began based on interest convergence. Mr. South wanted and needed the program to help his school make AYP, and the co-founders wanting and needing a way to get into Everywhere High School, so that they could help the students of color. However, after spending extensive time with one another, Mr. South started to gain an understanding of the experiences of people of color, and how these experiences shape how people of color view certain situations. For example, during one of our conversations Mr. South discussed how he views interactions with the police different than most Black people. He also gained an understanding how the curriculum and culture of a school promote one group over another. Without the co-founders, I would hypothesize that Mr. South would not have gained such a deep understanding.

Leaders of "Can We Talk" (directors of the program (mentors)

Each co-founder had their own personal reasons for participating in the establishment of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. For Dr. White, it was his experiences in teaching and an administrator in the Everywhere School District. Recall, Dr. White said for years he had watched students of color enter the high school and not come out on the other side. For Mr.

Butler, it was having three children educated in the Everywhere School District. He watched the struggles of not only his children but other children of color as they tried to navigate the school system. Additionally, he noticed the high adjudication rate of student-aged individuals in Everywhere, and knew that education could help alleviate this trend. Dr. Old noted that during her time in the Everywhere School District the marginalization of students of color. As an administrator she also noticed the high disciplinary rates for students of color, and the lack of opportunities for students of color to have their voices heard in the Everywhere School District. Together with the other co-founders she decided that something needed to be changed in order to give the students of color a voice in the Everywhere School District.

Even though the co-founders differed in their motivations and in some of their goals of the "Can We Talk" program, they were able to set aside their differences. and They worked together to create a program that would help students of color narrow the academic, social, and cultural achievement gaps that occurred in school district. In chapter five, I discussed how Dr. White and Mr. Butler disagreed on whether or not the "Can We Talk" program should be implemented at Everywhere High School. Dr. White knew the history and culture of Everywhere High School, and thought that a program for students of color would not be fully supported. Mr. Butler also knew the history and the past culture of Everywhere High School, but was willing to give the school a chance based on his conversations with Mr. South. After a meeting and several assurances by Mr. South that he would support the mentoring program, Dr. White and Mr. Butler agreed to bring the program to Everywhere High School. The "Can We Talk" program was a success at Everywhere High School for several reasons. The program had the support of the head administrator, the program was given time in the schedule to have regular meetings, the culture of the school started to accommodate the program, and the co-founders

were very knowledgeable and worked hard for the successful implementation of the mentoring program.

Leaders of "Can We Talk" (directors of the program (mentors) and Mentees

One key factor that often gets overlooked with the establishment of new programs is the students the program is intended to reach. As noted through Dr. Old, the students of color needed a place to be able to talk as well as see each other. The program was successful, because the students bought into and believed in the program. More importantly, the mentees established a relationship with the mentors and believed in the mentors. Throughout my observations, the strength of the relationships between the mentees and mentors was evident. The strengths of these relationships were also verified through conversations with the mentees. The mentees discussed how important it was for someone to belief in them, and they constantly expressed how the mentors believed in them not only as students, but more importantly as individuals who had a right to be heard.

Additionally, one of the goals of credible mentoring programs is to facilitate positive changes in the mentees. The "Can We Talk" program did this for the mentees as I observed and encountered. The mentees discussed the social opportunities they received being part of the program. For example, several of the mentees were able to attend a speech by Ms. Obama. They also received the opportunity to meet and work with a diverse group of people. A major social change the "Can We Talk" program accomplished at Everywhere High School was to inspire the students of color to be more socially involved. The students started joining other groups outside of the "Can We Talk" program. The "Can We Talk" program also stressed the importance of academics to the mentees. One of the first actions presented by the co-founders was to meet with the male students of color to discuss their academic test scores. They let the students know that

these scores were being utilized to make decisions about them. The co-founders then worked

with the students to increase their academic scores. With the improvement of the scores the

students started to view themselves and their school in a more positive nature. Several of the

mentees discussed how they started to pay more attention to completing their school. One of the

most powerful testaments that I came across during my time at Everywhere High School, was the

number of former and current mentees who stated how the program had not only inspired them,

but gave them the courage to go on and attend college. Through the field trips to colleges and

universities, the introduction of business community members, bringing in academic recruiters,

the "Can We Talk" program demonstrated to the mentees that if they wanted to obtain a college

education, the idea was something they could all acquire.

 Cultural Change at Everywhere High School

The experiences of the participants showed that the deep personal beliefs, attitudes, and

values of each had an effect of the implementation and maintenance of the "Can We Talk"

mentoring program. Mr. South's desire to make AYP, the desires of the co-founders to help the

students of color, and the desires of the students of color to gain a voice in their educational

experiences all converged to allow the "Can We Talk" mentoring program exist at Everywhere

High School. Furthermore, the desires of each helped to establish a more accepting culture at

Everywhere High School for a program designed to work with students of color. The culture

evolved enough that White students started to participate in the program. However, through

conversations and observations, the culture of Everywhere High School just like the rest of

society still needs to progress further in order to fully support initiatives like "Can We Talk." In

this study, the beliefs, attitudes and intentions of Mr. South and the co-founders of the "Can We

Talk" program held in terms of the establishment at Everywhere High School influenced the

academic and social opportunities of the students of color. In an effort to not only bring this mentoring program to Everywhere High School, but also support and maintain it, several other questions arose for future consideration.

Implications

The findings in this study refer to the role of the principal and co-founders in the implementation of a specific mentoring program designed to work with students of color at one majority White secondary high school. The personal purposes and drive of these individuals converged to meet the needs of the school as well as the students of color at Everywhere High School. The implications of this study raises questions about the ways mentoring programs for students of color should be implemented as well as the roles districts, principals, and mentors play in the establishment of these programs. In this manner, these questions raise the need for a conversation between all relevant entities in regards to the educational supports needed by students of color. These entities include school districts, district and school administrators, special education teachers, general education teachers, founders of mentoring programs, and university and teacher education programs. In order to influence the facilitation of instruction for students of color, there is a need for professional development and strategies of working with diverse student populations. With a focus on professional development all stakeholders can be successful in the education of children of color.

Structures for Success

The professional development of teachers evokes the role of school and district administrators working in conjunction with trained professionals who have a documented history of success in working with students who come from diverse backgrounds. The content of these professional developments should reflect the current strategies and supports necessary to support

the education of diverse student populations. Furthermore, if it is decided that a specialized program, such as a mentoring program is needed, the program should be implemented utilizing the best-documented strategies. The program should also have in place rubrics in order to assess the effectiveness of the program. In addition, the program needs to provide a screening tool for potential mentors as well as provide on-going professional development for mentors selected to participate in the program. Moreover, the relationship between the principal, mentors, and teaching staff is critical to the successful implementation of the mentoring program, especially if the mentoring program is designed to work with a group of marginalized students. Any changes made in the facilitation of the program should be based on the data obtained through targeted goals, and based on the best-established pedagogical instructional methods.

Teacher Preparation: A Change in Student Demographics

Additionally, with the growing number of students who come from diverse populations, university and teacher education programs need to examine how they are preparing potential teachers for the diverse students they are going to encounter. Traditionally, teacher education programs focused on teaching to students who typify the dominant culture. Through my experiences and verified through this study, many administrators and teachers are poorly trained to work with students and families who are racially, ethnically, and culturally different. This poor training has led to students who come from marginalized groups receiving inferior academic and social opportunities, while receiving superior levels of disciplinary infractions, and experiencing higher school dropout rates as compared to their White counterparts.   The collaboration between district and school administrators and founders of mentoring programs is a must if a mentoring program is going to succeed.

The Role of the Family

One of the final considerations is the role the family of mentees play in the successful implementation and maintenance of the mentoring program. District administrators along with school administrators and co-founders of mentoring programs need to establish strategies to effectively recruit the support of families. Without the support of families, the mentoring program will have short-term results. Furthermore, without the support of families, the program would not be able to effectively recruit the students it is trying to target. Mr. South and the co-founders discovered the first time they tried to have a meeting with their targeted families. Through the changing of their recruiting methods, Mr. South and the co-founders were able to recruit families and thus students to the "Can We Talk" program at Everywhere High School. Most of these issues raise questions about the role the district, school, the principal, and mentors play in the establishment of a mentoring program. In what ways do teachers help in the establishment of mentoring programs for students of color? In what ways are mentees themselves responsible in implementation of mentoring programs? How does the culture of a school help or hinder such programs? What might teacher education programs do to better ensure that teachers are better prepared to work with diverse students? If all of these entities do not work together, then students of color will continue to be marginalized and receive inadequate educational opportunities.

Future Direction for Research

Several considerations for future research are presented for the readers' consideration. This qualitative study utilized the framework of critical race theory. I presented a deep, rich understanding of the participant's experiences integrating and maintaining the "Can We Talk"

program at a majority White High School. Thus, I provide the following for future consideration of research.

Dropouts

The dropout rate needs to be evaluated. First, there is a need to focus on the dropout rate of mentees who drop out of similar mentoring programs. What happens to the mentees who no longer actively participate in the mentoring program? Do these students continue some of the skills they learned in the mentoring program to still succeed in their educational settings? Once these students leave the mentoring program do they return? What happens to mentees who move and attend other schools? These questions could help mentoring programs design ways to effectively recruit and retain mentees.

Research Sites

Second, the "Can We Talk" program is located in several schools. A multi-site study looking at the "Can We Talk" program on other school campuses could help gain a better understanding in the implementation of mentoring programs. On several of the campuses in which the "Can We Talk" program has been established, the majority of the student population are students of color. How does this compare to the implementation of the program at a mostly White school? How teacher attitudes differ at majority White do schools versus schools where the majority of the students are of color? What is the level of parental support at the majority of color school versus the White school? Do the motivations of the principals differ or are they still based on interest convergence? For example, did the principals in the schools with majority of students of color implement the program to make AYP?

Mentor Retention

Third, what happens to mentoring programs like "Can We Talk" once the original co-founders are no longer actively involved? For example, as I started this study, the original co-founders were stepping out of the day-to-day operation of the program. However, their direct connections with the principal and other members of the school, the co-founders still served as resources as questions arose about the program. What would happen if the co-founders were not available? Could or would the program still be successful, if Mr. South a White male principal took over the day-to-day operation of the program?

Accessibility

Fourth, my personal relationships with the principal, co-founders, teachers and students, I was able to gain valuable access to the campus. Would future researchers have the same "comfortable" access to the aforementioned? Many times, I heard from students I know your father or another family member so I think it is OK to share this information with you. I also had teachers share information with me because of past personal relationships. The new assistant principal, a Black male, would often invite me into conversations or share information with me because I am Black and a former principal. What would the data look like if I went into an educational setting without these prior relationships?

Methodological Framework

Last, I used the critical race theory as my methodological framework to conduct this study. Another study utilizing a different framework might yield different results. For example, what might the results look like if the study used transformational leadership or social justice theory as the methodological framework? What might the outcomes or results of the study reveal if it would have been conducted quantitatively?

Additional topics of inquiry for discussions could include, but not limited to are: what helpful strategies can be developed for the adaptation of mentoring programs district wide instead of one school implementing the program on its own? What aids and cautions can be offered in the implementation of mentoring programs designed for students who are from marginalized racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups? What factors should be considered when measuring the success of a mentoring program? What role does the social capital of the mentors play in the implementation and maintenance of mentoring programs? How do mentoring programs obtain and maintain mentee family support? The final topic of inquiry does the addition of genders and White students affect a mentoring program originally designed for male students of color.

Role of the School Community

The discussion, connection to the methodological framework, literature, conclusion, implications, and future directions for research all point to the critical role all stakeholders have in the establishment of mentoring programs for students of color. With the increase of mandates and laws designed to measure the achievement of all students, schools are continually looking for clear directions to increase their achievement numbers. Conscientious principals, teachers, and community members of color who serve as mentors are looking for ways to improve the academic fortunes of students of color. Their interests in doing so may vary, but the end results are the increased opportunities both academically and socially for children of color. Additionally, strong collaborative relationships between educational leaders and founders of mentoring programs for students of color allow for the mentoring program to be successfully implemented. Therefore, it becomes necessary for district administrators, school administrators, and mentors to support one another, and provide resources so that students of color can achieve

at the same rates as their White peers. Lastly, teachers need to be provided with om-going

professional development, so they can support the academic and social growth of students of

color.

Summary

The focus of this study has been to provide a deeper understanding of a specific

mentoring program, "Can We Talk" designed to work with students of color. In this chapter, I

have presented a compressed summation of the study, the connection to the framework, the

contribution to the literature, and conclusions of the study. Furthermore, I ended this chapter

with a discussion about the implications and offered possible future directions for research as a

result of the study. I advise the reader to take the time to gain an understanding of the

experiences of participants in this study, and to search for plausible directions in which they can

serve as advocates for those who support the academic and social growth of students of color.

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Appendix A - IRB Application

Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB)
Application for Approval Form
Last revised on January 2011

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:

- **Title of Project:** (if applicable, use the exact title listed in the grant/contract application)
  Leadership in a Race Based Mentoring Program: A Case Study of "Can We Talk"

- **Type of Application:**
  ☒ New/Renewal   ☐ Revision (to a pending new application)
  ☐ Modification (to an existing #_____ approved application)

- **Principal Investigator:** (must be a KSU faculty member)

Name:	David C. Thompson + Be Stoney (Co-PIs, and Craig. D. Butler II-- Ed.D student)	Degree/Title:	Ed.D. in Educational Leadership
Department:	Educational Leadership	Campus Phone:	532-5766
Campus Address:	363 Bluemont Hall	Fax #:	532-7304
E-mail	thompsond@ksu.edu		

- **Contact Name/Email/Phone for Questions/Problems with Form:**   Same as above

- **Does this project involve any collaborators not part of the faculty/staff at KSU?** (projects with non-KSU collaborators may require additional coordination and approvals):
  ☒ No
  ☐ Yes

- **Project Classification** (Is this project part of one of the following?):
  ☐ Thesis
  ☒ Dissertation
  ☐ Faculty Research
  ☐ Other: _____
  Note: Class Projects should use the short form application for class projects.

- **Please attach a copy of the Consent Form:**
  ☒ Copy attached
  ☐ Consent form not used

- **Funding Source:** ☐ Internal   ☐ External (identify source and attach a copy of the sponsor's grant application or contract as submitted to the funding agency)
      ☐ Copy attached   ☒ Not applicable

- **Based upon criteria found in 45 CFR 46 – and the overview of projects that may qualify for exemption explained at** http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/checklists/decisioncharts.html , **I believe that my project using human subjects should be determined by the IRB to be exempt from IRB review:**
  ☒ No
  ☐ Yes   (If yes, please complete application including Section XII. C. 'Exempt Projects'; remember that only the IRB has the authority to determine that a project is exempt from IRB review)

If you have questions, please call the University Research Compliance Office (URCO) at 532-3224, or comply@ksu.edu

Human Subjects Research Protocol Application Form

The KSU IRB is required by law to ensure that all research involving human subjects is adequately reviewed for specific information and is approved prior to inception of any proposed activity. Consequently, it is important that you answer all questions accurately. If you need help or have questions about how to complete this application, please call the Research Compliance Office at 532-3224, or e-mail us at **comply@ksu.edu**.

Please provide the requested information in the shaded text boxes. The shaded text boxes are designed to accommodate responses within the body of the application. As you type your answers, the text boxes will expand as needed. After completion, print the form and send the original and one photocopy to the Institutional Review Board, Room 203, Fairchild Hall.

Principal Investigator:	**David Thompson + Be Stoney (Co-PIs + Co-investigator Craig D. Butler II--Ed.D Student)**
Project Title:	**Leadership in a Race Based Mentoring Program: A Case Study of "Can We Talk"**
Date:	**April 10, 2014**

MODIFICATION
Is this a modification of an approved protocol? ☐ Yes ☒ No **If yes, please comply with the following:**

If you are requesting a modification or a change to an IRB approved protocol, <u>please provide a concise description of all of the changes</u> that you are proposing in the following block. Additionally, please highlight or bold the proposed changes in the body of the protocol where appropriate, so that it is clearly discernable to the IRB reviewers what and where the proposed changes are. This will greatly help the committee and facilitate the review.

NON-TECHNICAL SYNOPSIS (brief narrative description of proposal easily understood by nonscientists):
This qualitative case study will explore the effect of leadership within a specific mentoring program, "Can We Talk," which is designed to work with students of color. Specifically, this case study aims to determine how leadership in mentoring programs designed for ethnically- and racially-marginalized students can help counter the cultural hegemonic factors that create an academic and social achievement gap between White students and students of color given how many schools in the United States (U.S.) promote the dominant culture's social and academic values. This leaves students who come from traditionally underserved groups feeling isolated and can lead to feelings of rejection. This study seeks to gain a better understanding of how leadership in mentoring programs may make a difference.

I. **BACKGROUND** (concise narrative review of the literature and basis for the study):
The achievement gap between Whites and students of color has been well documented. Racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in academic achievement have remained a stubborn fact in the U.S. There has been a plethora of programs designed to help students of color reach parity with White students. Although some of the implemented programs have had some success, little scholarship has addressed how leaders enact and impact such programs, specifically mentoring initiatives like "Can We Talk." This study seeks to understand how the tenets of Critical Race Theory, transformational leadership, and school culture are manifested in the leadership of the identified program.

II. **PROJECT/STUDY DESCRIPTION** (please provide a concise narrative description of the proposed activity in terms that will allow the IRB or other interested parties to clearly understand what it is that you propose to do that involves human subjects. This description must be in enough detail so that IRB members can make an informed decision about proposal).

The 'Can We Talk' program selected for study is housed in a secondary school in a Midwestern city. Additionally, this socioeconomically diverse high school serves approximately 1500 students. In this educational setting males slightly outnumber females. Moreover, the school is approximately 70% White, and 30% underrepresented. Furthermore, around 30% of the student body is considered to be economically disadvantaged, 2% ELL, and around 13% of the students are considered to be students with disabilities.

Participant selection for this study is purposeful (criterion-based). This means participants will be selected because they can inform an understanding of the research issue central to the study. Each participant must meet certain criteria to be selected based on gender, race/ethnicity, role, length of experience with the program, and willingness to participate. The participants reflect the range of perspectives in the setting (quota sampling). The participants selected for the study are as follows: the principal of the school, and two co-founders of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. Furthermore, several other participants will be selected. The other participants include students who do and do not participate in the "Can We Talk" program. Parental permission will be obtained for all students under the age of 18. A total of 11 individuals will be interviewed. The interviews will be at the school site and will be tape-recorded and transcribed. Every effort will be made to interview in private settings, where confidentiality can be protected.

In addition to interviews, the researcher will conduct approximately 10-15 total observations of the program meetings and leadership planning sessions. An observation guide will be used to record information pertinent to the study. Finally, documents related to the program will be collected and analyzed. Both the observation guides and documents will be used to assist with interpretation of the data and documentation of the characteristics of the program.

III. **OBJECTIVE** (briefly state the objective of the research – what you hope to learn from the study):
The interviews and observations and document analysis form a case study of "Can We Talk" through which the researcher will gain a better understanding of the role of leadership in mentoring programs designed to work with students of color. The end objective is to estimate the program's effect which in turn will assist in judgments about whether the program should be replicated or modified.

IV. **DESIGN AND PROCEDURES** (succinctly outline formal plan for study):
    A. Location of study: **Secondary school located in a Midwestern city.**
    B. Variables to be studied: **Perceptions of the principal, the "Can We Talk" co-founders, mentors, and students.**

C. Data collection methods: (surveys, instruments, etc – **PLEASE ATTACH**)

> **This case study design will utilize interviews supplemented by observations and other sources in order to gain a better understanding of the leadership of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program.**
>
> **Interviews: Each participant will complete an hour long interview. Follow-up interviews will be scheduled as needed in order to provide clarification. Please see attached interview guides.**
>
> **Observations: interviews will be supplemented by observations in order to gain a better understanding of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program. Observations (5-10) will be conducted at "Can We Talk" mentoring sessions. The leadership of the "Can We Talk" will be contacted in order to schedule observations of "Can We Talk" leadership meetings. Five leadership meetings will also be observed. All observations will occur over a four-month period (approximately the equivalent of one semester.) Please see the attached observation guide.**
>
> **Documents: Documents requested and artifacts obtained for analysis will include mission and vision statements, goal statements, local and state assessment results found at the state department websites, "Can We Talk" meeting minutes, and other documentation of "Can We Talk" activities. The documents and artifacts will be examined to verify the data collected during the interview and to assist with interpretation and description of the case.**

D. List any factors that might lead to a subject dropping out or withdrawing from a study. These might include, but are not limited to emotional or physical stress, pain, inconvenience, etc.:

> **None are anticipated. However, if a participant becomes distressed or inconvenienced during the study, s/he will be informed of the right to end participation at any time. The researcher will also provide contact information for assistance in coping with any stress (provided by counselors at the site.)**

E. List all biological samples taken: (if any)

> **None**

F. Debriefing procedures for participants:

> **Participants will be orally debriefed immediately after completing the study. They will be reminded of the study's objectives. They will be encouraged to contact the researcher if they have any questions and will be provided with contact information for the principal investigator and IRB. Upon request, they will also be provided information about accessing the final report of the study.**

V. RESEARCH SUBJECTS:

A. Source:

B. Number:	**11**

C. Characteristics: (list any unique qualifiers desirable for research subject participation)

> **Three of the participants will be involved in designated roles in the "Can We Talk" mentoring program (the principal and two co-founders (mentors).The other eight participants will be recommended by the principal for participation in the study. This includes four students involved in the "Can We Talk" mentoring program, and four students who are not involved in the program. Participants (students who are not in the program) will be recommended by the principal will reflect the range of characteristics represented in the setting based on gender, race/ethnicity, length in the program, and willingness to participate.**

D. Recruitment procedures: (Explain how do you plan to recruit your subjects? Attach any fliers, posters, etc. used in recruitment. If you plan to use any inducements, ie. cash, gifts, prizes, etc., please list them here.)

> **The school principal will be purposefully selected for participation in the interview process. There are several other administrators located in this school setting, however, the head principal is the identified leader of all curricular and extra-curricular events. The head principal will be invited for participation in the study via email and then by phone.**
>
> **Two of the Co-founders (mentors) of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program will be invited to participate in the study via email and then by phone.**
>
> **Two groups of students will be selected to participate in the study. The first group will be students who are involved in the mentoring program. These students will be invited during a "Can We Talk" meeting and will have to secure consent from the parent/guardian and agree to participate in an individual interview meeting. The second group selected for participation will be students not involved in the mentoring program. The principal will be asked to generate a list of students who are representative of the student body. The students will then be randomly invited until representative is achieved based on race and gender; two students of color and two White students will be selected for participation. These students will also secure parent/guardian consent and be willing to participate.**

VI. RISK – PROTECTION – BENEFITS: The answers for the three questions below are central to human subjects research. You must demonstrate a reasonable balance between anticipated risks to research participants, protection strategies, and anticipated benefits to participants or others.

A. **Risks for Subjects:** (Identify any reasonably foreseeable physical, psychological, or social risks for participants. State that there are "no known risks" if appropriate.)
   There are no known risks beyond what participants would experience in their daily lives.

B. **Minimizing Risk:** (Describe specific measures used to minimize or protect subjects from anticipated risks.)

> Should participants experience any distress, the study will be halted and the researcher will debrief the participant immediately and provide contact information (for services at the site.) The participant will be informed of the study design. The participant will be given a chance to ask any questions they have and given the contact information for the primary investigator and IRB should they have questions at a later time. All interviews will be collected at the site and in a location that ensures confidentiality. Any publications resulting from the study will use fictional names or codes for the participants and all identifying characteristics (location, names) will be removed. All data will be stored in a secure location where only the researcher has access. Any transcripts prepared by someone other than the researcher will require a signed agreement with the transcriber to maintain confidentiality as well.

C. **Benefits:** (Describe any reasonably expected benefits for research participants, a class of participants, or to society as a whole.)

> There are several potential benefits from this study. With increased accountability measures for schools in terms of legislation like No Child Left Behind (NCLB), schools are looking for ways to meet the social and academic needs of all students. For school leaders, this study can help in the development and implementation of initiatives, such as, mentoring programs that are designed to work with a diverse population of students. Directors of mentoring programs which are school - based could possibly gain better insights into working with the formal leaders of schools as well as gain a better understanding of how to facilitate mentoring programs for students of color.

In your opinion, does the research involve **more than minimal risk** to subjects? ("Minimal risk" means that "the risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.")

☐ **Yes**   ☒ **No**

VII.   CONFIDENTIALITY: Confidentiality is the formal treatment of information that an individual has disclosed to you in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others without permission in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure. Consequently, it is your responsibility to protect information that you gather from human research subjects in a way that is consistent with your agreement with the volunteer and with their expectations.   If possible, it is best if research subjects' identity and linkage to information or data remains unknown.

Explain how you are going to protect confidentiality of research subjects and/or data or records. Include plans for maintaining records after completion.

> Identifying information will be stored separately from the data and codes or fictional names will be used to refer to the participants. Only the researcher will have access to this information. To protect this confidentiality, signed informed consent forms, audio tapes, transcriptions, and field notes/observation guides will be locked in a file cabinet in the researcher's house and retained for at least three years after the study's completion. All audio tapes and transcribed material will locked in a file cabinet in the researcher's house and retained for at least three years after the study's completion. After at least three years all data/materials will be destroyed.

VIII. INFORMED CONSENT: Informed consent is a critical component of human subjects research – it is your responsibility to make sure that any potential subject knows exactly what the project that you are planning is about, and what his/her potential role is. (There may be projects where some forms of "deception" of the subject is necessary for the execution of the study, but it must be carefully justified to and approved by the IRB). A schematic for determining when a waiver or alteration of informed consent may be considered by the IRB is found at

http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/consentckls.html

 Even if your proposed activity does qualify for a waiver of informed consent, you must still provide potential participants with basic information that informs them of their rights as subjects, i.e. explanation that the project is research and the purpose of the research, length of study, study procedures, debriefing issues to include anticipated benefits, study and administrative contact information, confidentiality strategy, and the fact that participation is entirely voluntary and can be

terminated at any time without penalty, etc. Even if your potential subjects are completely anonymous, you are obliged to provide them (and the IRB) with basic information about your project. See informed consent example on the URCO website. It is a federal requirement to maintain informed consent forms for 3 years after the study completion.

Yes	No		Answer the following questions about the informed consent procedures.
☒	☐	A.	Are you using a written informed consent form? If "yes," include a copy with this application. If "no" see b.
☐	☒	B.	In accordance with guidance in 45 CFR 46, I am requesting a waiver or alteration of informed consent elements (See Section VII above). If "yes," provide a basis and/or justification for your request.
☒	☐	C.	Are you using the online Consent Form Template provided by the URCO? If "no," does your Informed Consent document has all the minimum required elements of informed consent found in the Consent Form Template? (Please explain)
☐	☒	D.	Are your research subjects anonymous? If they are anonymous, you will not have access to any information that will allow you to determine the identity of the research subjects in your study, or to link research data to a specific individual in any way. Anonymity is a powerful protection for potential research subjects. (An anonymous subject is one whose identity is unknown even to the researcher, or the data or information collected cannot be linked in any way to a specific person).
☒	☐	E.	Are subjects debriefed about the purposes, consequences, and benefits of the research? Debriefing refers to a mechanism for informing the research subjects of the results or conclusions, after the data is collected and analyzed, and the study is over. (If "no" explain why.) Attach copy of debriefing statement to be utilized.

*It is a requirement that you maintain all signed copies of informed consent documents for at least 3 years following the completion of your study. These documents must be available for examination and review by federal compliance officials.

IX. **PROJECT INFORMATION:** (If you answer yes to any of the questions below, you should explain them in one of the paragraphs above)

Yes	No		Does the project involve any of the following?
☐	☒	a.	Deception of subjects
☐	☒	b.	Shock or other forms of punishment
☐	☒	c.	Sexually explicit materials or questions about sexual orientation, sexual experience or sexual abuse
☐	☒	d.	Handling of money or other valuable commodities
☐	☒	e.	Extraction or use of blood, other bodily fluids, or tissues
☐	☒	f.	Questions about any kind of illegal or illicit activity
☐	☒	g.	Purposeful creation of anxiety
☐	☒	h.	Any procedure that might be viewed as invasion of privacy
☐	☒	i.	Physical exercise or stress
☐	☒	j.	Administration of substances (food, drugs, etc.) to subjects
☐	☒	k.	Any procedure that might place subjects at risk
☐	☒	l.	Any form of potential abuse; i.e., psychological, physical, sexual
☒	☐	m.	Is there potential for the data from this project to be published in a journal, presented at a conference, etc?
☐	☒	n.	Use of surveys or questionnaires for data collection **IF YES, PLEASE ATTACH!!**

X. **SUBJECT INFORMATION:** (If you answer yes to any of the questions below, you should explain them in one of the

paragraphs above)

Yes	No		Does the research involve subjects from any of the following categories?
☒	☐	a.	Under 18 years of age (these subjects require parental or guardian consent)
☒	☐	b.	Over 65 years of age
☐	☒	c.	Physically or mentally disabled
☒	☐	d.	Economically or educationally disadvantaged
☒	☐	e.	Unable to provide their own legal informed consent
☐	☒	f.	Pregnant females as target population
☐	☒	g.	Victims
☐	☒	h.	Subjects in institutions (e.g., prisons, nursing homes, halfway houses)
☐	☒	i.	Are research subjects in this activity students recruited from university classes or volunteer pools? If so, do you have a reasonable alternative(s) to participation as a research subject in your project, i.e., another activity such as writing or reading that would serve to protect students from unfair pressure or coercion to participate in this project? If you answered this question "Yes," explain any <u>alternatives options</u> for class credit for potential human subject volunteers in your study. (It is also important to remember that: Students must be free to choose **not** to participate in research that they have signed up for **at any time** without penalty. Communication of their decision can be conveyed in any manner, to include **simply not showing up** for the research.)

Yes	No		
☒	☐	j.	Are research subjects **audio** taped? If yes, how do you plan to protect the recorded information and mitigate any additional risks?

Only the researcher will have access to the audio taped and transcribed material. All material will be kept in a locked file cabinet at the researcher's house. The material will be retained for at least three years after the study's completion. After at least three years all audio and transcribed material will be destroyed.

Yes	No		
☐	☒	k.	Are research subjects' images being recorded (video taped, photographed)? If yes, how do you plan to protect the recorded information and mitigate any additional risks?

XI.　　　**CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Concerns have been growing that financial interests in research may threaten the safety and rights of human research subjects.   Financial interests are not in them selves prohibited and may well be appropriate and legitimate. Not all financial interests cause Conflict of Interest (COI) or harm to human subjects. However, to the extent that financial interests may affect the welfare of human subjects in research, IRB's, institutions, and investigators must consider what actions regarding financial interests may be necessary to protect human subjects. Please answer the following questions:

Yes	No		
☐	☒	a.	Do you or the institution have any proprietary interest in a potential product of this research, including patents, trademarks, copyrights, or licensing agreements?
☐	☒	b.	Do you have an equity interest in the research sponsor (publicly held or a non-publicly held company)?
☐	☒	c.	Do you receive significant payments of other sorts, eg., grants, equipment, retainers for consultation and/or honoraria from the sponsor of this research?
☐	☒	d.	Do you receive payment per participant or incentive payments?
☐	☒	e.	If you answered yes on any of the above questions, please provide adequate explanatory information so the IRB can assess any potential COI indicated above.

XII. PROJECT COLLABORATORS:

A. **KSU Collaborators – list anyone affiliated with KSU who is collecting or analyzing data:** (list all collaborators on the project, including co-principal investigators, undergraduate and graduate students)

Name:	Department:	Campus Phone:	Campus Email:
David C.Thompson	Educational Leadership	785.532.5535	thomsond@ksu.edu
Be Stoney	Curriculum and Instruction	785.532.3531	bstoney@ksu.edu
Craig D. Butler II	Educational Leadership (student)	785.532.5535	cdbutler@ksu.edu

B. **Non-KSU Collaborators:** (List all collaborators on your human subjects research project <u>not</u> affiliated with KSU in the spaces below. KSU has negotiated an Assurance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), the federal office responsible for oversight of research involving human subjects. When research involving human subjects includes collaborators who are not employees or agents of KSU the activities of those unaffiliated individuals may be covered under the KSU Assurance only in accordance with a formal, written agreement of commitment to relevant human subject protection policies and IRB oversight. The Unaffiliated Investigators Agreement can be found and downloaded at http://www.k-state.edu/research/comply/irb/forms/Unaffiliated%20Investigator%20Agreement.doc

C.

The URCO must have a copy of the Unaffiliated Investigator Agreement on file for each non-KSU collaborator who is not covered by their own IRB and assurance with OHRP. Consequently, it is critical that you identify non-KSU collaborators, and initiate any coordination and/or approval process early, to minimize delays caused by administrative requirements.)

Name:	Organization:	Phone:	Institutional Email:

Does your non-KSU collaborator's organization have an Assurance with OHRP? (for Federalwide Assurance and Multiple Project Assurance (MPA) listings of other institutions, please reference the OHRP website under Assurance Information at: http://ohrp.cit.nih.gov/search).

☒ No
☐ Yes   If yes, Collaborator's FWA or MPA # _____

Is your non-KSU collaborator's IRB reviewing this proposal?

☒ No
☐ Yes   If yes, IRB approval # _____

C. **Exempt Projects:** 45 CFR 46 identifies six categories of research involving human subjects that may be exempt from IRB review. The categories for exemption are listed here: http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/checklists/decisioncharts.html. If you believe that your project qualifies for exemption, please indicate which exemption category applies (1-6). Please remember that only the IRB can make the final determination whether a project is exempt from IRB review, or not.
    Exemption Category: 45 CRF 46.101(b)(1)

XIII. CLINICAL TRIAL ☐Yes ☒No
(If so, please give product.)

Export Controls Training:
-The Provost has mandated that all KSU faculty/staff with a full-time appointment participate in the Export Control Program.
-If you are not in our database as having completed the Export Control training, this proposal will not be approved until your participation is verified.
-To complete the Export Control training, follow the instructions below:
Click on:

http://www.k-state.edu/research/comply/ecp/index.htm

1. After signing into K-State Online, you will be taken to the Export Control Homepage
2. Read the directions and click on the video link to begin the program
3. Make sure you enter your name / email when prompted so that participation is verified

If you click on the link and are not taken to K-State Online, this means that you have already completed the Export Control training and have been removed from the roster. If this is the case, no further action is required.

-Can't recall if you have completed this training? Contact the URCO at 785-532-3224 or comply@ksu.edu and we will be happy to look it up for you.

Post Approval Monitoring: The URCO has a Post-Approval Monitoring (PAM) program to help assure that activities are performed in accordance with provisions or procedures approved by the IRB. Accordingly, the URCO staff will arrange a PAM visit as appropriate; to assess compliance with approved activities.

| If you have questions, please call the University Research Compliance Office (URCO) at 532-3224, or comply@ksu.edu |

INVESTIGATOR ASSURANCE FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
(Print this page separately because it requires a signature by the PI.)

P.I. Name: David C. Thompson + Be Stoney (Co-PIs: Craig D. Butler II--Ed.D. student)

Title of Project: Leadership in a Race Based Mentoring Program: A Case Study of "Can We Talk"

XIV. ASSURANCES: As the Principal Investigator on this protocol, I provide assurances for the following:

A.   Research Involving Human Subjects: This project will be performed in the manner described in this proposal, and in accordance with the Federalwide Assurance FWA00000865 approved for Kansas State University available at http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/polasur.htm#FWA, applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines. Any proposed deviation or modification from the procedures detailed herein must be submitted to the IRB, and be approved by the Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB) prior to implementation.

B.   Training: I assure that all personnel working with human subjects described in this protocol are technically competent for the role described for them, and have completed the required IRB training modules found on the URCO website at: http://www.k-state.edu/research/comply/irb/training/index.htm.   I understand that no proposals will receive final IRB approval until the URCO has documentation of completion of training by all appropriate personnel.

C.   Extramural Funding: If funded by an extramural source, I assure that this application accurately reflects all procedures involving human subjects as described in the grant/contract proposal to the funding agency. I also assure that I will notify the IRB/URCO, the KSU PreAward Services, and the funding/contract entity if there are modifications or changes made to the protocol after the initial submission to the funding agency.

D.   Study Duration: I understand that it is the responsibility of the Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB) to perform continuing reviews of human subjects research as necessary. I also understand that as continuing reviews are conducted, it is my responsibility to provide timely and accurate review or update information when requested, to include notification of the IRB/URCO when my study is changed or completed.

E.   Conflict of Interest: I assure that I have accurately described (in this application) any potential Conflict of Interest that my collaborators, the University, or I may have in association with this proposed research activity.

F.   Adverse Event Reporting: I assure that I will promptly report to the IRB / URCO any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others that involve the protocol as approved. Unanticipated or Adverse Event Form is located on the URCO website at: http://www.k-state.edu/research/comply/irb/forms/index.htm. In the case of a serious event, the Unanticipated or Adverse Events Form may follow a phone call or email contact with the URCO.

G.   Accuracy: I assure that the information herein provided to the Committee for Human Subjects Research is to the best of my knowledge complete and accurate.

_____   _____
     (Principal Investigator Signature)   (date)

Appendix B - IRB Approval Letter

TO: David Thompson   Proposal Number: 7152
          Educational Leadership
          363 Bluemont

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair
          Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 05/21/2014

RE: Approval of Proposal Entitled, "Leadership in a Race Based Mentoring Program: A Case Study of "Can We Talk"."

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects has reviewed your proposal and has granted full approval. This proposal is **approved for <u>one year</u> from the date of this correspondence, pending "continuing review."**

APPROVAL DATE: 05/21/2014

EXPIRATION DATE: 05/21/2015

Several months prior to the expiration date listed, the IRB will solicit information from you for federally mandated **"continuing review"** of the research. Based on the review, the IRB may approve the activity for another year. **If continuing IRB approval is <u>not</u> granted, or the IRB fails to perform the continuing review before the expiration date noted above, the project will expire and the activity involving human subjects must be terminated on that date. Consequently, it is critical that you are responsive to the IRB request for information for continuing review if you want your project to continue.**

In giving its approval, the Committee has determined that:

    ☒   There is no more than minimal risk to the subjects.
    ☐   There is greater than minimal risk to the subjects.

This approval applies only to the proposal currently on file as written. Any change or modification affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. All approved proposals are subject to continuing review at least annually, which may include the examination of records connected with the project. Announced post-approval monitoring may be performed during the course of this approval period by URCO staff. Injuries, unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the IRB and / or the URCO.

Appendix C - Informed Consent Form

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT TEMPLATE

(If you are performing research involving human subjects, it is your responsibility to address the issue of informed consent. This template is intended to provide guidance for crafting an informed consent document. The Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB) *strongly* recommends that you model your consent form on this template. However, if you choose a different approach, it must contain at a minimum the same elements as this standard version. Language and terminology used in the consent form must be written at no more than the 8th grade level, so that the potential participant can clearly understand the project, how it is going to be conducted, and all issues that may affect his or her participation. In addition, please write the consent form in a manner that addresses your subjects directly instead of writing it in a manner that addresses the University Research Compliance Office directly. KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT TEMPLATE

PROJECT TITLE: Leadership in a Race Based Mentoring Program: A Case Study of "Can We Talk"

APPROVAL DATE OF PROJECT: March, 2012 EXPIRATION DATE OF PROJECT: April 3rd, 2014

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):   **Dr. David C. Thompson, Dr. Be Stoney, Craig D. Butler II**

CONTACT AND PHONE FOR ANY PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS: **785-532-5335**

IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE INFORMATION: **Dr. Rick Scheidt**

SPONSOR OF PROJECT: **n/a**

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: **The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of the role of leadership in mentoring programs designed to work with students of color.**

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED: **Interviews, observations, document analyses**

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES OR TREATMENTS, IF ANY, THAT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO SUBJECT:

n/a

LENGTH OF STUDY: **Summer and Fall 2014**

RISKS ANTICIPATED: **none**

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED: **Leaders of schools and mentoring programs will gain a better understanding of how to facilitate and implement mentoring programs for students of color.**

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: **All material collected for the purpose of this study will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home for at least three years. After at least three years all material related to this study will be destroyed.**

IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF INJURY OCCURS: **n/a**

Last revised on May 20, 2004

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PARENTAL APPROVAL FOR MINORS: _____

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

(Remember that it is a requirement for the P.I. to maintain a signed and dated copy of the same consent form signed and kept by the participant

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____   **Date:** _____

Witness to Signature: (project staff) _____   **Date:** _____

Appendix D - Email Solicitation Letter

Email Solicitation Letter for Study Participation

Title of Study: Leadership In A Race Based Mentoring Program: A Case Study Of "Can We Talk"

Dear Prospective Participants,

My name is Craig D. Butler II. I am currently a Ed.D candidate in Educational Leadership at Kansas State University. I am writing to ask if you would be interested in participating in my dissertation research on leadership in mentoring programs designed to work with students of color. I am looking for participants who have a knowledge of the "Can We Talk" mentoring program located at your high school.

To actively participate within this study, I would require you to do the following:
- Complete a demographic questionnaire about yourself, which would last no longer than 15 min.
- Participate in an interview that is at least 60 min. and be available for a follow-up interview if necessary.

As a prospective participant, you will be requested to read and sign a participant consent form, which will be the initial step within the study. There are no costs to participate within this study and you will receive no compensation. The benefit of your participation will help inform school leaders as well as leaders of mentoring programs about the role of leadership in mentoring programs not only designed for students of color but for all students.

If you are interested in participating within this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at cdbutler@ksu.edu , or call me at 702-754-8556 (cell). You may also contact one of my advisors, Dr. David C. Thompson at thomsond@ksu.edu or call at 785-532-5335; or Dr. Be Stoney at bstoney@ksu.edu or call at 785-532-5525

Thank you for your consideration of participating within this prospective study.

Sincerely,

Craig D. Butler   Dr. David Thompson
Ed.D candidate in Educational Leadership Professor and Chair, NEFC
Tel. 702-754-8556   Tel. 785-532-5335
cdbutler@ksu.edu   thomsond@ksu.edu

                                         Dr. Be Stoney
                                         Associate Professor
                                         Tel. 785-532-5525
                                         bstoney@ksu.edu

363 Bluemont Hall, 1100 Mid-Campus Drive, Manhattan, KS 66506-5312 | (785) 532-5541 | Fax: (785) 532-7304 | www.k-state.edu

Appendix E - Interview Guide Principal

1. Main Question: What is the role of Leadership in mentoring programs designed to work with students of color
    a. How are the tenets of CRT manifested in the dimensions of leadership of the school implementing the mentoring program as perceived by
    b. How did the leadership shape school culture (shared meanings of symbols, artifacts, and behaviors) as perceived by

Script:

- Hi my name is Craig Butler and I am conducting a study on mentoring programs (do not want to tell them about leadership as it might influence their thinking).
- The purpose of this interview is to find out about the "Can We Talk" mentoring program located at your school.
- This interview should last approximately 1 hour.
- For the purpose of adequately recording information, I am going to tape record the interview, and from time to time you will see me write down some notes. The notes will be used to help me in gaining a better understanding of the information obtained during this interview.
- If you have any questions at this time please let me know.
- I will then hand the interviewee the consent form (if it is a student under the age of 18 I will have already obtained parental permission and a signed consent form).
- We will then go over the consent form and I will then obtain the interviewee signature.
- Again, I will then introduce myself and then tell the interviewee that I am now turning on the tape recorder.
- Interview Session:
- At the end of the interview: Thank you for participating in the interview. Your interview will be confidential and I will then tell the interviewee what I plan to do with the interview recordings, that I will be contacting them to go over the transcriptions, remind them of the purpose of the interview, and where they can access the information. I will also provide them with contact information so that they can contact me if they have any further information, questions or concerns.

Interview guide for Principal: The identified formal leader of "Can We Talk"

1. Please introduce yourself and tell me a little bit about you?
2. What are your pre-teaching, teaching, and administrative experiences in working with students of color?
3. How did "Can We Talk" come to be implemented in this school?
4. What were some of the challenges in implementing "Can We Talk" into this school setting?
5. Why as the principal did you feel the need to support a mentoring initiative like "Can We Talk?"
6. Specifically, how has the "Can We Talk" mentoring program helped you fulfill your role as the principal of this school?

7. As the principal, how have you demonstrated to your internal (staff & students) and external (parents, businesses etc.) communities the importance of "Can We Talk?"
8. Tell me about a time when "Can We Talk" allowed you to address the needs of students of color in this school building.
9. What have your experiences been in working with the founders of the "Can We Talk" program?
10. What else could you tell me about your role in the "Can We Talk" mentoring program?

Appendix F - Interview Guide Co-Founders (Mentors)

1. Main Question: What is the role of Leadership in mentoring programs designed to work with students of color
    a. How are the tenets of CRT manifested in the dimensions of leadership of the school implementing the mentoring program as perceived by
    b. How did the leadership shape school culture (shared meanings of symbols, artifacts, and behaviors) as perceived by

Script:

- Hi my name is Craig Butler and I am conducting a study on mentoring programs (do not want to tell them about leadership as it might influence their thinking).
- The purpose of this interview is to find out about the "Can We Talk" mentoring program located at your school.
- This interview should last approximately 1 hour.
- For the purpose of adequately recording information, I am going to tape record the interview, and from time to time you will see me write down some notes. The notes will be used to help me in gaining a better understanding of the information obtained during this interview.
- If you have any questions at this time please let me know.
- I will then hand the interviewee the consent form (if it is a student under the age of 18 I will have already obtained parental permission and a signed consent form).
- We will then go over the consent form and I will then obtain the interviewee signature.
- Again, I will then introduce myself and then tell the interviewee that I am now turning on the tape recorder.
- Interview Session:
- At the end of the interview: Thank you for participating in the interview. Your interview will be confidential and I will then tell the interviewee what I plan to do with the interview recordings, that I will be contacting them to go over the transcriptions, remind them of the purpose of the interview, and where they can access the information. I will also provide them with contact information so that they can contact me if they have any further information, questions or concerns.

Interview guide for Co-Founders: The identified In-formal leaders of "Can We Talk"

1. Please introduce yourself and tell me a little bit about you.
2. Tell me about your experiences growing up in U.S. schools while being a person of color.
3. Could you describe to me what led you and the other co-founders to form the "Can We Talk" mentoring program?
4. How did "Can We Talk" come to be implemented in this school setting?
5. Tell me about your role in the "Can We Talk" program?
6. Tell me about your experiences in working with the school principal in regards to the "Can We Talk" program.

7. Tell me about a time when the district and school leaderships demonstrated their support for the "Can We Talk" mentoring program.
8. Describe how the school community (I.E teachers, non-teaching staff, administration, and students) have reacted to having "Can We Talk" in their school?
9. Tell me about a time when a school staff member came and talked to you about "Can We Talk"
10. Can you describe a specific incident where a mentee came to you and told you how being a part of "Can We Talk" has impacted his/her life.
11. Could you share anything else with me that you feel I should know about the "Can We Talk" program?

Appendix G - Interview Guide Mentee

1. Main Question: What is the role of Leadership in mentoring programs designed to work with students of color
    a. How are the tenets of CRT manifested in the dimensions of leadership of the school implementing the mentoring program as perceived by
    b. How did the leadership shape school culture (shared meanings of symbols, artifacts, and behaviors) as perceived by

Script:

- Hi my name is Craig Butler and I am conducting a study on mentoring programs (do not want to tell them about leadership as it might influence their thinking).
- The purpose of this interview is to find out about the "Can We Talk" mentoring program located at your school.
- This interview should last approximately 1 hour.
- For the purpose of adequately recording information, I am going to tape record the interview, and from time to time you will see me write down some notes. The notes will be used to help me in gaining a better understanding of the information obtained during this interview.
- If you have any questions at this time please let me know.
- I will then hand the interviewee the consent form (if it is a student under the age of 18 I will have already obtained parental permission and a signed consent form).
- We will then go over the consent form and I will then obtain the interviewee signature.
- Again, I will then introduce myself and then tell the interviewee that I am now turning on the tape recorder.
- Interview Session:
- At the end of the interview: Thank you for participating in the interview. Your interview will be confidential and I will then tell the interviewee what I plan to do with the interview recordings, that I will be contacting them to go over the transcriptions, remind them of the purpose of the interview, and where they can access the information. I will also provide them with contact information so that they can contact me if they have any further information, questions or concerns.

Interview Guide: Students who are involved in the "Can We Talk" mentoring program.

1. Tell me about an important tradition at your school?
2. Tell me about how you became part of the "Can We Talk" program?
3. Tell me about specific mentoring experience you have had while being part of "Can We Talk?"
4. What have your experiences been in terms of interacting with other students involved in the "Can We Talk" mentoring program?
5. Tell me about an experience you have had with a student who is not involved in the "Can We Talk" program?
6. How has your principal demonstrated that "Can We Talk" is an important part of your school?

7. Tell me about an experience you have had with one of the "Can We Talk" mentors?
8. How has "Can We Talk" leadership (principal and mentors) influenced your relationship with the school?
9. What else should I know about the "Can We Talk" program?

Appendix H - Interview Non Mentee

1. Main Question: What is the role of Leadership in mentoring programs designed to work with students of color
    a. How are the tenets of CRT manifested in the dimensions of leadership of the school implementing the mentoring program as perceived by
    b. How did the leadership shape school culture (shared meanings of symbols, artifacts, and behaviors) as perceived by

Script:

- Hi my name is Craig Butler and I am conducting a study on mentoring programs (do not want to tell them about leadership as it might influence their thinking).
- The purpose of this interview is to find out about the "Can We Talk" mentoring program located at your school.
- This interview should last approximately 1 hour.
- For the purpose of adequately recording information, I am going to tape record the interview, and from time to time you will see me write down some notes. The notes will be used to help me in gaining a better understanding of the information obtained during this interview.
- If you have any questions at this time please let me know.
- I will then hand the interviewee the consent form (if it is a student under the age of 18 I will have already obtained parental permission and a signed consent form).
- We will then go over the consent form and I will then obtain the interviewee signature.
- Again, I will then introduce myself and then tell the interviewee that I am now turning on the tape recorder.
- Interview Session:
- At the end of the interview: Thank you for participating in the interview. Your interview will be confidential and I will then tell the interviewee what I plan to do with the interview recordings, that I will be contacting them to go over the transcriptions, remind them of the purpose of the interview, and where they can access the information. I will also provide them with contact information so that they can contact me if they have any further information, questions or concerns.

Interview Guide: Students Not-Involved in the "Can We Talk" program

1. Tell me about an important tradition at your school?
2. What have you heard about the "Can We Talk" mentoring program?
3. Tell me about an experience you have had with a student who is involved with "Can We Talk?"
4. What discussions have you had about the "Can We Talk" program?
5. Tell me about a time when a teacher discussed "Can We Talk?"
6. How has your principal demonstrated that "Can We Talk" is an important aspect of the school?
7. Tell me about an experience you have had with the leadership (principal & Co-Founders (mentors)) of "Can We Talk?"
8. What else should I know about your school or "Can We Talk?"

Appendix I - Photo Object Elicitation Interview Questions

Photo-object elicitation possible questions:

Photo-object elicitation example questions:

1. Tell me about what you brought me?
2. Tell me about what you have here.
3. You mentioned X, can you give me an example of when X happened another time during your experience with Can We Talk.
4. Walk me through a typical session/day/experience when you were with the program
5. You mentioned a lot about x, can you think of a time when you experienced Y?
6. If I were to be a fly on the wall when you had this object, what would be some terms or phrases I would hear?

Photo-object elicitation example questions:

1. Can you tell me a little bit more about …
   Tell me about an important tradition at your school?
2. Tell me about how you became part of the "Can We Talk" program?
3. How has your principal demonstrated that "Can We Talk" is an important part of your school?
4. Tell me about an experience you have had with one of the "Can We Talk" mentors?

Appendix J - Invitation Letter from Principal

November 8, 2010

Dear Parent,

Free State High School is beginning its second year implementing a program called Can We Talk (formerly known as Courageous Conversations). The purpose of Can We Talk is to bring together students of all racial backgrounds to discuss historical and current issues facing students of color. Many current events on a national level have created talking points for the group, and issues and challenges on a local scale have served as a focal point for discussions as well. Can We Talk student participants meet during each seminar period throughout the school year.

Can We Talk was founded by four African-American community leaders from Lawrence, Kansas. Willie Amison, Craig Butler, Bud Stallworth, and Ed Brundt recognized the need for adult mentors in our schools based on the academic achievement gap that, while narrowing, still exists across the district. While focusing primarily on mentoring African-American male students during the first year, the program has expanded to include male and female students from all racial backgrounds. Free State High School currently enjoys participation from over 100 students from every racially disaggregated background, including your student.

__The purpose of this letter is to invite all parents of Can We Talk participants to an potluck dinner and informational meeting on November 19th at 6:00 pm in the Free State High School Black Box Theater.__ Besides an outstanding dinner, this evening will provide you an overview of the program and specific plans for community-based activities and field trips. The event should last no more than one hour and will be facilitated by founders of the Can We Talk program.

I look forward to meeting you on November 19th. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 832-6050.

Sincerely,

Ed West
Principal
Free State High School

Appendix K - Independent Study Guide

Can We Talk Independent Study Curriculum

Goal Setting
Current Events
PowerPoints/Film Media
Interviews (LEAP partners)
Journaling
Grades/Homework Completion
College Visits
Field Trips
Community Service Projects
FAFSA/ACT/SAT Testing
Job Shadowing/Career Exploration
Attendance/Participation at Can We Talk
Movie Night
Pot Luck Dinner
Student Exchange w/ LHS
Kansas Black Student Union/Alliances Leadership Conference
KU Symposiums

Field Trips
Brown vs. Board of Education
Capitol Building
Negro Baseball Museum/Jazz Museum
Ropes Course

College Visits
Kansas University
DeVry University
Baker University
Kansas State University
Washburn Tech
University of Missouri-Kansas City
Johnson County Community College
Kansas City Community College
        -including Tech Center

Appendix L - Observation Excerpt

Date: 9/26/2014

Researcher: Craig D. Butler II

Time: 8:15-9:15

Location: Everywhere High School

Before:

I arrived at the school and it was a late start day. Late start days are when the school starts and hour later, so that teachers can go through school or district professional learning development. On this date the "Can We Talk" mentoring program decided to have a program entitled "Will the Leaders Stand Up." When I arrived I went to the main office to check in. The secretary directed me to the auditorium for the meeting. I was a little surprised the meeting was in the auditorium. The reason being that the program usually has about 40-50 participants, sometimes more or sometimes less. As I headed to the auditorium through the commons area, I saw several small pockets of students involved in conversations, while other students took the time to catch up on homework. After making through the commons area I went into the auditorium. I was very surprised when I entered the auditorium. There were approximately 300 teachers and students in the auditorium.

Figure 4.7. An excerpt from a field observation performed on 9/26/2014 on a "Can We Talk" mentoring session.

Appendix M - Excerpt from Field Experience

An excerpt from my first field experience is located in Figure 4.8.

I then went to the front office and asked where the library was located. There were three

people in the main office, two secretaries and the school resource officer. One of the

secretaries directed me towards the library. As I walked towards the library, I noticed all

of the students sitting in the various classrooms. I then entered the library and proceeded

to one of the classrooms located in the library. As I entered I noticed that there were six

high school students. There were two African American female students, two African

American male students, one White student, and one Latina. The students had been in

the program an average of three years. The meeting was supposed to start at 10:00 but

did not start until 10:25. At the meeting were an assistant principal from each of the high

schools, one of the co-founders of the program, six students, the site director from one of

the middle schools, and one of the student-mentees had brought his 4-6 year-old little

brother as his parents were at work.

Figure 4.8. Excerpt from observation performed on 5/29/2014 on the "Can We Talk"
mentoring program. This included a Co-Founder, assistant principal in charge of the
program, two site-directors, and the student leadership team.