RACIAL STANDPOINT AND LEARNING: UNDERSTANDING STUDENT STANDPOINT

IN THE INTERRACIAL AND SERVICE-LEARNING CLASSROOM

by

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(Under the Direction of Tina M. Harris)

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study sought to understand the ways in which student racial standpoint influences the skills and concepts which they report to have learned from an Interracial Communication and African American Relational Communication course, and the ways in which they discuss applying this knowledge to a service-learning course. The results from revealed eleven (11) skill and concept themes which students reported to have learned in the course, eleven (11) pedagogical tools which students described as contributing to their learning in the race communication classroom and seven (7) application themes which students reported to have used in a service-learning course. Beyond these themes which emerged, student racial standpoint and implication for future research are discussed.

INDEX WORDS: Standpoint, Standpoint Theory, Interracial Communication, Race, Service-learning, Pedagogy, Experiential Learning Theory

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my friends and family: past, present and future.

May I live my life in a way which is always a blessing to you.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970's, or midway through the civil rights movement, a small group of academics have strived to promote honest conversations about race and racism in their classrooms (Fox, 2001). In keeping with these traditions, many university classrooms have been designed to address these issues by seeking to increase student intercultural competence and challenging them to consider their own racial point of view as well as others who are racially different from her/himself (Harris, 2003). In these classrooms, college students are afforded the opportunity to discuss racial issues and to struggle with alternative racial points of view. For some students, this is the first time they have ever discussed race with racially different individuals. When race, as well as gender and class, is brought to the forefront of these courses, students experience a variety of emotions ranging from guilt and shame to anger and despair (Tatum, 1992). Despite the difficulty of discussing racism in the classroom, these classes have been found to be effective for impacting student perceptions of and attitudes towards race (Asante & Schmidt, 2006; Harris, 2003), facilitating the application of information learned in class to real-life contexts (Harris, 2003), and playing a meaningful role in improving societal racial dynamics (Chang, 2002). While a large body of academic literature has been devoted to the theory and practice of race pedagogy, little work has been done to understand the ways in which students learn the material which they retain and take away from an interracial communication course.

A growingly popular pedagogical technique, known as service-learning, offers a new context for understanding the knowledge acquisition (retention) and application of race communication pedagogy. Service-learning, can be explained as a pedagogical practice which takes place in an academic course, and involves student reflection of their experiences, genuine service to the community, and the creation of a "mutually beneficial and respectful relationship between the students and community members" (Benson and Harkavy, 2003, p.1223). Courses which have implemented a service-learning component have been found to benefit student, instructors and the community in which they take place (Madden, 2000; Strange, 2000; Marullo, 1998; Warchal & Ruiz, 2004). These courses have been utilized to give students real-world application of course material while also facilitating student reflection and progress which may not be present in a course without a service-learning component (Markus, Howard, and King, 1993 & Marullo, 1998).

The following study is qualitative in nature and was designed to understand the communication skills and concepts students retain after the completion of an interracial communication course. The study was also designed to understand the critical impact an interracial communication course potentially has on a student's ability and preparedness to apply their knowledge to a service-learning project. More specifically, this project aimed to reveal the ways in which a race pedagogy course functions to equip students with the skills necessary for impacting their world through a service-learning project.

As with all research, this project was founded within a theoretical framework. This particular project explores research from an interpretivist perspective. According to Crotty (2008), this epistemology "looks for (a) culturally derived and historically situated interpretation of the social life-world (p. 67)." This means that interpretivists assume that knowledge is situated

in both history and culture. Additionally, three theories guiding this study and to be discussed in the subsequent chapter are: (1) Critical Race Theory - utilized to understand the development of a race focused communication course; (2) Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984) – elements applied to understand the types of skills which students could be expected to learn; and (3) Standpoint Theory (Harding, 1987) – to identify the ways in which student racial standpoint influences the ways in which they talk about the material they have learned.

This study is important to social science research, specifically interracial communication and pedagogy, because literature has not yet thoroughly addressed how classrooms that focus on race impact students' interracial communication skills and perceptions after the course has ended. Further, it is not yet known which particular assignments, class discussions, and pedagogical tools most impact or inform students' learning about interracial communication. Thus, in order to explore this phenomenon, the following goals of this study were developed: (1) To identify the critical experiences within these courses that facilitate a student's understanding of interracial communication course material and shape their racial perspectives; (2) To understand the ways in which a course influences a student's readiness to participate in a service-learning course where they develop a diversity training program for their community; and (3) To determine if (and in what ways) a student's racial and gender standpoint impact the ways in which communication skills are learned and utilized.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Race Pedagogy

Multicultural Education

Race pedagogy has been implemented into many academic disciplines including social

sciences, political science, journalism, education and communication (Akande & Schmidt, 2006;

Fassett and Warren, 2007; Harris, 2003;Harris, Groscurth & Trego, 2007; Harris Miller & Trego,

2004; Martin & Davis, 2001). In order to lay the groundwork for race and racism education in

the communication classroom it is first essential to have an understanding of multicultural

education. While multicultural education refers to differences in race, ethnicity, nationality,

language, gender, class, sexuality and ability (Rosenfelt, 1997), the field of multicultural

education was founded on the growing concern for the study of ethnic cultures, experiences, and

issues, especially those of racial minorities (Gay 1983). Research claiming to be multicultural

education began to appear in the 1970's (Fox, 2001), but much of the work referred to as

"multicultural education" had differing or conflicting goals.

In an attempt to better understand the growing field of multicultural education, Sleeter

and Grant (1987) conducted an exhaustive review of literature on multicultural education. Their

research revealed 89 articles and 38 books on the topic of multicultural education. This study

provided the research necessary for the creation of a taxonomy of five different areas of research

exploring the topic of multicultural education. This taxonomy included the following: (1)

Teaching the culturally different, (2) Single group studies, (3) Human relations, (4) Multicultural

Education, or (5) Multicultural and social reconstructionist. In their review, Sleeter and Grant

(1987) observed seven articles and 11 books that defined multicultural education as something primarily for students who are racial minorities, which they categorized as "teaching the culturally different" (p. 423). Nine articles and five books were identified as conceptualizing multicultural education as "human relations." In this case, multicultural education was seen as a way to help "students of different backgrounds to communicate, get along better, and feel good about themselves" (p.426). Nine articles and two books address multicultural education as single group studies or "multicultural education that focuses on one specific racial or ethnic group experience" (p. 428). A larger portion of the review, 47 articles and 19 books, fit into the official category of multicultural education. Sleeter and Grant (1987) define this category as "multicultural education" because

> …even though the advocates of the previous research used the same phrase, these authors do emphasize education that is truly multicultural and that focuses on common goals of strength and value of cultural diversity, human rights and respect for cultural diversity, alternative life choices for people, social justice and equal opportunity for all people, and equity distribution of power for members of all ethnic groups. (p. 429).

Finally, a small but significant body of research, seven articles and three books, addressed multicultural education as "multicultural and social reconstructionist" (Sleeter & Grant, 1987, p.435). This research emphasized multicultural education and focused on the common goals of "multicultural education" and preparing "young people to take social action against social structural inequality" (Sleeter & Grant, 1987, p.435). It is this small body of research which reflects most of the work done in race pedagogy and interracial communication today.

To further understand multicultural education, it is important to review the mission statement the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education adopted in 1972 to

address the importance of defining and explaining the need for multicultural education. According to Mattai (1992),

> Multicultural education is education which values cultural pluralism. Multicultural education rejects the view that schools should seek to melt away cultural differences or the view that schools should merely tolerate cultural pluralism… It affirms that major education institutions should strive to preserve and enhance cultural pluralism. To endorse cultural pluralism is to endorse the principle that there is no one model American. (p. 67).

This statement is regarded as the first infusion of multicultural education into higher education (Boutte, 1999). This statement is inclusive of all five types of multicultural education listed in Sleeter and Grant's (1987) taxonomy.

In her book chapter, *A Rationale and Framework for Course Change*, Kitano (1997) discussed the many reasons for adopting multicultural course change. These reasons included potential benefits to instructors, comprehensive knowledge for students, engaging students in education that is relevant to them, and equipping students with the necessary skills for a culture of growing heterogeneity. Firstly, Kitano explains that multicultural education is linked to benefits for instructors because it requires collaboration between disciplines which stimulates "provoking discussion…resulting in innovative team arrangements for course development and implementation" (p.3). Kitano also explained that instructors who use multiculturalism have been observed as having a higher morale, increasing their enjoyment in the courses that they teach.

Secondly, Kitano (1997) also described the instructor's professional responsibility to provide students access to complete knowledge about their discipline, including the diverse and

whole collection of voices who have contributed to the field. Thirdly, Kitano describes the

moral responsibility to intellectually and emotionally engage all students in an educational

experience that encourages learning and degree completion, which many consider paramount for

multicultural education. Rosenfelt (1997) argues that individuals learn best when the material is

developed for the individual and reflects their identity. Western education has mostly been

developed for and by White males and continues to benefit the same population while ignoring

the needs of students who identify as female and/or with a race or ethnicity other than White.

Multicultural education is valuable because it seeks to create an education that is beneficial for

all people. According to Kitano (1997), a multicultural course presents new knowledge to help

students to value diversity. The third and final benefit that Kitano (1997) addressed is the need

for all students to learn to communicate in a growingly diverse nation.

Understanding the diverse perspectives for what multicultural education represented

(Sleeter & Grant, 1987) lead Kitano (2007) to explain that it is essential for multicultural

researchers to make their research and pedagogical goals explicit. Kitano suggested the

following goals for multicultural education: (1) to support diverse students' acquisition of

traditional subject matter knowledge and skills; (2) to help students acquire a more accurate and

comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter; (3) to encourage students to accept themselves;

(4) to help students to understand the history traditions and perspectives of other groups; and (5)

to help students to value diversity and equality and equip them to work actively toward a more

democratic society.

Race-Focused Pedagogy

While multicultural education was founded on concepts of racial equality and the abolition of racism in U. S. society, it is important to recognize race pedagogy as distinctly separate from multicultural education. Generalizing multicultural education to all types of diversity (including sexual orientation, ability, and age) shifts the focus away from the uncomfortable reality of racism, thus causing its persistent existence to be overlooked and avoided (Orbe & Harris, 2008). For example, firsthand accounts of continued racism on university campuses make it evident that race is a salient issue that must be addressed. Feagin (1992) argued that racism and racial prejudices committed by White students, White professors, White administrators and staff and White alumni perpetuate the difficulties faced by non-white undergraduates, graduates and professors on campus. Similarly, Lynn (1999) argued that

> as we approach the next millennium with all of the problems of the color line still fully
>
> intact we will continue to be in desperate need of some direction and guidance as to how
>
> we can begin to build a democracy that acknowledges and incorporates all of its citizenry
>
> and takes into account the special gifts that each person; each community; and each
>
> cultural, racial and ethnic group has to offer. (p. 622)

The evidence of racial disparities and continued racial prejudice indicate that, it is apparent that race remains a topic that needs to be addressed in college classrooms as the nation's youth face a growingly diverse nation.

Theoretical Background

Teaching about race in the communication classroom can be traced to two areas of thought: Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Communication Pedagogy (Fassett & Warren, 2007). Critical Race Theory explains the core principles by which these classrooms operate regarding race. Critical Communication Pedagogy adds to these principles through explaining an instructor's approach to race in the communication classroom. In the following pages, I explain the general arguments of these two areas of thought as well as their approach, assumptions, and goals regarding teaching about race in the communication classroom.

Critical Race Theory

The CRT movement involved a collection of activists and scholars interested in "studying and transforming the relationship between race, racism and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p.2). The theory includes many of the same assumptions as civil rights activists but puts them into a broader perspective of economics and history (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). However, unlike the civil rights movement, Critical Race theorists do not simply try to understand our social situation; rather, they also try to change it (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). As noted by Sleeter and Grant (1987), CRT values continue to reinforce the construct of multicultural education through the works of "multicultural and social reconstructionist[s]."

CRT was established by a group of lawyers who saw a continued need for activism against racism despite the strides for changes made by the civil rights movement. While overt forms of racism were established as "wrong" and "taboo," other forms of racism were also gaining ground (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001, p.2). According to Delgado and Stefanic (2001), all CRT theorists do not agree on all levels, yet they do tend to agree on the following tenets. First, they believe that racism is ordinary and is the common, everyday experience for racial minorities

in the US. Delgado and Stefanic (2001) explain that since racism is ordinary and common, it is difficult to cure or address. They insist that,

> [C]olorblind or formal conceptions of equality expressed in rules that only insist on equal treatment can only remedy the most blatant forms of racism such as redlining or refusal to hire a black Ph. D. over a white college drop out" not implicit discrimination based on race. (p.7)

A presumption of CRT theorists is that racism actually serves the interests of white and, therefore, there is little incentive to eradicate racism (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). As whites benefit from better paying jobs, higher salaries, and better education for their children, even if other individuals are not benefiting, there is little reason to change the status quo (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). Critical Race theorists also agree with the social construction hypothesis, which states that race and the different racial categories are the "products of social thought and relations" (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001, p. 7). In his book, *"Race" and Racism*, Richard Perry (2007) explained that "all humans share genes at the rate of 99.9 percent" and that "the human genome does not offer any justification for dividing humanity into genetically bounded groupings" (p.1). Delgado and Stefanic (2001) explained that race, as a social construct, is problematic because "minute comparisons of skin color, physical features, and hair texture are used as differentials instead of similarities between races such as personality, intelligence and moral character" (p8). They further argue that if majority members of society benefit from racism, then they can "invent, manipulate or retire race when [it is] convenient" (p.8).

Second, Critical Race theorists also largely agree that differential racism exists (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). This means that the dominant society racializes minority groups at different times in response to shifting societal needs (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). Racism is, therefore,

difficult to track or prove. Thirdly, these theorists also agreed that each race has their own origins and evolving history and that no person has a single, easily stated identity (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). As was discussed earlier, an individual's identity has many dimensions including "race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and age, spirituality, nationality, and socioeconomic status" (Orbe & Harris, 2008, p. 90). Delgado and Stefanic (2001) argue that every person has the possibility for "conflicting, overlapping identities, loyalties and allegiances" (p. 9).

The fourth and final tenet which Delgado and Stefanic (2001) posit that CRT theorists agree upon is that racial minorities have a unique voice in society. Delgado and Stefanic (2001) explain that because of different experiences minorities have with oppression, they are able to express to their White counterparts matters that they might not even know of. While CRT theorists may have other tenets and ideas regarding CRT, these are those identified as most consistent and important for understanding CRT in race pedagogy.

Lynn (1999) moved towards a Critical Race Pedagogy in her in-depth interviews with young Black teachers in an effort to understand their commitment to Critical Race Theory in the classroom. From the interview data, Lynn discovered five general issues with which Critical Race Pedagogues are concerned. The first was the endemic nature of racism in the United States. The teachers asserted that race and racism are "permanent fixtures that have been woven into the very fabric of our society" (Lynn, 1999, p. 615). The second was that racism is "normal and a fixed part of the American social landscape" (p. 617). This general issue clearly aligns with the first tenet of CRT (ordinariness) previously discussed. The third issue was the importance of cultural identity. Interviewees discussed the importance of maintaining their sense of African identity and culture while dealing with the daily tasks associate with teaching. Many of the

interviewees described the need for Black students to have their culture reinforced, especially when many of their teachers are White. One interviewee described the reason for this importance by stating that, "I think that we as a race have allowed the deteriorating, immoral, hedonistic practices of the European to not only invade our community but dictate our ideology…We have no identity" (Lynn, 1999, p. 617).

The fourth concern of CRT teachers was the necessary interaction of race, class, and gender. Many of Lynn's (1999) interviewees felt that, as noted by one teacher, "the problem of racism in the United States is accompanied by the problem of poverty and that it is the Black poor who are in most need of resources and a good, sound education" (p. 619). The fifth and final concern was the practice of a libratory pedagogy that includes: (a) teaching children about the importance of African culture; (b) encouraging and supporting dialogue in the classroom; (c) engaging in daily self-affirmation exercises with students; and (d) actively and consistently resisting and challenging authorities who advocate practices that are hegemonic and counter-emancipatory. While this concern includes components of the other four tenets, Lynn (1999) made this issue distinct because of the specific element of action and discussion with the students.

Similarly, Solorzano and Yosso (2001) state that the overall goal of CRT in the classroom is to "develop a pedagogy, curriculum and research agenda that accounts for the role of race and racism in U. S. education" (p. 3). In their research, Solorzano and Yosso (2001) explained that CRT in teacher education asks the following three questions (p3): "How do educational institutions function to maintain racism, sexism, and classism?" "How do students of color resist racism, sexism and classism in educational structures, processes and discourses?" and "How can educational reforms help end racism, sexism, and classism?" Sleeter and Grant (1987)

would most likely have classified this research as multicultural and social reconstructionist because it includes a value and respect for cultural diversity, human rights, social justice, and equal opportunity for all people as well as encouraging social action.

Critical Communication Pedagogy

The current study is also situated in an area of research described by its founders, Fassett and Warren (2007), as Critical Communication Pedagogy (CCP). CCP is influenced by Critical Pedagogy which was first described by Paul Freire's in his book *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire explains this type of pedagogy as "efforts to reflect and act upon the world in order to transform it, to make it a more just place for more people, to respond to our own collective pains and needs and desires" (Freire, 2003 as cited in Fassett and Warren, p.26). According to Fassett and Warren (2007), the utility of Critical Pedagogy in the communication discipline is that a

> critical pedagogical perspective invites instructional communication scholars to situate in relation to larger, macro socio-cultural, socioeconomic structures, to explore the ways in which racims, sexism, classism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression permeate classrooms and research on classrooms, teachers and students. (p.27)

They go on to explain that instructional communication scholars have a distinct role in critical pedagogy which can facilitate change. Fassett and Warren posit that,

> Where critical educators wax philosophic about whether someone has false consciousness or participate in her or his own domination, instructional communication scholars look to concrete instances, to how communication functions to create, shape, support, sustain, or challenge existing social structures and oppressions. (p.29)

Fassett and Warren (2007) explain that critical communication pedagogy is fundamentally dedicated to the following 10 commitments that in return help to define the

practices and research of critical communication educators. The first commitment relates to identity, wherein critical communication pedagogy is committed to identity as being constituted in communication. They explain that, "identity is not assigned at birth but rather made possible, accomplished, through communication; it is through repetition that this communicative residue of assumptions and beliefs comes to seem natural or inevitable" (p.40). The second commitment of critical communication educators concerns power. CCP understands power as both fluid and complex. Understanding power in this way means that critical communication educators explore power and privilege and do not simply reduce power to a "tool or skill set" (p.42). Critical communication pedagogy researchers see power as both omnipresent and also often overlooked.

The third critical communication commitment is to culture. Critical communication educators place culture as "central to critical communication pedagogy, not additive" (p.42). This means that culture is present throughout all teaching and research materials and ideas and it is not simply a unit, chapter or after-thought. The fourth commitment of critical communication educators is to "embrace a focus on concrete, mundane communication practices as constitutive of larger social structural systems" (p.43). Critical communication researchers do not dismiss the mundane or ordinary but see it as a window to larger systemic practices. The fifth commitment of critical communication educators is to "embrace social, structural critique as it places concrete, mundane communication practices in a meaningful context" (p. 45). This commitment explains that critical communication researchers welcome socio-structural critiques of the world in which they live including their own research and academic practices. Fassett and Warren (2007) explain that, "In learning what is (and is not) our discipline, not only are we disciplined by others, but we discipline ourselves; it is careful analysis of this interplay that characterizes critical communication pedagogy" (p.48).

The sixth commitment of critical communication pedagogy researchers is "Language (and analysis of language as constitutive social phenomena) is central to critical communication pedagogy" (p. 48). The very words which we choose have consequences and are pivotal in our pedagogical practices. The seventh commitment of critical communication pedagogy is "Reflexivity is an essential condition" (p. 50). This commitment is of the researchers to understand that they are not separated from the research that they do. Actually, their research is a recreation of themselves and therefore is always a process enmeshed with the researcher's values, beliefs, assumptions and practices. The eighth commitment of critical communication pedagogy is to "embrace pedagogy and research as praxis" (p. 50). Fassett and Warren (2007) do not simply mean to put theory into practice; rather, they are calling on teachers and students to collectively reflect and act together to transform their world. They explain that:

> In our classrooms when we work with students to understand the nature of racial or gendered or sexual identity, it is to more fully understand how our most mundane and (un)intentional (in) actions make us complicit in racism, sexism, or homophobia; we work to understand how racism, sexism, homophobia and other oppressions are not simply fully formed and give to us, but rather something we create and sustain through communication. (p.51)

The ninth commitment of critical communication educators is to teaching through dialogue. Simply put, "critical communication educators embrace -- in their classrooms, and in their writing their communities, and their students, research participants, and co-investigators -- a nuanced understanding of human subjectivity and agency" (p. 52). Fassett and Warren (2007) explain that critical communication educators do not dismiss their student's point of view: rather, "we acknowledge that those with whom we interact have important or formative reasons for how

and why they engage in everyday actions as they do" (p.52). Finally the 10th commitment of critical communication educators is to "engage dialogue as both metaphor and method for our relationship with others" (p.54). Critical communication researchers use dialogue and inquiry as a way of knowing. Fassett and Warren (2007) explain, "dialogue is not a matter of negotiation and not a process of friendship building, though both may occur; it is a process of sensitive and thorough inquiry; inquiry we undertake together to (de) construct ideologies, identities, and cultures" (p. 55).

While critical communication pedagogy is a new area of pedagogical thought, research has reported that communication courses that focus on race usually report having the following goals: (a) to help students to think critically about racial issues (Harris, 2003; Paoletti, Segal, & Totino, 2007); (b) to challenge students to apply the information learned in class to real-life contexts (Harris, 2003); and (c) to improve societal racial dynamics (Chang, 2002). In order to achieve these goals, instructors use many different approaches or pedagogical tools to introduce the subject of race into the classroom. Some of these tools include body performance, class discussion, visual texts, and student reflection.

Race pedagogy research has addressed the instructor and student body and performance of race in the classroom. Cooks (2003), examines the instructor by bringing their racial body and "performance" to the forefront. The article explains that labeling the white body in education is essential for Whites to be seen racially in and of themselves. Cooks insists that "To construct for ourselves how whiteness comes to hold meaning or power in specific contexts, how we have gained status and privilege, is to unravel the tightly held promise of blankness, of normalcy" (Cooks, 2003, p.248). Likewise, Johnson and Bhatt (2003) discuss the use of their bodies as text for the students to scrutinize. In their article they argue that this vulnerability of racial identity

helps students to visualize the concepts that they talk about and to further build alliances across

difference.

Coleman and Wolf (1998) also found that the teacher's vulnerability to use their racial

body and performance can play a crucial role in discussions about race. On the other hand,

Cooks (2003) also presents student discussion as a means of body performance. She explains

that, "I look at the positions adopted by my students in relation to their own racialized identity. I

am interested in the subject positions they adopt as well as those they leave behind" (p.250).

Related to both class discussion and instructor role, Harris (2003) found the instructor's role to

be critical in the interracial classroom. In her research, she found that as moderator, discussion

facilitator, conflict negotiator, nurturer and counselor, the instructor's role is crucial for open and

honest communication about race. Finally, Harris, Groscurth, and Trego (2007) found that using

the body in role-play activities can also be a productive pedagogical tool for challenging students

about racial privilege.

Visual texts have also been found to be a powerful tool for introducing and creating

discussion for interracial issues. In a similar study, Harris (2001) found that the films *Color of*

Fear and *Rosewood* served as catalysts for discussions about racism and its impact on interracial

communication. Akande and Schmidt (2006) also used the film *Color of Fear*, along with its

sequel, *Color of Fear 2*, in an interpersonal communication course. They found that together the

films sparked discussions of race and ethnicity as they pertained to interpersonal communication

concepts.

Many interracial communication and race-focused courses have used student reflection as

a tool to elicit student thought and experiences concerning the race-focused course material

(Harris, Miller, & Trego, 2004; Paoletti, Segal & Totino, 2007). Paoletti, et al. (2007) used three

different types of student reflection in their course: the minute paper, journal assignments, and a reflective portfolio. The minute paper provided a "snap shot of short-term learning" (Paoletti, Segal & Toino, 2007, p. 48). Instructors asked students to respond to the question, "What is one thing you learned in class today?" Student reflection was also used through journal assignments, and according to Paoletti, et al. (2007), the weekly online journals served as a time for the "students to learn from past experiences …but also to encourage them to begin to recognize their own learning moments without prompting" (p. 52). The third type of student reflection and an extension of student journaling is a reflective portfolio. Paoletti et al. (2007) incorporate an assignment for an electronic portfolio which includes essays and selected journal entries. The researchers explain that these portfolios are different from journaling alone because they are "intended to offer students the opportunity to select, integrate and showcase their learning over the course of the semester" (p.52) instead of a single snapshot.

Service-Learning

One particular pedagogical practice that is a critical component of this research project is student service-learning. In the *Encyclopedia of the Community (2003)*, Benson and Harkavy define service-learning as, "community service with academic study [combined] in order to enhance a student's capacity to think critically, solve problems practically, and function as a life-long moral, democratic citizen in a democratic society" (p. 1223). Benson and Harkavy (2003) go on to explain that service-learning takes place in an academic course, involves student reflection of the experience, genuine service to the community, and the creation of a "mutually beneficial and respectful relationship between the students and community members" (p.1223). Service-learning is unique because it combines university course concepts with tangible and authentic life experiences.

Coles (1999) addressed six goals for service-learning, which include (1) helping students to apply course concepts, (2) putting theory into practice, (3) assisting students in making connections between theory and social problems, (4) giving students exposure to individuals different from themselves, (5) providing students with understanding for structures which contribute to institutional racism, and (6) helping students see life from another's perspective. Service-learning does not solely involve course expectations, but also pays particular attention to involvement in a true need of the community. This experience is aimed to give students the firsthand experience with learning about disparities and what the life of another is like in a way that the classroom and textbooks alone could not accomplish.

As service-learning becomes widely accepted across academic disciplines, research regarding its effectiveness is also gaining ground. This research continually supports the positive benefits of service-learning practices; however, research methods have focused primarily on

quantitative assessments of student performance, researcher observations, and review of students

journals. Direct student report regarding the skills used and learned in these service-learning

programs has yet to be established. For example, in a semester-long organizational

communication course where service-learning made up 40% of the content, Madden (2000)

found that students benefited from the course in their personal, social and intellectual growth.

Personal growth referred to students' increased self-confidence and the development of a sense

of identity and self-respect. Their social growth was described as enhanced interpersonal and

communication skills, and intellectual growth involved their advanced cognitive and critical

thinking skills and a developed desire to learn new ideas and concepts. A final and very

important outcome was an obligation to citizenship and the development of professional skills.

According to their self-reports, these students had an increased sense of community awareness

and pride about their involvement. Madden (2000) also reported that skills like time and conflict

management and perseverance were skills needed for completion of the course. This study

illustrates for audiences the multiple benefits of service-learning to the individual as well as the

development of skills that may only develop in a real world context like community service.

While the findings are illuminating, they are also limited as a methodological approach in that

they were gathered primarily through instructor observation and interpretation.

In another study, Strange (2000) found similar results when a 20-hour per semester

service-learning requirement was introduced into a large introductory Child Development

course. One-hundred-and-sixty-six students in the service-learning cohorts (two classes)

outperformed the students who took the course during the three semesters prior to the

introduction of service-learning requirement (Strange, 2000). The study found that service-

learning students "performed more strongly in narrative assignments (mid-term and take-home

final), revealed thoughtful reflections about links between what they were learning in lecture, course readings and the hands-on experiences they were having at their service-learning placements, as described in their journals" (Strange, 2000, p.5). Again, this study reflects the benefits of a service-learning course but it fails to reflect the skills and concepts the students utilized and learned throughout their experience.

According to Warchal and Ruiz (2004), service-learning has also been found to be a significant factor for student experiences after graduation. In their study on alumni employment, Warchal and Ruiz (2004) conducted an assessment of 121 alumni from a small, Catholic college in southeastern Pennsylvania who graduated between 1961 and 2002. The researchers found that service-learning experiences were a significant factor in the employment choices of students after graduation, students often received an offer of employment related to their service-learning experience (Warchal & Ruiz, 2004). This study suggests that service-learning has an impact on students beyond their college experience.

Not only do students benefit from service-learning, but professors and the university benefit as well. From his chapter on organizational communication in the book *Service-learning Across Curriculum: Case application in higher education*, Madden (2000) reported on the ways to effectively implement service learning into 40% of an organizational communication course, which originally did not include a service component. The course covered communication theories in the classroom and the students were involved in evaluation audits with partnering local organizations for the service component of the course. Like the previous studies, student journals revealed that students benefited from personal growth. However, in this study, Madden (2000) revealed that as the instructor, he experienced a "renewed sense of vigor, excitement and

enthusiasm about teaching" (p.81). The university also benefited from having ambassadors in the community to build an alliance between academia and the public.

As the literature suggests, integrating race into a service-learning course often times results in many benefits for the involved students. In his study of students enrolled in a Race and Ethnic Relations course, Marullo (1998) compared two sections of students at a university in the northeast. One section was a service-learning course and the other section had a traditional lecture-discussion format. The results suggest that service-learning provided students with advantages not present in the other course. For example, such issues as "citizenship, empowerment, diversity awareness, leadership, moral development, and rejection of individualistic explanations of social problems" (Marullo, p. 267-269) were an integral part of the course. In a similar study, Markus, Howard, and King (1993) used a service-learning political science course as a point of comparison with a traditional political science course. The study suggested that students in the service-learning course had an increase in course grades and were more likely than those in the traditional sections to report that they had performed up to their potential in the course, learned to apply principles from the course to new situations, and were more aware of social issues.

Similarly, Rose and Bylander (2006) developed a service-learning program where students from a Primarily White Institution (PWI) were brought together with students from a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) to engage in a year-long service-learning program. These students spent time studying together at the PWI, the HBCU and a university in Cameroon with which they were both unfamiliar. The program was developed in order to provide students with the opportunity to live, learn, and work together with individuals who were different from themselves and in situations that were also unfamiliar. While the authors do not

explicitly describe the data collection method, student comments were collected. These comments indicated that the program seemed to foster personal change, self-confidence, and a greater appreciation for cultural and racial diversity.

While it may appear an easy task, Coles (1999) addressed the difficulties that come with incorporating race into a service-learning course: Race appears to be a factor at the onset when students choose a course that involves service-learning. Coles reported on her experience with offering a service-learning component to her sociology course. She recognized that Black students were less likely to choose service-learning than their White cohorts. Based on conversations, observation, and informal survey data, many of these Black students explained that they were already involved in service activities or that they felt they had already experienced racial and economic minorities in their everyday lives (Coles, 1999). Coles also stated that when race is a course focus, all students (White and non-White) are more reluctant or reticent to choose the service-learning option. Coles attributed this reluctance to the discomfort of addressing race in conversation and in real-life circumstances. Coles argued that students assume that service-learning in other courses where race was not necessarily addressed were more comfortable than those that were race-centric.

When a service-learning element is added to a university course, benefits are observed for both the instructor and the students. To this end, service-learning has been shown to give students the opportunity to apply theoretical constructs from their course to real-life situations (Madden, 2000; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; Strange, 2000; Warchal & Ruiz, 2004). Service learning has been associated with student personal, social and intellectual growth (Madden, 2000), development of professional skills (Madden, 2000), stronger performance (Strange, 2000), and a significant factor for student experiences after graduation. It has also been linked to

a renewed excitement and enthusiasm for instructors and having the ability to help build

alliances between a university and its local community (Madden, 2000). To date, there is no

research that has assessed the ways in which an interracial communication course prepares

students for a future service-learning experience. Further, while service-learning has historically

developed student interracial communication competence (Markus, Howard, & and King (1993);

Marullo, 1998; Rose and Bylander, 2006), the specific ways in which service-learning allows

true change to take place in a student's life is not yet understood.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Standpoint Theory

In order to understand the research methodology for this project, it is important to describe the epistemological framework guiding this research. The current project is understood from a feminist standpoint theoretical framework. Standpoint theory is aligned with both multicultural education and race pedagogy (Rosenfelt, 1997) and assumes that each individual has a viewpoint from which they see their world. It also assumes that oppressed (minority) viewpoints are not only legitimate but essential to understanding the world in which we live. More importantly, feminist standpoint theory has been applied to racial minority and majority issues because of the similar construct of oppressed groups (Rosenfelt, 1997).

Feminist standpoint theory is rooted in symbolic interactionism (Crotty, 2003), which is concerned with "how individuals assign, develop, maintain, and modify meaning attached to the world around them" (p. 72). Symbolic interactionism emphasizes three assumptions: (1) "human beings act toward things on the basis of the meaning that they have for those things"; (2) "the meaning of such things is derived from and arises out of the social interaction that that person has with others"; and (3) "these meanings are handled and modified through an interpretive process in dealing with the things that person encounters" (Crotty, 2003, p. 72). For the purposes of the current study, particularly attention has been paid to the meanings that students make concerning race as a result of completing a communication and race-centered course and participating in a service-learning opportunity.

Scholars have argued that standpoint theory best articulates why men and women's (as well as white and minority) opinions and viewpoints vary. The theory asserts that the viewpoint of the dominant ruling class (i.e., White race) is projected onto each individual within the society and cannot be denied (Harding, 1987). It further argues that struggles must be endured as a means for giving voice to and, to an extent, legitimizing the oppressed viewpoint of minorities (Harding, 1987). It must be noted, however, that regardless of whether or not dominant voices "validate" the experiences of the oppressed, their experiences are real, authentic, and valid, nevertheless. The oppressed point of view is theorized to be the more accurate because it is previewed to their personal (minority) point of view as well as the need to accommodate to and learn the dominant view point to survive. The theory suggests that this accurate and truer viewpoint can only enter society through struggle (Harding, 1987).

The following study assumes that each of the participants holds individual standpoints that collectively inform their experience with the interracial communication course in which they were enrolled as well as the service-learning project in which they participated the following semester. It is assumed that each of these viewpoints (racial majority and minority) is valid and that racial minorities will have a more accurate view of race and racism coming into their interracial communication course experience. It is likely that racial minorities will explain course related events, conversations, and experiences that influenced their racial standpoint differently than their peers from the majority racial group. It is also likely that even though each of the students will experience similar circumstances throughout their service-learning course, the experiences will also shape racial minority and majority students' racial standpoints in different ways.

Experiential Learning Model

As discussed earlier, the service-learning literature suggests that service-learning courses benefit the community, faculty and undergraduate students. It indeed would be difficult to prove that students do not learn through hands-on service-learning experiences, however, precisely how and what they learn through their experience requires a theoretical approach. The most prominent theorist in the experiential learning field is David A. Kolb (Stein, 2004). With influences from John Dewey, Kurt Lewin and Jean Piaget, Kolb (1984) explained the premise for experiential learning and proposed a model for the experiential learning process in his book *Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of learning and development.* Kolb has explained that learning requires four learning stages that occur in a continuous cycle. These stages include: (1) a concrete experience; (2) observation and reflection on the experience; (3) applying theories and concepts to the experience; and (4) active experimentation where the learner is able to apply their knowledge (Stein, 2004). Throughout experiential learning literature Kolb's model is the most popular experiential model to date and it has offered a theoretical basis for understanding for how students can be expected to learn through a multicultural communication course and service-learning independent study (Henry, 1989).

The Experiential Learning Model predicts that learning takes place through a cyclical and unending process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Kolb's (1984) model asserts that when individuals participate in all four stages the requirements for learning and creativity are available:

> Integrative development where the person is highly developed in each of the four
> learning modes: active, reflective, abstract and concrete… Here the students are

taught to experience the tension and conflict among these orientations, for it is

from the resolution of these tensions that creativity springs. (p. 203)

Through this theory, Kolb (1984) theorized that individuals favor a particular aspect of the

learning cycle based on their personal learning style. Likewise, each learning style favors one of

four adaptive competencies or skill sets. These skill sets include: (1) valuing skills: helping

others, listening with an open mind, receiving feedback, sense making; (2) thinking skills:

information gathering, information analysis, and theory building; (3) decision skills: quantitative

analysis, use of technology, goal setting; and (4) action skills: leadership, and initiative (Kolb,

Boyatizis, & Mainemelis, 2001). While one skill set is favored, each skill set can be learned by

an individual of any of the four personality types. In this study, these learning skills were used to

understand and classify the particular skills which the participants could have been expected to

learn in their courses.

Experiential Learning theory has been used most in higher education for course

implementation and design (Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001). In his article, *Experiential

Learning, Cases, and Simulations in Business Communication,* Saunders (1997) argued that

"Colleges must do more than instruct" (p.100) they must also prove that learning is taking place.

Sauders (1997) further suggested that ELM should be a foundation on which business

communication instructors can develop, evaluate and use their tools and classrooms more

effectively. This application has also been found useful in the instruction of adult learners and in

previous service-learning literature.

Jarvinen (1989) structured a professional development nursing course for adult learners

on the basis of ELM. In his book chapter, *Experiential Learning and Professional Development*,

Jarvinen (1989) explains that the course spanned the first two of four years of the student's

nursing program and aimed to support their professional development through their course work and internship experiences. Throughout the chapter, Jarvinen described the ways in which he structured the course in order to facilitate the student's learning to develop all four of Kolb's learning modes (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation) (Jarvinen, 1989). Concrete experiences included student's describing their own work life problems and completing exercises in self-evaluation, perception and communication. Abstract conceptualization included group and individual analysis of these exercises. Afterwards, students were instructed to draw conclusions from the experiences and discuss these conclusions in groups and with the class. This activity of drawing conclusions and discussing them was considered part of the reflective observation phase of the model. Finally, students were able to participate in the active experimentation stage through assignments which required them to apply their knowledge at home and work (Jarvinen, 1989). The course also included essay assignments in which the students were required to draft a community development plan, and a personal goals and program plan (Jarvinen, 1989). Jarvinen evaluated the course through informal interviews, student diaries and surveys. The results supported that the students found the course and assignments challenging, students intended to or were implementing the knowledge from their class in their work environments. Jarvinen (1989) explained,

> It is apparent that the students adopted the process of 'learning to learn' and 'learning to reflect my own practice' as part of their everyday lives… the course has (also) been, and continues to be a significant influence in my own development…It has enabled me to grow in my role as a facilitator and to share my own experiences with the students. (p.167)

It is apparent that developing the course through an ELM framework was beneficial for the students as well as for the instructor.

Similarly, ELM has been applied to service-learning course development and implementation. In his article, *A theoretical and practical framework for service-learning in marketing*, Ed Petkus, Jr. (2000) has provided a framework for the design and implementation of service-learning courses in marketing through using Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, in which he also described the use of service-learning in a one-credit service option in junction with Kolb's Experimental Learning Cycle. Petkus' (2000) project was completed at a Northeastern United State's university in a service-learning consumer behavior course. It was a one credit course set up as a fourth credit option that was available to students enrolled in consumer behavior that semester. Thirteen students participated, and the course requirements were 40 hours of course relevant volunteer service, attendance at biweekly and one hour reflection sessions, maintenance of a reflection journal, and completion of a final paper based on the entire service learning experience (Petkus, 2000, p.68). The author reported that concrete experience (actual work at the client), formal reflection (journal entries and discussion at bi-weekly meetings), abstract conceptualization (instructor introduction of course concepts as well as student connections made to these concepts), and finally active experimentation (modifications students made based on the client's needs) (Petkus, 2000) were the primary means for course design. Outcomes of the project included student experience of at least one of the learning cycle stages and benefits of service to the client organizations for which the students were working.

The project also experienced several challenges, such as a lack of fully implemented outcomes due to the short length of a semester in terms of a student's learning cycle, not to mention a lack of cooperation and participation from the clients whom the students served and student self-reports of a heavy workload for a one credit course (Petkus, 2000).

ELM literature also reveals a desire to implement experiential learning throughout higher education departments and institutions. In her book chapter *Building an institution for experiential learning,* Long (2004) described a case history of the implementation of experiential learning in a marketing and organizational behavior department an institute of advanced education. Through the decision to implement experiential learning courses department-wide, Long (2004) explained that classes were conducted as primarily group discussion, involved group and individual exercises and opportunities for student reflection on the material and their experiences. According to Long (2004), "The work was valued, and the grapevine hung heavy with the stories of students transformed by their experiences within the programme and by the new ways of approaching organizational issues that they had learned" (p.122). This account reflects the rich experience that can be found by both instructors and students in ELM courses. The courses proved to be appreciated and beneficial to the students' learning outcome; however, it was also stated that it was difficult to implement ELM throughout the entire department because ELM practices are often contrary to traditional learning models which consist of only lecturing and reading. The models also challenged students to think critically about their experiences, including those within the university and classroom. In the chapter, Long (2004) argued that ELM practices can only emerge through struggle, which she describes as, "participative and collective efforts of those who have the courage to set aside individual egoism…in order to access the patterns of experience that emerge despite current structures

(individual or group) that both order yet delimit them" (p.134). Given this struggle, Long (2004) suggested that three factors must be stressed in experientially based programs. These include: (1) Creating time and space for reflection, (2) to question common everyday values like power, position, hierarchy and values to discovering ways to understand the current structures and practices which validates some experiences and invalidates others, and (3) understand that institutional respect and validation of experiential learning is essential for experiential learning to flourish.

As stated earlier, ELM is the most popular experiential model to date (Henry, 1989) and it has been used in this paper as a theoretical framework for understanding the ways in which students can be expected to learn when they are enrolled in an interracial communication course and subsequently participate in a service-learning course. Based on the model, it was expected that the participants' learning would be dependent on their encountering of the four leaning stages: (1) a concrete experience; (2) observation and reflection on the experience; (3) applying theories and concepts to the experience; and (4) active experimentation where the learner is able to apply their knowledge. ELM also offered a framework for understanding the skill sets which students may describe throughout the study. These include: valuing skills, thinking skills, decision skills, and action skills.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD

A case study approach was used to analyze the data for this study. According to Creswell (2007), a case study "involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context)" (p.73). As previously noted, this project involved the experiences of one particular group of students enrolled in an independent study course. The case was unique because each of the students completed a multicultural course in a speech communication department (e.g., Interracial Communication or African American Relational Communication) at southeastern university in the U. S. prior to enrolling in a service-learning independent study. The unique nature of the students' enrollment afforded us the opportunity to explore how (a) an interracial communication course prepared and equipped students to use their communication skills within the community after the course was completed, and (b) a service-learning opportunity, in concert with experiences with an interracial communication course, facilitated interracial communication competence.

This case study employed a variety of data collection methods in an effort to fully understand the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007), and in order to collect an appropriate amount of data, in-depth interviews were conducted with the undergraduate students and informal interviews were conducted with the graduate student Project Managers assisting the professor with the semester-long service learning project. While undergraduates were the primary focus of this study, informal interviews with Project Managers allowed us to understand the ways in which the students completed their responsibilities for the project throughout the semester.

Students were interviewed about their experiences with both courses, with each individual interview lasting approximately 60-90 minutes. The interviews sought to understand student experiences with the Interracial Communication (or African American Relational Communication) course, the service-learning course, and the combination of the two (see Appendix A). The interviews aimed to uncover particular experiences, activities, conversations, and/or assignments that facilitated the students' growth as a competent interracial communicator on the topic of race and racism. The interviews were then transcribed for analysis to determine what recurring themes existed in relation to the phenomenon of focus.

Student Recruitment and Participation

Participants were drawn from a group of 12 undergraduate students who had taken a three-hour credit Interracial Communication (IRC) or African American Relational Communication (AARC) course in the spring of 2008. These students also participated in a three–hour credit service-learning independent study in the fall of 2008 with an interracial communication scholar. One Black woman and one White woman were enrolled in AARC. In this course students were assigned to read a variety of scholarly articles and books on Black identity and communication from leading scholars on this very important topic. The readings included but were not limited to the book *Come On People: On the Path from Victims to Victors* (Cosby& Poussaint, 2007), the journal article "The Communication of Solidarity in Friendships among African American Women" (Hughs & Heuman, 2006), selected chapters from the book "Origins of black body politics (Jackson 2007a; Jackson, 2007b), "The past is ever present: Recognizing the new racism" (Collins, 2005a), "It's your turn: Black to the future" (Smith-Shomade, 2008), and "Get your freak on: Sex, babies, and images of black femininity" (Collins,

2005b). The primary text for the course was *The Black Family: Essays and Studies* by Staples (2001).

The students enrolled in the AARC course attended course lectures, engaged in in-depth classroom discussion, and were assigned three major assignments and two exams. The first major assignment was a critical response paper to the in-class viewing of the movie "Amistad" (1997). The purpose of this 5-7 page critical analysis was to provide the students with the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings about films and popular culture phenomena as they relate to the Black community. The second assignment was a Raising Consciousness critical response paper (5-7 pages) on a topic of the student's choosing (e.g. stereotypes in television, music videos, body politics, otherness, etc.). The third and final assignment was a group project entitled "A Racialized Consciousness of the African American Experience." This project called for 5-6 students to work together to write a paper that allowed them to identify a specific relationship or communication phenomenon that is unique to Blacks, which involved thorough research on the basic principles of the topic and a formal presentation of the findings to the class.

Students enrolled in the IRC course included two White women, two White men, three Black women, two Black men, and one Hispanic man. (While a total of 12 students were enrolled in the independent study, three were unsuccessfully recruited for participation despite repeated attempts.) These students were assigned to read the textbook *Interracial Communication: Theory into Practice* (Orbe & Harris, 2008), as well as excerpts from the book *Some of My Friends: Writers on Interracial Friendships* (Bernard, 2004). These books covered topics such as the history of race, the power of language, racial and ethnic identity negotiation, multiple and other identities, theoretical approaches to interracial communication, interracial friendship and romantic relationships, interracial communication in the context of organizations,

interracial conflict and topics related to the mass media. Students involved in the IRC course were assigned five major assignments and two exams.

The major assignments included: (1) a monthly journal entry on their racial encounters within/outside of the classroom; (2) three reaction papers, and (3) the development of an original diversity-training workshop. The student observation journals required students to submit a journal entry each month for four months about a racial encounter experienced during the course of the semester where the student either observed or was a part of the experience. The student papers included two reaction papers and one encounter paper. The first reaction paper required the students to reflect on their experience with a role-playing exercise entitled "The Crayola Activity," where students engaged in a hypothetical interview context involving the use of discriminatory language and behaviors designed to recreate privilege through the interview role-play experience between and amongst classmates. The second reaction paper provided the students with the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings about the Oscar Award winning film *Crash* (Bob Yari Productions, 2004). This film was selected for its ability to articulate the simplicity and complexity of race through the racial and social tensions in Los Angeles. The third paper required students to attend a meaningful cultural event involving a racial, ethnic or cultural group with whom they had no familiarity or affiliation. For that assignment, students were required to attend an event involving an event they otherwise would not attend. The goal of that assignment was to challenge students to have firsthand experience with a culture that would elicit understanding and awareness of the importance culture (and cultural diversity). The final project for the course was the development of an original diversity-training workshop assignment. This assignment required groups of five to six students to create an hour-long (or more) diversity training workshop for an audience they believed was in need of

cultural sensitivity training. In addition to an in-class presentation, each group was required to create an instructional manual essential for real-world implementation (i.e., lecturettes, exercise, etc.) of the program.

Prior to their completion of either course, the professor identified students she believed were responsible, had a high level of commitment to learning, and were mature enough to handle the responsibilities of an independent study the following fall semester. The students were then recruited and asked if they were interested in participating in a service-learning independent study. It must also be noted that students were also chosen based on their perceived dedication to their spring semester course. A total of 12 students enrolled in the three-hour credit independent study. This course required that the students fulfill the weekly tasks of contributing three hours of service to the client. In order to protect the identity of the organization and its members, the pseudonym "Helping Hands" will be used throughout this study. It must also be noted that students were required to attend team meetings with and submit journal entries to their respective Project Manager.

The purpose of the service-learning course was to afford students the opportunity to engage in learning about interracial communication from a practical and applied approach. By designing this nontraditional course as a service-learning opportunity, students are able put their knowledge about interracial communication into practice, which ultimately fulfilled the overall objective of the Interracial Communication and African American Relational Communication courses.

Helping Hands was a nonprofit multi-service organization that identified that it had diversity communication issues within the organization. Helping Hands had two services, *Info-Connect*, an information and referral call center, and *Helping Hands Outreach*, which worked to

supply volunteers to the local community. According to the Program Director of Helping Hands, the organization was servicing the economically disadvantaged members of the local community, many of whom are of a racial minority status. Because minorities face racial discrimination, bias, and prejudice in their daily lives at an alarmingly high rate (Feagin, 1992; Perry, 2007), there was a strong likelihood that these same behaviors would be present when an individual contacts Helping Hands for temporary assistance. While staff members are there to assist their clients in crisis situation, there is potential for their negative (or positive) beliefs about these groups to shape and influence how they communicate with their clients.

Half of the students worked with *Info-Connect* and the other half of the students worked with *Helping Hands Outreach*. The students' primary tasks were to observe the verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors of the staff members as they occurred within the organization and its activities. Coupled with their knowledge gained through readings from the previous course and discussions during the service-learning project, the students and Project Managers (two Speech Communication Ph.D. students) developed materials deemed critical to reducing instances of and subsequent responses to racial discrimination. The teams were instructed to develop a diversity training manual or other resources identified as central to providing positive communicative experiences of clients. Administrators would use these resources to address issues of covert and overt forms of discrimination that have occurred or have the potential to occur in Helping Hands. At the end of the semester, students were required to present the materials that they had developed throughout the semester for Helping Hand's use in the future.

Upon completion of the course project, students were recruited at the end of the semester for research participation by email and phone requests for participation in a one-hour in-depth

interview. Students were informed by the professor of the goals of the proposed study and were

encouraged to participate. They were informed that while there were no direct benefits offered

for participating, the opportunity to personally discuss their experiences in the service-learning

course would make for a valuable contribution to social science research and understandings of

race and service-learning pedagogy. Students were made aware of the research project through

solicitation in the various group meetings by the professor. The students did not receive extra

credit, nor were they penalized for choosing not to participate. At a meeting near the end of the

semester, the professor made another appeal and was granted permission to provide contact

information (i. e., email addresses, phone numbers) to the researcher in order to create the

interview schedule.

Shortly after the semester had ended, students were contacted by email soliciting their

participation in a one-hour interview to discuss their experiences with the service-learning

project and to help with the study. If the student did not respond, a subsequent email was sent to

solicit their participation. If there was still no response, a third and final attempt was made

through a phone call to set up an interview.

Most of the interviews were held in a conference room in the speech communication

department and one interview was held at a local library for the student's convenience. In order

to create a comfortable interview, efforts were made to match students with an interviewer of the

same gender and race; however, because interviewer availability was limited, participants were

matched with an interviewer who was either of the same sex or race. The three Black women and

two White women were interviewed by a White woman; one Black man was interviewed by a

Black female; a second Black man was interviewed by a White female; and the two White men

were interviewed by a White woman. While not ideal, matching at least one demographic

characteristic was deemed more favorable, as sharing certain aspects of their identities with the interviewer would elicit trust and full disclosure on the part of the participant.

On the scheduled interview day, the interviewer welcomed the participant through inviting them to sit at a conference table and offered them water or a snack. Once the participant was situated, the interviewer began the interview process by turning on tape recorder and allowing the interviewee to review the consent form (see Appendix). The interviewee was then requested to sign one consent form and to keep the second for him/herself. The interview began by asking the participant for demographic and educational information (see Appendix). This information was followed by the first stage of the interview, where questions related to their experience with the multicultural course they took in the spring of 2008 were asked. Students were asked about their general experience as well as about the materials they believed facilitated their learning in the classroom. Students were also asked to identify specific pivotal learning moments they experienced in the class or as a result of the class.

Education recall literature suggests that student remembrance of lecture material is significantly lower than student recall of simulation or role-play material. In their study, *Role Play Simulations: The Assessment of an Active Learning Technique and Comparisons with Traditional Lectures*, DeNeve and Heppner (1997) interviewed 23 students eight months after the completion of a psychology course in which a role-play simulation was 20% of their overall grade. The researchers assessed the students' reaction to the simulation, the extent to which the students thought the simulation and lectures were educationally valuable, and the amount of information the students could accurately recall. To assess recall, students were asked an open-ended question about a specific lecture and a specific simulation which covered approximately the same material taking place over a 50-minute class period. Later the instructor rated the

accuracy of the students' responses on a Likert-type scale (1 = recall some information correctly and 0 = recall no information correctly). The mean student recall for lecture material was .24, while the mean student recall of simulation material was .74 (DeNeve & Heppner, 1997). It is important to note that students found lecture materials to be more influential in their after-college experiences.

As previously noted, the IRC and AARC courses consisted of a variety of teaching methods including lectures, reading assignments, class discussions, role-play activities, videos, journal entries, paper assignments, group projects and exams. Since the literature suggests that students would most likely recall group and role-play activities better than reading and lecture materials, a list of major course topics and readings were provided during the interviews to aid in their recollection of the entire course and its content for the purposes of the current study.

The second phase of the interview focused on questions related to the participants' experience with the service-learning independent study. Participants were asked to discuss their general experience with the independent study as well as the materials that facilitated their learning during the service-learning experience. Students were asked to again describe positive and negative pivotal learning moments occurring during or as a result of the independent study. The final phase of the interview focused on the intersection between the multicultural communication course and the service-learning independent study. Students were asked to describe the ways in which the course impacted their service-learning experience and when (and how) the course and service intersected. At the conclusion of the interview, students were given the opportunity to ask any questions that they had about the study. They were also given the primary and co-investigators' contact information if they had questions after the interview was concluded. In order to ensure anonymity, students' names were replaced on all identifying

documents and materials with a pseudonym to protect their identities. Student race and gender were noted for the use of data analysis. The audiotapes of the interviews were then duplicated, with the copy being given to a transcriber and the original kept by the primary investigator in order to protect the anonymity of participants and the data from accidental destruction. A transcriptionist was hired to accurately transcribe the individual interviews for the purposes of data analysis.

Data Analysis

In his book, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, Creswell (2007) explained that the procedures for a case study include the specific stages of (1) making categorical aggregation of the data; (2) establishing patterns and (3) making naturalistic generalizations. During categorical aggregation of the data, a researcher "seeks a collection of instances from the data, hoping that issue-relevant meanings will emerge" (p. 163). As issue-relevant meanings emerge, the researcher establishes patterns within the data and can begin to make correlations between categories of meaning. Finally, naturalistic generalizations are made from the data analysis which can be used to learn from the case study (Creswell, 2007).

Creswell (2007) also describes the general process of qualitative data analysis as resembling a spiral, rather than linear, model of procedures. Creswell explains that, "The researcher engages in the process of moving in analytic circles…One enters with data of text or images and exits with an account or a narrative. In between, the researcher touches on several facets of analysis and circles around and around" (p. 150). These procedures or "facets" of analysis include: (a) data managing, (b) reading and memoing, (c) describing, classifying, and interpreting, and finally (d) the representation or visualization of an account. Throughout this

process, the data is reviewed for codes, categories and subsequently the interpretation and representation of meaning drawn from the codes and categories.

Creswell's (2006) spiral model of data analysis has served as a foundation for the analysis procedures in this case study. In the data managing stage of analysis, the interviews were labeled and numbered. They were also divided by section. The first unit of data included interview questions and data pertaining to the students' experience with their IRC or AARC course, while the second portion of the data included questions regarding their experience with and application of skills to the service-learning course. This was done for a more manageable analysis. Next, during the reading and memoing stage, the researcher thoroughly reviewed each transcript. This involved a significant examination of the interview transcripts, carefully noting the emerging themes of the skills and concepts that the students reported to have learned and the ways in which they described learning them. At this point, preliminary notes were also made regarding comments where the students expressed their thoughts from a racial and/or gender standpoint. If themes began to appear to emerge, they were noted and put aside for future use.

Next, in the describing, classifying, and interpreting stage of the analysis, the researcher began to classify the observations made regarding the skills and concepts learned and ways in which students gained and used their knowledge. Student comments regarding skills and concepts were grouped together and organized by type. The skill sets offered by Kolb (1984) (valuing, thinking, decision and action) facilitated in this organization. Student comments regarding pedagogical tools were organized by type and finally their comments regarding the ways in which they used the learned skills and concepts were organized. After all the data was organized, observations were made and conclusions were drawn regarding the emerging themes.

Finally, in the representation and visualization stage of analysis, the final presentation of the data was written. Specific examples that best illustrated the themes emerging from the interviews were extracted to illustrate the general nature and meaning of each.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: STUDENT RACIAL STANDPOINT

White Male

Two White men (WM), Jason and Matthew, were interviewed during this research project. Jason explained that he is an Advertising Major and Speech Communication Minor and that he will be graduating in the upcoming May 2009 graduation. Matthew explained that he is a Speech Communication Major who has an interest in Rhetorical Studies. He will also graduate at the end of the semester, May 2009. Jason self-identified as a White man who did not generally spend time with racially different individuals. Jason explained,

> In the South, like, I feel like even though I don't think personally, especially like in my age demographic that racism is something that's really prevalent. I think that race is something that's really segmented amongst populations, like just for one reason or another, the culture we live in now, like, people tend to stick to people that are similar, you know.… I don't consider myself to be prejudiced, but then there's a lot I just don't know in general. (p. 2, 60-66)

He also explained that he thinks that because he has grown up in Southern United States, he has been influenced by a racist perspective.

> I come from a family that's like, my grandparents especially, like that would probably – they're not racist on like – I probably have to do a percentage. They'd probably be like 40% racist or something like that, you know. I think that's probably – you're getting near that with grandparents from like young adults my age in the South. So I've grown up –

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I'm sure there's been some effect on the way like my grandparents think and that's

affected my parents and I'm sure that's affected me in some ways, but for the most part,

just because I go to a school and I've grown up in places that I don't think about racism.

Like all my friends aren't like saying things like that, but my minds just not ever on it.

(p.8, 323-331)

It is clear from this quote from Jason's interview that he did not think about race on a regular

basis and was, therefore, not confronted by his own Whiteness. When probed about how he

applied the skills and concepts he learned from the IRC course to the service-learning project,

Jason was most vocal about the interactions he had with individuals who were of other races.

For example, when Jason was asked what overall communication skills he had learned from the

IRC and service-learning course, he explained that he avoided race but would confront racism.

Matthew also described himself as a White male, but unlike Jason, Matthew claimed that

he had many friends of different races and admitted that he entered the class thinking that he

knew all he needed to about interracial communication. It is clear, however, that the course

opened his eyes to many concepts regarding race, including the ways in which he framed those

relationships. In his interview he explained,

I kind of came into it thinking, you know, I already know everything there is to know

about interracial communication, you know, because I have Black friends. What are you

talking about? You know, or I have Mexican friends or, you know, or I have whatever.

Uh, but I guess that would beg the question, you know, like is your relationship with

them, like, what is it based on? Is it based on pity, you know? Because if it's based on

pity, uh, which is certainly a possibility after learning all those things in the course, um,

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then,… I guess the question would then be like is this the best possible friendship? Are

you framing it the best way? (p.5, 208-216)

In this portion of Matthew's interview, he describes his social network as being racially diverse,

which he incorrectly assumed had provided him with sufficient knowledge on issues of race.

However, upon enrolling in the IRC course, this assumption was found to be untrue. He also

reveals that he was able to see that simply because he has friends who are racial minorities, he

still had plenty to learn about the beliefs he held surrounding those relationships.

Matthew's racial and gender standpoints are not as explicitly identified as being salient to

his experiences as are Jason's, but he does admit that he felt guilty at the beginning of class

because he was like a "player in a game" of systemic racism (p.3, 126). Matthew also explains

that he did not think that racism was an issue in his life until he had to critically analyze his

encounters in journal entries. His resistance to racism is still apparent when he describes his

experience at Helping Hands, to be discussed at length later.

Difficulty Agreeing with Content

Two main themes occurred between Jason and Matthew, the first of which was that both

men had difficulty agreeing with all of the material because their standpoints as White men of

privilege. For example, when asked about his overall experience with the course, Matthew said,

"[There were] definitely things that I couldn't understand, just being white…[it was] hard to

agree with everything" (p.2, 71-72). Jason expressed the same sentiment when he said, "Some

you agree with and some you disagree with, and it was just a lot of food for thought, I guess"

(p.2, 55-56). As White men, their racial standpoints were in question throughout the entire

course. When faced with this opposition, it is clear that they were not able to see the course

material as fact but more as opinion which could be dismissed. However, for the other

participants, this was not a theme, which can be attributed to their standpoints as marginalized individuals.

Theory Development

Another theme which occurred for these two White men was a tendency to develop their own theory to understand race and racism. For example, Jason explains that,

> I think that's something that I thought a lot in the class, that maybe it's not just all racial but maybe there's some like psychological effects, as that no one wants to be the minority, you know? I think just in general in life no one wants to be in the minority. So if we keep classifying everything on race, then I would think that maybe the problem with some interracial communication is that, uh, the majority is sort of just kind of lazy because we're just like, well, we're the majority. You know? And the minority is probably a lot more frustrated because yeah historically there's racism, there's this, there's that. But I think there's probably a level of frustration with just we're the [minority], you know, and it's not easy, and there's not really anything that can be done about that, I guess. So I don't really know. (p.16, 714-723)

It is clear from these statements that Jason was using psychology to dismiss the effects of White privilege and racism. Similarly, Matthew developed a theory to understand racism:

> I remember saying in class one time, you know, I think a lot of it is just rooted from a culture of fear. You know, like when you see something that's different, you know, like the first thing you realize is the difference, and then you kind of get scared because you don't know how to itemize it. You don't know how to compartmentalize it and that kind of rooted into, you know, oh, let's put what's different in captivity so we can manage it.

It's just its different; we don't know what it's capable of. You know, of course the

difference was skin color, and I don't know. (p.3, 113-119)

Again, this can be attributed to Jason and Matthew's racial standpoints. It is clear from these

interviews that their standpoints were questioned as White men, thus affecting their learning,

application, and interview responses.

White Female

Two of the participants, Holly and Cathy, were White females (WF). Holly, who took the

AARC course, explained that she is a Speech Communication major and would graduate the

following spring semester. Cathy, who took the IRC course explained that she is a Speech

Communication major and Sociology minor and was graduating in the spring as well. Unlike the

other participants, these two women did not self-identify as White or use that lens to engage with

the course material. For example, it was common for the other students to say, "As a White male

I could…..", or "As a Black female I couldn't see…" Cathy, however, explained that she had

not had a lot of experience with individuals of other races before the course nor exploring her

own experiences with race or her own racial identity. When asked why she took the course she

explained,

Just like my own personal experiences in the past with diverse groups of people were not

that broad. I'm from a really small town and the county school system in the town where

I grew up is not very good… So our brother and I wound up going to a really small

private school…I think I had a lot of opportunities in the smaller setting that I would not

necessarily have had in a larger school. But at the same time, it limited the number of

people that I met, the types of people that I met, and you know, the overall just people

from different walks of life that you see as you're growing up when you're like in your

most impressionable years. (p.1-2, 38-47)

She went on to explain that upon arriving at the university, she met people of all different walks

of life including different races, religions and personal preferences. Still she did not explicitly

say, "As a White woman I…"; however, both Holly and Cathy made statements indicating that

they wanted to be sensitive to race, yet were also pessimistic of racism in their experiences at

Helping Hands.

For example, Holly describes a time when a woman mentioned that she felt she was

treated unfairly by one of Helping Hand's client organizations. Holly minimizes the situation by

attributing it to the client having a bad day, as if attributing the offense to racism would be

unreasonable. This statement from Holly's interview reveals that she is more likely to accept that

an offense would be the result of something within her control rather than something systemic

and reflective of a larger societal issue.

Cathy's (WF) racial standpoint as lens through which to understand her experiences with

the service-learning project is also apparent when she answers the question, "In what ways the

IRC course and the Helping Hands together impacted your interracial communication skills

overall?" Cathy explains that while race is important to an individual, it is not always a salient

factor in most interactions.

Just, you know, there are so many factors that affect another person's standpoint and

experiences that race is just almost insignificant in looking at people's differences. Like

it's not – I mean your race differs a lot of your experiences and it's not insignificant for a

single person, but when you're considering an interaction, a lot of times it really has

nothing to do with anything. There are other differences that, um, make bigger impacts

on certain interactions. …I'm not trying to minimize the importance of race. I mean, it is

a key factor in forming your social identity, which then in turn affects everything else.

But at the same time, like, it's not the be-all end-all factor in most anything. (p.24, 1077-

1093)

In stark contrast to her other classmates, Cathy is able to push race aside in her response by

stating that it is not a completely legitimate factor in her interactions.

Black Male

Two Black men, Brian and Jim, were interviewed as part of this thesis. Brian and Jim

both explained that they are Speech Communication majors. Brain graduated after taking the

service-learning course in December 2009, while Jim would graduate in the spring. Brain

describes himself as a Black male with many different types of friends. He explains that his best

friend is a White male and described what we term as a sense of *racial distancing* when talking

about a fellow White classmate. He explained that he did not see one particular friendship with a

White classmate as interracial after he was able to get to know her,

When I first met her, it was interracial because we're in an interracial class, so that's what

we focus on and paying attention because you know you're going to talk about issues that

if you were friends, you wouldn't just have conversations about. In interacting, it sort of

adds an element that's not normally there. But towards the end of this, I could tell. I just

saw her as Lisa as opposed to Lisa the White girl or whatnot, and, um, I don't know… it

just transcended race to where it wasn't a thought at all. (p.13, 559-567)

It was clear from this comment that Brian desires to look at his classmate as an individual apart

from her race. Throughout his interview Brian made it clear that he was not completely satisfied

with the course and felt that he wanted something different, stating that, much like his White

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male classmates, he could not completely agree with everything from the course. He did not attribute this to his race but rather the fact that he was able to have interracial communication relationships without struggle. Brian did not want to view interracial communication as two people from entirely different worlds, but as two people who could make it "work" without struggle.

Jim also described himself as a Black male who has many friends of different races. However, he mentioned that he did not have many White friends but that he wanted to make more and was actively pursuing this goal in his personal life. Jim mentioned several times that he is a Black male at a predominantly White university. He explained that this made it hard for him to differentiate between the material which he learned in class and what he had learned from his own life experiences. Jim mentioned that life was his biggest teacher, and as a result, he already had good communication skills. Since Jim felt that he could not differentiate between his life experiences and learned experiences from class, he did not identify as many skills and concepts, how he learned them, or ways in which he applied those concepts at Helping Hands. While both of these men attribute the ways in which they encountered the class to their race, they did not do so with the same intensity or salience as did the Black women.

Black Females

There were three Black women who were interviewed for this project, Tara, Dana and Tanya. Tara and Dana are Speech Communication majors who are to graduate in the spring. Tanya explained that she was a Public Relations and Speech Communication double major, had graduated after taking the service-learning course in December 2009, and was currently on the job market. Tara and Dana took the IRC course and Tanya took the AARC course. Each of these women explained that they could relate to the course because they were Black. For example,

Dana explained, "I think any class where I can – where it can relate to me, I'm always interested in it" (p.3, 98). This was a type of comment which was unique to the Black students and reveals that they were particularly aware that race is something which directly correlates to their lives.

From the information she revealed in the interview Tara was at least somewhat familiar with working with racially different individuals through tutoring Black, White and Hispanic children in her community. (During that time, she experienced at least one racial confrontation that ended in a fist fight.) Regarding the class, Tara explained that she enjoyed the IRC course because she learned more about Black women.

Dana, who also took the IRC course, explained that she had spent most of her life as one of the only Black girls at a White Catholic high school and had many White friends. She explained, that "I've had to be sort of like a representative for the African Americans in general, for people that have never had contact with someone of a different race" (p.2, 67-68). This comment reveals that Dana often assumed the role of spokesperson for entire racial group, which is an incredible responsibility and burden.. She also explained that she had "always been really aware of …cultural things" (p.5, 200-201). Dana attributed this awareness to having homosexual friends and explained that she always felt that she treated people with respect because that is how she wanted to be treated.

Tanya (BF), who took the AARC course, explained that as a Black female the course helped her to better understand herself and other Black people. Tanya shared that she had at least some experience with people of other races because she spent time mentoring Black, Asian and White kids through her sorority. She particularly spoke about being able to apply course material about Black families and male-female relations to her life experiences. When asked about her

overall experience with the course, she explained that she had been able to identify ways in which the course material applies to her own life.

> I mean, I noticed that I had noticed that a lot in my family. Not just my father, but my sister's father and then, ya know, other family members, uncles, cousins, things like that, so once I learned about that, I got to get a better understanding of, ya know, of men and the way they think...it put things in perspective for me as far as understanding why men act the way they do. (p.6, 241-244, 252)

It is apparent that the course material resonated with Tanya because of her standpoint as a Black woman. It helped her to understand her own family and Black men better.

One common theme that occurred with these Black women was an expression of feelings that they were at a disadvantage as Black women. In her interview Dana explained that being a Black female was a "double-negative."

> I mean, the way I look at it. Honestly, like, I mean it's not weird and I'm not angry about anything, but definitely seeing the African American females, like, it's a double negative, and that's what my mother always told me. It's already hard enough being a woman, and then on top of that, you're black, so you have to try extra hard, which is all I've had to do to prove myself.

It is clear from this excerpt from Dana's interview that she has felt disadvantaged because of both her identity as a Black person and a woman. As a result, she was struggling with trying to prove herself because her identities and the need to properly represent both groups. Tanya also expressed the difficulties of being a Black woman.

> We learned about, um, how STDs are more prevalent in African American women and things like that, so I learned a lot as far as what statistics show and things like that. So

that was kind of frightening, for me being an African American female myself and just,

ya know, they're saying so many statistics working against me than I would have

liked.(p.7, 312-316)

From their comments, it is apparent that these women have become aware from their own life

experiences and through the course that there are difficulties associated with being Black and

being female, which an individual who is White or male most likely would not face.

These women also expressed that they had felt defensive about class material or needing

to defend their race to others. For example, Tara explicitly described how she felt angry before

taking the class.

Like sometimes – okay, so before that class, I maybe would have gotten offended or

gotten on the defense or like just got really angry about certain things that would have

happened in real life situations, but ever since I took that class, I learned that not

everybody know certain things about race or different things like that about people so

they might need to be taught certain things first before you just, um, become so irrational

toward them and things like that. (p.3-4, 136-140)

Similarly, Dana also expressed that she often felt defensive going into situations where

she knew that she would be talking about race. When asked about her overall experience with the

IRC course she said,

Going into it, I thought [the course] was going to be something a little bit differently and

like I think just from personal experiences, any course that's ever been like an African

American something course or Interracial, I think I go into it probably a little on the

defensive just being a minority student, um, at a predominantly White university. (p. 2,

59-62)

Dana's response indicates that she felt a need to be prepared to defend herself as a Black female. In contrast, this feeling was not expressed by either of the Black males who participated in this research project. It may indicate that it is an important theme for Black women because of their status as a double minority. Since these women are marginalized by their race and gender, their life experiences and the societal barriers of racism and sexism placed before them may induce more stress on the Black women than they do the Black men. While the women were not asked specific questions about how they cope with these stressors, this finding suggests that these two Black women are faced with the task of identifying coping strategies that they must employ when faced with information which might be discouraging in a race pedagogy classroom as well as their lives in other social contexts.

Black and White Standpoint Themes

Course Applied/Did Not Apply to My Life

General conclusions which can be made about the ways in which racial student standpoints emerged in this study are that both Black men and women explicitly stated that the course material pertained directly to them and their understanding of race. For example, Jim (BM) explained, "I'm an African American at a White University, so I see like what she's teaching. I'm seeing it actually like working in real life, so it's real practical" (p.1, 42-44). This, however, was not a common theme for the White students in this study. White students' comments generally reflected learning about other races. For example, when Jason (BM) was asked about the greatest benefit of the course, he explained,

> I think that was good just because for me and probably most of the people in the class, they'd say it was just good to think about some things or actually just learn some things about other people that you didn't know. (p.2, 69-72)

As Jason's (BM) comment suggests, the course benefited him because he was able to learn about people who were different from him. Unlike their Black classmates, the White students did not mention that the course particularly related to a better understanding of who they are as racial and/or gendered beings.

Difficulty of Discussing Race

Another general theme that reflected racial standpoint was that White students talked about race as a topic believed to be too difficult to discuss with all groups of people, including their White friends. Cathy (WF) exhibits this clearly when she says,

> And so I think that like just having kind of a safe environment to explore issues that, um, that you don't really talk about everyday with people and that race is still taboo in a lot of contexts. You know, it's not something necessarily that you talk about with your friends at the dinner table. So just to like provide an outlet for us to discuss meaningful issues in an academic context." (p.2, 81-85)

Cathy's (WF) comment indicates that the course was helpful because she did not have an outlet in which she is able to talk about race, even in her social network of close friends. However, Black students often mentioned that these topics were difficult only when talking with White people. Brian (BM) reflects this theme when he is asked about the types of communication skills he learned from the IRC course. He said, "Well, public speaking [skills] because sometimes talking about race, especially in a class that has the majority of White people, can be uncomfortable" (p.3, 124-125). Brian and other Black students made it clear that race was something that they could talk to other Black friends about but it was a difficult topic to broach with White people, which is most likely attributed to their lack of racial awareness as well as their societal White privilege.

Racial Standpoint to Explain Difference

One final theme which emerged regarding racial standpoint was that White individuals spoke about learning to use as a frame of reference to explain difference, while Black individuals commented that this was common sense, or something they had already learned from life. This point is displayed in Dana (BF)'s comment.

I think it would have been completely different for me being like a Black female from being a White male. Had I come into being a White male, I probably would have learned a lot of things I didn't know. Honestly, I feel like life has taught me more lessons than I could ever learn from anybody's book. (p.5, 197-200)

Dana (BF) also explained that standpoint was common sense to her. When she was asked how she learned to see another's standpoint she replied,

Um, probably I mean I feel like that's common sense honestly. I wouldn't really say from the class. I mean the class definitely – like I said I can't think of any theories or concepts or anything like that, so I can't like tie anything that I learned, but, um, I just think through common sense. (p.10, 430-433)

As this excerpt of Dana's (BF) interview suggests, standpoint was not something new for her like it was for the White students, which is not an uncommon revelation (Feagin, 1992).

Discussion Student Racial Standpoint

As the analysis indicates, student standpoints were salient through the participants' responses to questions regarding the service learning project and the IRC or AARC course. Each student had a history of experiences that undoubtedly shaped their standpoints, which further supports the findings and inference that their identities shaped their overall experiences. Although the participants in this study were few in number, the findings also suggest that they

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had similar experiences because of their shared identities. Thus, the current study is consistent with and supportive of earlier standpoint theory research.

Analysis of the data revealed two common themes that were apparent for the White men, Jason and Matthew. The first was that both men expressed that they had difficulty agreeing with all of the material because they are White men. This was not a theme that occurred for any of the other participants, and can be attributed to their racial and gender standpoints. The other students were of marginalized status, which included being either a woman (both Black and White), a Black woman, or a Black man. In the case of Jason (WM) and Matthew (WM), it is clear that they were not able to see the course material as fact, but more as a collection of opinions that can be dismissed. Another theme which occurred for these men was a tendency to develop their own theory to understand race and racism. They tended to want to explain or dismiss racism by means other than challenging the reality of societal power or facing their own Whiteness and White privilege. It is clear from these gentlemen's interviews that their standpoints were questioned as White men and, therefore, affected their learning and application of course material to their service learning experience.

Unlike the other participants, the two White women, Cathy (WF) and Holly (WF), did not explicitly state, "As a White woman I…" However, despite failing to explicitly make a direct comment regarding their race and its influence on their experiences with either course, their racial standpoints were still apparent through their responses. Holly and Cathy both made statements indicating that while they were being sensitive to race, they were also pessimistic of racism in their experiences at Helping Hands. Holly's interview revealed that she was more likely to accept that an offense as experienced by a racial minority was more likely due to their own doing rather institutionalized racism. Similarly, Cathy explained that while race was

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important to an individual, it is not always a salient factor in most interactions with individuals of different races. In stark contrast to her other classmates, Cathy chose to push race aside or ignore race by stating that it is not a salient factor in her interactions people from different racial backgrounds. In contrast to the White men, being women and members of a gender which has been historically marginalized, they may have been able to identify with the course material in a way that was not offensive to or divergent from their worldview. Whiteness, or their racial identities, may have also played a factor in their understanding of their experiences. Failing to explicitly refer to their own racial standpoint, as White women, may indicate that they do not view their own race as salient.

In contrast, the two Black men, Brian and Jim, were interviewed and clearly articulated a strong identification with their racial group membership; however, they were found to have very different standpoints. While Brian (BM) reported having many different types of friends, and that his best friend in particular was White, he also described himself as having a colorblind mentality when talking about a fellow White classmate. In contrast, Jim (BM) mentioned that he did not have many White friends but wanted to make more and was actively pursuing this goal in his personal life. Jim mentioned several times that as a Black male at a predominantly White university, his understanding of his racial identity was informed by both his real-life and classroom experiences, which is telling of his racial standpoint. As a Black male, he has been faced with race for most of his life, and being at a university whose culture is comprised primarily of White individuals has forced him to learn about interracial communication everyday. Jason, on the other hand, expressed a sense of racial distancing. He did not want himself or others to be defined by their race. This contrast displays both of the men's standpoints

and personal backgrounds. Jason seemed to have been sheltered from racial realities, while Jim seemed aware of race and racism in his life.

One common theme for the Black women was an awareness of the disadvantages of being both Black and female, clearly demonstrating that their racial and gender identities were central to their experiences with the two courses. These women also expressed that they had changed in their interracial communication approach in a unique way. Two of these women, Tara (BF) and Dana (BF), expressed a need to monitor their behavior and to try to enter interracial interactions as less defensive communicators. The other Black female, Tanya (BF) expressed the need to be more assertive and clear. Conversely, this theme was not present for either of the Black men, White men, or White women, which may be indicative of an important theme for Black women. Essentially, these women are living a double-consciousness (Du Bois, 2007) that is foreign to their classmates for whom those experiences do not resonate.

The findings do suggest that student racial and/or gender standpoints clearly influenced the ways in which they experienced and learned throughout the IRC and AARC courses. These findings support the research regarding Whiteness (Cooks, 2003; Johnson & Bhatt, 2003; Tatum, 1994) and offer new understanding of the ways in which Black students negotiate their identities when enrolled in a race and communication course. As discussed earlier, Feminist Standpoint Theory asserts that the viewpoint of the ruling class (i.e. White-Male) is projected onto all of the individuals within a society. The theory also argues that while the marginalized and oppressed viewpoint is valid, real, and authentic, it will also only be legitimized by the ruling class through struggle (Harding, 1987).

As could be anticipated through standpoint theory, White males in this study exhibited the most difficulty with the course material, which speaks to their to deal with their newfound

awareness of their privilege and the perceived threat thereof. They discussed not being able to agree with all of the course material and struggling with understanding the concepts. Although the men are not an oppressed minority, they are beings with gendered and racial standpoints and related experiences that became salient and threatened while in the class. Also, consistent with assumptions of the theory, Black females expressed the most experiences with a struggle to have their viewpoints heard. Black males and White females also expressed certain amounts of struggle and privilege, respectively, but not nearly as vividly as their White male and Black female colleagues

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: IRC AND AARC COURSE

Research Question 1

Responses for students who completed the Interracial Communication and African American Relational Communication course were addressed by Research Questions 1 and 2. Research Question 1 asks, "What skills and concepts are students reporting to have learned from their Interracial or African American Relational Communication course?" Data for this research question were generated from the following five interview questions: (1) How would you describe your overall experience with the course?; (2) What was the greatest benefit to taking this course?; (3) What aspects of the class contributed to your learning in general about effective interracial communication?; (4) What communication skills would you say you learned through the interracial communication course and in what ways are those skills used?; and (5) What pivotal learning moment related to communication did you have in class (or outside of class) as a result of taking the course?

The skills and concepts students reported to have learned are separated into four sections which correlate with the four skill-sets outlined by Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model. These skill sets include Valuing Skills, Thinking Skills, Decision Skills and Action Skills. As explained earlier, valuing skills are skills that emphasize helping others, listening with an open mind, and receiving feedback. Thinking skills are skills emphasizing sense-making, information gathering, information analysis, and theory building. Decision skills are skills that emphasize quantitative analysis and the use of technology. Finally, action skills are skills that place

particular emphasis on goal setting, leadership, and initiative (Kolb, Boyatizis, & Mainemelis,

2001). Decision skills did not emerge from the data and therefore will not be discussed in the

following analysis. This can be explained by understanding the course content. Neither course

was designed to equip students with skills for quantitative analysis or the use of technology.

Valuing Skills

Skills which qualified as valuing related to practices which involved helping others,

listening with an open mind, and receiving feedback. The valuing skill themes that emerged from

the data were *Interracial Conflict Management, Listening,* and *Language Sensitivity*. One of the

valuing skills students mentioned most was Interracial Conflict Management. This was skill was

reflective of students who expressed learning a skill to use if they were to experience a

confrontation with an individual of another race or ethnicity. When asked in the interview to

describe the aspects of the class that contributed significantly to her learning about effective

interracial communication, Tara (BF) explained that the class transformed her attitude from

being defensive in racial situations to being able to teach other individuals about her racial

standpoint.

> So, before the class, I maybe would have gotten on the defense or, like, just got really
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> angry about certain things that would have happened in real life situations, but ever since
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> I took that class, I learned that not everybody knows certain things about race or different
>
> things like that about people, so they might need to be taught certain things first before
>
> you just, um, become so irrational toward them and things like that. (135-140, p.3).

From her experience in the class, Tara (BF) reports becoming more aware of how many of her

classmates and people in general have not had experiences with race. This awareness was in

stark contrast to her own racialized experiences, and through being in the class, she gained a newfound awareness of the need to teach others about her experiences as a Black woman. Similarly, two other students, Cathy (WF) and Brian (BM), also expressed that they learned how to calmly address an interracial conflict situation. Brian described how he was able to literally put his conflict management skills to use in a conversation he had with his best friend after the course.

In the conversation, his friend had asked him the following question: "If Black people were uncomfortable in the South or if there was a lot of traces of racism in the South, why don't they all move North?" Brian (BM) explains that this was one of the "dumbest things I've ever heard" (p.6, 241-242); nevertheless, he also describes the ways in which he addressed his friend's comment.

> I really had to like take a step back and answer him calmly and, like, really like think of a good answer as opposed to being defensive on the subject…I was kind of like, all right, calm down and give him just something that makes it seem stupid but doesn't make him stupid for asking. (p.6, 242-245)

Brian (BM) explains that while he was frustrated to hear his friend make a racially ignorant comment, the course had taught him to step back from the situation and to think about a genuine answer that would not discourage his friend from continuing to seek out racial information. In these three examples, the participants stress that through taking the interracial communication course, they learned of the importance of learning to step back from the racial situation, not assume about the other person and to insist on approaching the situation calmly and with the willingness to teach.

Throughout the students' responses that reflected interracial conflict management, both Black and White students explained a need to refrain from being offended when encountering a conflict situation and to be willing to teach the other individual. However, Black students identified a need to defend the importance of having more frequent discussions about race and racism on both the individual and societal levels. These students were able to give real-life examples where they found it essential to use the skills learned in the class. Their ability to give examples from their life may be attributed to their racial standpoint. Since they are Black, their lived reality most likely included instances involving interracial conflict.

In contrast, most of the White students did not give particular examples, with the exception of Jason who explained that he had difficulty with discussing race while enrolled in the course. This may have been reflective of their racial and gender standpoints. As a White female, Cathy was aware of the potential for encountering an interracial conflict situation but she may not personally encounter one because of her privileged position. As such, race does not impact her every-day interactions or lived experiences in general. Jason had experienced internal conflict throughout the actual course. This also may be attributed to his White privilege. Throughout his interview, he appeared to be still struggling with confronting his own Whiteness as well as coming to terms with the reality of societal power. His need to be patient and neutral was indicative of his desire to avoid conflict throughout the course.

Another valuing skill that emerged from the interview data was *learning to be sensitive to racial issues*, or racial sensitivity. Some students explained that they learned how to censor their language or conversations, while others felt that they had gained general knowledge about a racial group which enhanced their understanding of race on a more basic level. For example, Tara (BF) explained that she learned how to treat others; "[the class taught] that certain things

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are offensive towards other races and I just, like, the platinum rule states to treat others how they want to be treated…it overrules the golden rule" (p.3, 107-109). She goes on to describe this further.

I know what not to say. Like, for example, I said the word "tolerance" or "tolerate." I know that this is not the right word to use in just about every situation… If I'm in a meeting with people of different races, I would know what is crossing the line and what is not as far as jokes. (p.5, 225-226, 227-228)

Similarly, Holly (WF), who took the AARC course, described that she learned to be sensitive to comments that might seem unfair:

[I learned that] sometimes it doesn't always go both ways. Like if somebody would have said that of, like, a different race, it would have been, like, -you kind of can say, if it's your own race, it's, like, you can say what you want about it. But if it's, like, somebody else's race, you would have to sort of like tread lightly. (p.8, 346-349)

It is clear in Holly's response that she learned to sensitively approach racial situations and to carefully choose her words. Both Holly (WF) and Tara's (BF) comments reflect that they learned in the IRC and AARC course that it is important to be aware of their language sensitivity when communicating interracially. Their comments also suggest that both women became aware of an invisible line which should not be crossed in an interracial encounter. It appeared from their comments that Tara (BF) was expressing a desire to be treated with respect. She also explained that the class gave her the knowledge of parameters that seem to exist in interracial communication. Holly (WF), on the other hand, was struggling with a comment made by one of her Black classmates. Through that encounter, she was learning that messages being communicated within interracial contexts potentially have different meanings depending on the

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race of the communicators. While something could be offensive if she said it, it might not be as offensive if a Black female said it. It was clear that in this circumstance Holly was confronted with her privilege as a White woman and was able to reconcile this realization with the conclusion that she would need to monitor her conversations when in an interracial conversation.

Listening was another valuing skill students mentioned by student as something learned through taking the Interracial or African American Relational Communication course. Tanya (BF) describes her experience with the AARC course: "I learned a lot of listening skills just from listening to other people's perspectives, their thoughts, their concerns, things like that" (p.4, 174-176). Jason (WM) also describes listening as a primary communication skill he learned in the IRC class. He states that, "The main thing that I learned as far as communication skills in the class was just listening. Just trying to figure out where people are coming from and what that's going to mean for their comments and stuff like that" (p. 7, 282-284) As this quote suggests, Jason used listening, or being attentive to the messages communicated by others, to understand the point of view and marginalized standpoints of his other classmates.

Like Jason, Cathy (WF) explained that learning to listen was related to conflict management skills. She explains that she learned to "listen to the other person, you know, really to not jump to conclusions or shoot off at the mouth" (p. 5, 217-218). Here it is apparent that Cathy recognized listening as an important skill to use when faced with an interracial confrontation. Tanya (BF), Jason (WM), and Cathy's (WF) responses reflect a general theme of learning to listen in the courses; however, there was one distinct difference. Tanya and Cathy discussed listening as a way to gain knowledge and to develop empathy for individuals of other racial groups. Jason, on the other hand, expressed a difficulty with and pessimism towards the class material. He also expressed that he mostly listened because he feared saying something he

would regret if he spoke up, these reflecting a more defensive approach to listening. His

response to use listening to "figure out where people are coming from and what that's going to

mean for their comments" was particularly important for Jason because of his racial standpoint.

As a White male who reportedly did not often encounter racially different others, much of the

course material and class discussions about race were new for Jason. Listening was, therefore, an

asset for Jason to understand differences in racial standpoint.

Thinking Skills

Thinking skills related to practices that involved information gathering, information

analysis, and theory building. The thinking skills emerging from the data were *Reframing Race,*

Naming a New Concept, Racial Knowledge, Critical Thinking, and *Skill/Concept Reinforcement.*

Reframing Race was one of the most salient and interesting categories. This category describes

the use of another's frame of reference to understand differing ideas, beliefs, and actions held by

an individual of another racial or ethnic group. Several of the White students explicitly stated

that learning from the marginalized experience of a fellow student helped them to better

understand race or a concept they had learned from the class. For example, when asked, "What

aspects of the course contributed significantly to your learning?" Matthew (WM) replied,

> I just definitely learned about frames of reference, which was really…I think that was one
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> thing that was more important to me than anything else because I feel like a lot of
>
> people… and, like, an underlying root, you know, for a lot of their problems are their
>
> misunderstandings of where people are coming from…Like a lot of people just don't
>
> realize that how their entire history is shaped and how it's been framed could be
>
> completely different from somebody else's. (p. 6, 231-237)

As his response suggests, Matthew (WM) learned quite a bit from his classmates of a different race. This appears to have possibly occurred during their classroom discussions about race and their group projects, each of which created opportunities for sharing ideas about, experiences with, and perspectives on the topic of race relations.

Cathy (WF) shares a similar observation about what communication skill she learned as a result of taking AARC. She stated that, "…to, um, understand that their life experiences are different from your life experiences and what shapes other people are the different things that we go through and the different like people that we meet" (p. 5, 220-223). As the response suggests, the AARC course impressed upon Cathy that life experience can be different across race and can influence interracial encounters, which she most likely would not have learned had she not taken the class.

A second way in which students demonstrated the utility of frame of reference was to explain the gap between their own and another individual's beliefs about racial issues and experiences. For example, Matthew (WM) describes how his new knowledge of race in the class helped him to better understand a difficult racial experience he had with an associate some time prior to his taking the course. He described a conversation that he had with a Black female superior at work. In a seemingly very casual conversation, Matthew had expressed that curdled milk was disgusting to him. Matthew thought that he was making a neutral comment about his preferences, but his superior felt that his reflected to a deeper disrespect of her Black culture because her family had been making buttermilk from curdled milk for generations, unbeknownst to Matthew. The situation ended in a dispute over whether or not Matthew was in fact racist and eventually tainted the relationship between Matthew and his superior and his perception of Black women. This situation continued to irritate Matthew because he could never understand it;

however, he did explain that learning about standpoints or an individual's frame of reference in the IRC course helped him to finally understand the situation. He explains: "So, the only way that I could really rationalize what happened is that she just has a completely different frame of reference from me" (p.9, 411-412). It is apparent from this example that recognizing the possible perspective a racial minority might have on a seemingly innocent or non-racial created a frame of reference that helped Matthew better understand the communication between himself and his supervisor.

In a similar vein, another student, Holly (WF), described a negative pivotal learning moment when she was in the AARC course. During class, the professor asked the class how they felt about interracial dating, and one Black female expressed her frustration with Black men dating White women. Holly explains her response:

> I was sort of caught off guard with that because, like, if it was said the other way around, then it would have been perceived as offensive. I feel like if I had said, "Oh, when I see a White guy with a black girl", it would have sounded incredibly inappropriate. (p. 7-8, 317-320)

It is clear from this response that Holly (WF) is frustrated with her Black classmate's comment. She goes on to explain that understanding her classmate's frame of reference helped her to resolve the dissonance she felt concerning the comment: "I could say, 'Well if it was said the other way around', but on the other hand, like, I guess you can see where she's coming from because I mean that's her point of view and that's her experience" (p.8, 333-336). Holly's comment explains that she was able to resolve the tension she felt because of her classmate's comment by attributing the difference to a different racial frame of reference. These responses

suggest that for White students, there is a need to explain the differing of opinions and beliefs that exist between themselves and individuals who are marginalized.

It is important to note that one Black student, Tara (BF), also alluded to learning about frame of reference in the IRC course. When she was asked to describe her overall experience with the course, she explained that, "[I] got to see race differently, I guess. Like the different perspectives of different races that you would never think that some people would get offended by certain things that you did" (p.3, 103-106). It is clear from this response that the course made her aware of the ways in which race influenced her classmates' perspectives. Tara's expression of learning about difference was not in an attempt to explain difference but rather to manage her own behaviors in order to not offend an individual of another race.

Another interesting Thinking Skill theme which emerged from the data was *Naming a New Concept*. Throughout the interviews, several students regarded the learning of a new term to be significant in their experience within the course. In most cases, students explained that they learned terms regarding ideas or concepts with which they already had experience but no term or phrase to describe it. When exposed to many new words in the course, several students felt as if the class challenged them to think critically about a subject that they had not yet pondered. Dana (BF) shares that, "Honestly, I feel like I just learned a lot of technical names for things… I just feel like I kind of knew all that stuff, I just didn't know the names for it" (p.5, 196-197, 209-210).

Three specific terms mentioned in the interviews were (1) the one-drop rule; (2) White privilege; and (3) racism as societal power. Tara (BF) describes how it felt to finally place a label on the one-drop rule phenomenon. According to Orbe and Harris (2008), the one-drop rule refers

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to a social or legal guideline used in the United States that defined Black ancestry. Through

course content on this topic, Tara explains that,

> [The book] taught me the…I guess I already knew about the one drop rule, but I never
>
> knew it was called [the] one drop rule, where if one drop of blood in you is Black, then
>
> you're considered Black. I never, because I knew it was used very greatly during like the
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> slavery times and the civil rights times and things like that, but I never actually knew the
>
> name of it until I took the class. (p.5, 190-194)

As this response suggests, Dana (BF) was directly impacted by her ability to apply the concept to

a phenomenon with which she was already familiar. She finally had a term to explain something

she had already known about but did not know how to identify it.

Likewise, Brian (BM), states that his encounter with the concept of White privilege for

the first time was quite revealing.

> I think a lot of the concepts were interesting, things that I never quite, um…I might have
>
> thought about in my subconscious but I never like put a word on it, like White privilege,
>
> something like that. I never truly thought of it in the terms that [our professor] put it in.
>
> (p.2, 78-81)

In the course, the professor defined of Whiteness as "a social construction associated with

privilege based on how European American identity is unmarked, neutral, and invisible" (Orbe

& Harris, 2008, p.274). While Brian (BM) insists that he could have known about White

privilege in his subconscious, he hadn't thought critically about it in order to understand it in

these terms prior to taking the IRC course.

In another example, Matthew (WM) describes the way that his experience of being able

to name White Privilege made him feel better able to affect social change.

[Naming White privilege] made you feel privileged just to have the knowledge. It's

certainly something that is important that, you know, can create and has effective social

change…Being able to call it something, it made me feel more empowered to, like,

change it, you know, to help affect social change. (p. 3, 110-112)

It is clear that the knowledge of the concept of White privilege was a revelation for Matthew

(WM), which made him feel able to act against racism.

Finally, Jason (WM) described his reaction to learning about racism as involving societal

power.

I remember one of the biggest shockers coming into the class was that immediately she

said that racism is something that if you don't have societal power, you can't be racist. It

was one of the first things we learned in class….only White people can be racist because

we have societal power. (p3, 111-115)

This comment illustrates how a concept can cause a student to struggle with the basic premises

of the course.

Student Racial Standpoint was apparent in these responses because both Brian (BM) and

Tara (BF) mentioned that they thought they already knew the concepts and simply did not have a

word or definition for their observations. White students Matthew (WM) and Jason (WM),

however, both explained that they had never heard or thought of racism or White privilege before

entering the course. These men were privileged to not be aware of their own privilege. Matthew

(WM) explains that having knowledge of White Privilege made him feel empowered. Jason

(WM), however, was shocked to learn that he would be confronted with his own societal power

from the start in the class. Throughout his interview, it is apparent that Jason explicitly continues

to struggle with the concepts he learned in the IRC course.

Another thinking concept that emerged from the interview data was students expressing that they had gained racial knowledge, or general knowledge about another racial group. Holly (WF) said that she learned about the harsh realities of slavery in the AARC course. She explains: "[I learned] the extreme circumstances that people faced and, like, how, like, unwilling they went. You know, like, how they're literally like captured" (p.5, 222-223). In this comment Holly describes gaining racial knowledge regarding slavery that she did not have prior to taking the AARC course. Tara (BF) also explained learning racial knowledge in the AARC course. She explains,

> I knew – well, since I'm an African American female, I knew there were many types of African American females, but that particular part of the course, I didn't know that it was that in-depth, like the Jezebel and the – I forgot the other ones right now…And then the ways that you would communicate with like Hispanics or Asian Americans or any other racial group. (p.2, 65-67, 68-69)

In this excerpt of Tara's (BF) interview, it is clear that she learned general knowledge regarding Black women as well as knowledge concerning Hispanics, Asians, and other racial/ethnic minorities. As a Black female, she is able to comment that she gained racial knowledge about her own racial group as well as other minority groups. There was not particular mention of learning more about White individuals by either White or Black students, which may be reflective of Whiteness being understood and recognized as the norm and representative of an un-raced people, while Blacks, Hispanics and Asian Americans were mentioned as "raced."

Critical Thinking was regarded as a thinking skill because it involved student responses which implied or stated that they had been actively gathering or analyzing information and the ways in which their world works. Jim (BM) describes gaining the skill of critical thinking as a

result of talking the IRC course. When asked to describe the skills he learned in the IRC course, he replied,

> Thinking more in-depth about why things are; you know, the way they are. Or rethinking the way that they have been explained and how communication has affected the way people think. So yeah, definitely more critical thinking and stuff, you know, thinking more broadly, thinking more in-depth when it comes to like interracial situations and stuff like that" (p.3, 110-114).

It is clear from this comment and others like it that both the IRC and AARC course encouraged them to think critically about the world around them and issues relative to race.

The final thinking skill which emerged from the data was concept/skill reinforcement. Some students described their learning experience in the course as a reinforcement of skills that they already had. This was also regarded as a thinking skill because it involved theory building. As an example, Matthew (WM) explained that he was able to apply the skills he had learned from other classes class about self-disclosure to the experience he had bonding with his IRC classmates. He explained that,

> I saw other people humbling themselves, which was a great motivator for me to be able to do the same thing and open up, and, uh, it kind of set – I would say it kind of set the stage for other people in the class to be open, you know, and certainly when you – you know like, what's that, the recall that's like, it's Speech Comm. studies. It's like when you, when there's more information on disclosure – when disclosure increases… I learned it in Interpersonal, but anyways it's almost like we knew all these other things about these people that were really touchy, and that kind of made the whole class feel closer because of it. (p.4, 162-169)

This comment suggests that while Matthew (WM) did not remember the exact term, he was able to apply knowledge from his introductory communication class to his experience in the IRC course.

Since the students did not elaborate much on the ways in which their skills and concepts were reinforced, it is difficult to draw many conclusions from these responses. Nevertheless, it is clear that these students continued to learn concepts outside of class that were reinforced in the IRC course.

Action Skills

Action skills were described by Kolb, Boyatzis and Mainemelis (2001) as skills which exhibit leadership and initiative .One of these skills which students mentioned learning was learning to be able to better *communicate their thoughts clearly*. Brian (BM) explained that, "When you're just speaking in the discussions, you have to formulate your opinions and, like, express them so that other people understand where you're coming from, so all that was interesting, where I can express myself more" (p. 3, 129-132). Brian also mentioned that the course content was especially helpful in his confidence to speak-up,

> I've had classes where the topics were kind of uncomfortable but this was always about
> race and it's always a group of different races where there was an underlying tension on a
> lot of days that added pressure to rise to the occasion [to speak-up] (p.4,146-149).

Tanya (BF), who took the AARC course, also mentioned that it taught her to use clear communication.

> I learned that, um, it's [communication is] supposed to be clear, um in like I guess your
> standard of things, your wants, your needs and things like that. Um, I guess I just learned
> that communication is key to give yourself a better understanding of what I want, what I

need and things like that. And what I'll tolerate, and what I won't tolerate. (p. 8-9, 363-

366)

Brian (BM) was enrolled in the IRC course, and Tanya (BF) was in the AARC course, and

although they were in two qualitatively different classes, both students appear to have learned the

same type of communication skills.

Another theme that emerged as an Action Skill was *Proactive Consciousness*. When

asked about the communication skills they learned in the IRC, some students explained that the

course taught them to speak up and be proactive about racial issues. Tara (BF) explains, "[I

learned] if somebody else says something that's out of the way [offensive], if that person doesn't

correct them, I might take them to the side and say that was a little off the wall for them to say"

(p.6, 231-233). Cathy (WF) also explains that the course helped give her the confidence to be

able to speak up when she heard a racist comment. She explains,

I felt like having this class gave me the confidence to speak up a little bit more because,

um, it's like, I knew that this person wasn't going to be like, "I'm never going to talk to

you again" just because I said that, you know? (p.7, 278-281)

Through her reflection, Cathy (WF) explains that the class made her aware that she was not

alone in feeling uncomfortable about racial comments and that she would most likely not lose a

friend if she chose to speak up in a situation and confront someone when a racist comment was

used.

Using the example of the definition of racism, which argues that a person must have both

societal power *and* racial prejudice in order to be racist, Dana (BF) describes how this allowed

her to be able speak up in a course she had some time after the IRC.

We saw a video clip and it had something to do with, like, I think Black people being

racist or something like that, and I was, like, 'Actually we can't be, like, because from

what I learned from an Interracial Communication class, like, you have to have a certain,

like, um social status or, like, position of power. Like, you have to be able to affect

someone else. (p.9, 383-387)

Dana (BF) explained that the IRC gave her the knowledge and confidence that she needed to

make a stand against a commonly misunderstood racial concept. Each of the students who spoke

of the development of an action skill in the IRC course express in their interview that they

developed a sense of agency throughout the course. Cathy (WF) suggests that she had felt

uncomfortable with racist comments in the past but never felt like she could say something about

it without offending someone else. As a White female, she was not personally threatened by

racism and. Therefore. had less of a desire to offend another over the issue, until she learned that

it was acceptable for her to take a stand against racism. Brian (BM) and Dana (BF), speaking

from a Black racial perspective, expressed that the class gave them the practice and knowledge to

be able to stand up for their race and against racism in ways that they had not been able to

before.

Did Not Learn or Lack of Change

Finally, some students expressed that they specifically that they either did not learn any

skills or that their strategies regarding interracial communication had not changed. While this

theme may be perceived as negative, it actually connotes either a resistance to the content

because it conflicts with prior understandings of race or is essentially a review, of sorts, of

information with which one had previous experience. While Jason (WM) did describe learning to

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be patient and to listen, he also said that his attitude towards interracial relationships did not change throughout the course: He explains,

> I stuck with the same thing going into the class, it's that the color of your skin is not the most important thing about any person and that if you really want to make some communication within communication and just relational progress, then you have to identify yourself based on things that people can relate to like values, morals, those things that people can relate to regardless of the color of your skin or just activities in general, what you're into. (p.11, 467-471, 475)

Jim, a Black male, also expressed that the course did not add to his communication skills until after being probed. Jim explains,

> I guess I always thought I had pretty good communication skills so I don't know that they improved at all or anything. I'm not sure if it had any type of impact at least long-term. It might have had an impact at the time. (p.3, 93-95)

After being prompted by the interviewer, however, Jim (BM) did reveal that he *had* learned to think critically throughout the course. As a Black male, it is possible that Jim approached the question with an awareness of the fact that he may have learned many of his interracial communication skills through his life experiences outside of the IRC class. Acknowledging that he had learned to think critically after being prompted may suggest that he was able to think outside of the terminology of "race" to see his personal development throughout the course. As Jason's (WM) response suggests, he felt resistance towards the course material and continued to hold a colorblind approach to interracial interactions. As a White male, approaching others through a colorblind mentality may allow him to avoid having to confront his own Whiteness.

Because of his privilege he is able to hear and understand the concepts from the course but he is also able to reject them as fact.

Research Question Two

Research Question also addressed student experiences in the IRC or AARC course. This research question asked, "Which pedagogical tools do students report as effective in their learning in an interracial communication course?" and was informed by three specific interview questions. The first was, "What aspects of the class contributed significantly to your learning about effective interracial communication?" This question directly asks the students to report the ways in which they learned in the interracial communication course. The second question that informed Research Question two was, "Can you please take a moment to tell me a story about a pivotal learning moment related to communication that you had in class (or outside of class) as a result of taking the course?" This question allowed the students to reflect on their most pivotal learning moments, and was designed to account for data that could only be reported through their own narrative. Finally, in the second part of the interview, students were asked to describe a pivotal learning moment related to effective interracial communication they had experienced in the service-learning course. Once students described their experience, the interviewer probed about the student's preparedness for the experience. These questions included, "How did you deal with the experience?" "Did you feel prepared to deal with the experience?" and "What prepared you to deal with the experience?" These final probes were designed to gather additional data about what students learned from the interracial communication course but would have only mentioned in the context of applying the concepts to the service-learning experience.

Several themes emerged from the data as a result of student responses to the aforementioned questions. Most of these pedagogical tools can be organized by three specific

training models as discussed by Foeman (1991): Didactic, Experiential and Group Work. Each of these models is an approach human resource managers use in cross-race training groups in the U.S. and England. During didactic training, people are taught in a linear style through lecture and are presented with information. In experiential training, an emphasis is placed on personal experiences to teach about issues of diversity. Finally, in group work training both information and experiences are emphasized as part of the learning process. In the following analysis the pedagogical tools which were expressed in each of these categories will be addressed. Themes which did not appear to fit within a specific training model will also briefly be discussed.

Didactic Training

Lectures, readings, and videos were that students identified as part of their classroom learning reflect linear didactic training. Lectures were mentioned as important to their learning; however, just as the literature suggested, the amount of information they remembered from specific lectures was limited. Some students would explain that they did not remember anything in particular from them at first, but then later in the interview, they would mention specific information that they did in fact learn from a lecture. For example, Matthew (WM) explained that lectures were not his favorite part of the course.

> The lectures, you know, I feel like a lot of people, the class wasn't necessarily their favorite part, but it's kind of like on a scale, you know, all of them would be way above zero, it's just that the personal reflection and seeing the video were just so great, uh, to be able to really, you know, kind of uncover some of these things that you thought related, you know? (p.4-5, 182-187)

Matthew's (WM) reflection on class lectures suggests that while they were important, the videos and personal reflection were much more central to his learning. Again, this is consistent with

recall literature which suggests that students recall information more accurately from activities than lectures (DeNeve & Heppner, 1997). Later in the interview, however, Matthew explains that the lectures concerning White privilege made an impact on his learning:

> … when I learned about White privilege in that class, it was kind of like, you know, it's like a – there are terms that, like I said like way earlier in the interview, that you're aware of them but you don't know what to call them. So having a lecture was really important, too, because it kind of made you feel empowered. And because you have more knowledge, it kind of made you feel like you're more of a threat now to imposing change and being a catalyst for change, you know? (p.5, 186-197)

Unlike his classmates, Jason (WM) explained learning from lectures differently than other students. Jason admitted that he felt uncomfortable to speak up in class for fear of saying something that he would regret. Despite this discomfort, when asked what aspects of the course contributed to his learning, he reportedly learned from the lecture format of some classes. Jason explained that,

> Mainly lectures, I just listened a lot. I didn't say too much because we had some folks that were really vocal and I was having like a lot of different thoughts about different things and I was afraid sometimes that I might say something and then be like, "Shoot, I shouldn't have said that." So mainly from lecture is where I learned. (p.5, 191-195)

As the response suggests, Jason (WM) was more comfortable with the lectures because he would not have to risk self-disclosure during discussions. In contrast, the responses from Cathy (WF), Matthew (WM) and Jason (WM) suggest that lecture material is not readily recalled, eight months after the course, but it is still a significant part of the learning process, and students are able to recall information after some probing. Jason's response suggests that lectures may act as

a "safe place" for students to learn if they are not comfortable with other pedagogical tools such as discussion.

Dana (BF) also explained that she learned through a didactic teaching style when she attended a Peggy McIntosh lecture in partial fulfillment of a course assignment (cultural event) for the IRC. She explained that while she had heard of White privilege, she had never thought of some of the privileges about which Dr. McIntosh spoke in her speech. Dana discussed learning about the inaccessibility of products made for her and the injustice of Black history being an elective course instead of required course for University students. Through her response, it is clear that Dana did not expect to learn anything new about being Black; however, by attending the lecture, she was challenged by the speaker to think critically about the world around her. Dana's response is reflective of her standpoint as a Black female. She has lived her life needing to be aware of being black and, thus, has learned a lot about being Black simply through life experience. The new information presented by Peggy McIntosh, however, was a catalyst for Dana's quest to question societal norms regarding race and normalcy.

Readings that were required for class were also mentioned throughout the interviews as an aspect of the class that contributed to the students' learning. For example, Tanya (BF) explained that the readings were helpful for her learning in the AARC course.

> [I learned] those [statistics for Black women] mostly through articles. There was one in particular, don't know where it's at, but it was in an article and we had learned about some studies. …But I'm not sure exactly which one it was, but it was one day when we just went over just about African American women and their relationships with men, um, and it just had some, ya know, and it was some kind of study that we had learned about where they had did a study, um, with, ya know, a focus group with different women and

different men, as well as they had some statistics that was from an article… that was a

pivotal moment because it taught me a lot about African American women and their life,

and the negative things that are working against them. (p.8, 321-334)

While Tanya (BF) cannot remember the article specifics, she does remember the article's main

points and suggests that reading this material was a pivotal learning moment for her.

Cathy (WF) took the IRC course and mentioned the readings as facilitating her learning

about interracial communication. She specifically mentions using the Beverly Tatum (2003)

book to develop material for her end of the semester project for the IRC course. Like Tanya

(BF), Cathy (WF) could not remember detailed specifics about the course readings, but she does

remember some details of the title and author's name of the book, which proved to be helpful for

her final assignment. Another pedagogical tool students discussed as being critical to their

learning about interracial communication was the use of movies. *The Color of Fear* (1994),

Crash (2004), and *Amistad* (1997) in particular were mentioned by the students as significant.

The Color of Fear, as discussed in the methodology section of this thesis, is a documentary that

features a group of eight men from four different racial and ethnic groups coming together to

have open and honest discussions about race and racism. In contrast, *Crash* (2004) is a full-

length feature film that focuses on race and racism as well but is purely fictional. Several of the

students explained that *The Color of Fear* was beneficial because it offered an inside look at how

other people honestly discuss race and racism. Matthew (WM) put it into plain words: "I saw

other people humbling themselves, which was a great motivator for me to be able to do the same

thing and open up and …it set the stage for other people in the class to open [up]." (p.4, 162-

164). Cathy (WF) further explains this observation.

We were watching how they interacted and I'm a person who learns the most when I, like, see something happen…so that was a lesson in, one, understanding other people's standpoints. Two, seeing how people communicate about issues that, um, might be touchy subjects or are really important to them. Then number three also seeing effective ways to communicate your feelings and ineffective ways to communicate your feelings. (p.4, 150-158)

In both of these examples, it is clear that Cathy (WF) and Matthew (WM) found it helpful to witness "firsthand", so to speak, how other people have difficult conversations about race and racism in order to learn to do the same in their own lives.

Dana (BF) also discussed the importance of watching *The Color of Fear* as well as the movie *Crash* when she was asked which aspects of the interracial communication course were beneficial for her learning about interracial communication. She explained that a specific conversation between the men who were racial minorities in *The Color of Fear* really impacted her. One Asian man had explained his trouble with the Black community when he moved into a Black neighborhood to offer the service of a convenience store. When he and his family moved there, however, they were subjected to rioting because of racial prejudice and community unrest. It was clear from her response that viewing the movie had an impact on Dana's understanding of interracial communication between racial minorities.

Crash had a similar effect on Dana as well. She uses the scene where a store is broken into and the Persian owner seeks revenge on the Hispanic locksmith who refused to fix the locks on the badly damaged door. Dana was moved to tears as she explained the impact that this scene had on her.

I feel like we're all sort of in the same place trying to get, like, to the same point and I

think if people would just try to accept people a little more and try to be a little more

understanding…it would make everything run a lot more smoothly. (p.9-10, 411-415)

Dana's (BF) emotional response to discussing the conflict that was present between racial

minorities in both movies made it evident that the strife that existed in these examples was

deeply important to her. As a Black woman, she can relate to the struggle of minorities (as well

as her own), which was expressed in her sadness for minorities who cannot accept or help one

another, and choose to instead hurt each other's progress.

Jason (WM) also described the movie *The Color of Fear* as critical to his learning

experience in the IRC. He identified with a White man in the documentary who was trying to

approach his discussions with the other men through colorblindness. Jason described that this

was pivotal for him because he identified with the man; however, he also explains that he learned

that he needed to refrain from being honest with his classmates because colorblindness was not

generally accepted in the classroom.

The person I agreed the most with was the one that everyone else hated the most because

it was this one White guy that like seemed really nice and he wanted to approach

everything from colorblindness, but then everyone was like, oh, I hate that guy. So, I was

like, "Oh, okay"…That sort of like framed my view for the rest of the class. Like I was

open and I would listen, but as soon as I watched that video, I just realized that my

perspective was different than a lot of the rest of the class's because that guy sort of

seemed like a problem solver to me…This sort of like framed some of my thoughts from

the class and it probably made me a little bit less receptive. (p.5, 206-209; 210-213; 218-

129)

Jason (WM) was clear in his belief that watching *The Color of Fear* and hearing his classmates'

responses taught him that he had a different frame of reference than other individuals in the

classroom.

Finally, Holly (WF) mentioned that watching the movie *Amistad* shocked her because she

had never seen such an explicit depiction of the realities and atrocities of slavery. She explains

what she learned from the movie.

> Just like the extreme violence and like conditions, and then, um, I don't know, kind of
>
> how like certain ideas of like slavery is wrong, slavery is wrong, slavery is wrong, like it
>
> keeps kind of getting perpetuated or like fought for, but like it doesn't actually become,
>
> you know, slavery didn't get abolished for like quite some time. I don't know. Probably
>
> like small voices just keep trying to speak out, speak out, speak out, but like it just never
>
> – I don't know – it just seemed like it flashed so many times.

Holly's (WF) explanation clearly describes how the film taught her more about racial history,

revealed to her the extreme violence that slaves experienced, and the ways in which people who

tried to end slavery were silenced. Thus, using film in the class was an effective pedagogical tool

in her learning in ways that the other course materials may not have been as successful.

It is clear through these four examples that students movies as pedagogical tools

contributed to their learning about interracial communication. Matthew (WM) and Cathy (WF)

express the benefit of seeing other people attempting to discuss the risky topics of race and

racism. Dana (BF) and Jason (WM) also express importance that watching movies like *The*

Color of Fear and *Crash* had on their learning experiences in the IRC classroom. Their responses

also demonstrate the way in which their racial standpoint influenced their experience with the

movies. Dana, as a Black female, had not thought about the ways in which racial minorities can

hinder rather than help one another's social progress. On the other hand, Jason as a White male was challenged by the confrontation of his own point of view for one of the first times during the system.

As suggested by education recall literature, students in the current study did not remember as much lecture and reading materials as they did media or active participation assignments like role-play and the end of the semester assignment (DeNeve & Heppner, 1997). However, students did mention these as important for learning about interracial communication. Mostly White participants suggested that lecture material was not readily recalled, eight months after the course, but it is still a significant part of the learning process. The students were able to recall information gained from lectures after probing from the interviewer or glancing at the course outline, which was provided at the time of the interview. One student's (Jason, WM/IRC) responses suggested that lectures may act as a "safe place" for students to learn if they are not comfortable with other pedagogical tools such as discussion.

Another assignment that was salient in their learning was the required attendance at a cultural event, which one student (Dana, BF) deemed valuable in her understanding of White privilege. Because of her status as a double minority, she did not expect to learn anything new about being Black, yet was challenge her to think critically about her place in the world in a new and unique way. This data suggests that an additional or out-of-class lecture where the speaker is addressing issues of race may act as a catalyst for a student's ability to question societal norms regarding race and institutional racism, and reinforce concepts already addressed in class.

An interesting finding from the data is that students enrolled in the AARC course were more likely to mention readings as an aspect of the course that contributed to their learning more than those enrolled in the IRC. This may be because this course was designed with fewer

opportunities for hands-on experience. As with the lectures, students did not remember detailed specifics about the readings, but they did remember general concepts, which were beneficial for gaining racial knowledge. Since the AARC course had readings that were more focused on one racial group and dealt with more in-depth examinations of institutional racism in ways that were different from the IRC course, it is understandable that both of the students who took the course attributed their learning to the readings. It must be noted, however that there were instances where IRC students Holly (WF), Tanya (BF) and Cathy (WF) found the course readings as a beneficial pedagogical tool. Nevertheless, other tools were mentioned with more frequency and intensity as

As with previous research, visual texts such as movies were mentioned as highly memorable and central to their learning. Some of the White students explained that the movies facilitated in their understanding of racial history. Several students both races spoke about learning how to be vulnerable about racial issue through watching other people be vulnerable, while others experienced being challenged about colorblindness. Some black students mentioned that these videos opened their eyes to understanding racial prejudice between marginalized groups, a concept which they had not thought of before. These findings were consistent with Harris's (2001) finding that showing the movie *The Color of Fear* (and *Rosewood*) in a race pedagogy class acted as a catalyst for discussions about racism and its impact on interracial communication, which was found to be true in the current study. These findings are also consistent with those from Akande and Schmidt (2006). These researchers found that showing the videos *The Color of Fear* and *Color of Fear 2* (year) sparked discussions of race and ethnicity as they pertained to interpersonal communication concepts. This research further supports the use of *Color of Fear* in the classroom and contributes new support for using *Crash*

and *Amistad* to facilitate conversations about race and racism in the race pedagogy classroom when personal testimonies might be absent.

Experiential Training

Experiential Training themes were expressed through the emphasis students placed on experiences with learning. In the current study, Black and White students discussed the use of reflection activities and discussion to facilitate critical thinking regarding interracial communication. Tara (BF) explained that refection was helpful for understanding an experience she had outside of class when she was tutoring a Hispanic girl who mentioned that she did not like black people. The experience was shocking to Tara because she is a black female who helped this student every day. Since this experience occurred while Tara was taking the IRC course, she explains that journaling about the experience helped her to analyze the situation, "I guess because I went back and re-analyzed the whole situation so that taught me something." This demonstrates that the reflection through journaling of her own experiences in class was beneficial to her learning about interracial communication in her own life. Cathy (WF) also discussed journaling when she was asked which aspects of the course contributed to her learning about interracial communication. Cathy, like Tara (BF), explains that journaling helped her to critically think about classroom material and real-life in ways that she otherwise may not have engaged with thoughts about and experiences with race.

Matthew (WM) also discussed journaling as a particularly influential aspect of the course after he watched the movie *The Color of Fear*. When asked to explain which aspects of the course contributed to his learning about effective interracial communication, Matthew explained that the movie *The Color of Fear* really stuck out to him and that journaling was important for him to recognize the same experiences in his own life. In the interview he said,

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The personal journals, they were really integral in like – they were really important in terms of like looking at ourselves, realizing that a lot of these problems that we think are like really foreign and like that are on this video screen are really rampant in some cases and then you know we can find traces of them in our own lives. And realizing that it affects us as well as like these you know these people on the screen was really important too. (p.4, 173-177)

It is clear from this response that as a White male, Matthew had not thought that many racial issues were removed from his world. It was through the specific assignment to journal about race in his own life that he was able to see issues of race to be prevalent in his own life.

Students not only mentioned journal writing but they also credited the movie reflection papers for impacting their learning experiences with the multicultural course. For example, Dana (BF) described how writing one of the reflection papers facilitated her understanding her own interracial interactions:

Like, if you actually have to sit down and write a paper about it and it has to be cohesive and it has to have all like the elements that a real paper has…um you're probably going to dig a little bit deeper and I don't know it just like kind of helped me understand some things. I kind of understand myself a little bit better and like realize that I guess I was maybe a little defensive because I wouldn't have probably thought that until after I wasn't. And I was like, wow, at the way that I was kind of acting initially- it would have turned me off to me. (p.4, 140-147)

As the quote suggests, reflection papers were just as influential as journaling to facilitate critical thinking about the course content and reflecting on personal racial attitudes. It is also clear that

as a Black female, Dana benefited from being able to reflect on her own defensive behavior prior to the class and make a change because of her reflection.

Students also explained class discussions as an experiential training tool that had an impact on their learning about interracial communication. Students explained that discussions enhanced their understanding of the material, and that speaking in front of the class helped them to learn to communicate their thoughts clearly and sensitively. They also expressed the importance of discussions to be able to hear their classmates share personal thoughts and experiences. For example, one student, Dana (BF), explained that the discussions urged her to be sensitive to the language she used: "We had to learn to either be politically correct or use neutral language because you definitely don't want to offend anyone" (p.15, 642-643). As her explanation suggests, the desire to not offend her classmates encouraged her to use sensitive language. She also gave details of an experience where hearing the desires of one of her classmates allowed her to have the knowledge she needed to be sensitive. She explained that she learned about language sensitivity hearing her classmate describe his frustration when people referred to him as Mexican because he was not of Mexican descent. From this experience she explained, "…I would like to think that I was aware before the class but I probably wasn't aware of maybe little things that I probably did like that to someone else which I wouldn't want someone to do to me" (p.15, 649-651). In this example, Dana (BF) was able to use this experience to learn about interracial communication sensitivity from one of her classmates.

Similarly, Tara (BF) explained that hearing her classmates' desires for understanding her perspective in class discussions helped her to know how to approach a conflict situation. In her interview she explained that she learned that others would feel more comfortable if they were taught in racial situations. The instances where students mentioned class discussion

demonstrated that it was critical to her learning. Each of the students suggest that hearing about negative or ineffective communication patterns was quite helpful in their understanding of effective interracial communication.

Journaling, self-reflection, and class discussion were found to be beneficial Experiential Training Tools for students to think about race in their own lives as well as their own personal attitudes and beliefs regarding race and interracial communication. One White male had clearly explained that journaling helped him to actually see racism as something that is not just on TV and far removed from his life, but actually something that is present in everyday life. A Black woman expressed that journals were also helpful, but her motivation was distinctly different. She explained that it allowed her the opportunity to reflect on her own communication behavior in an interracial context and encouraged her to become more patient and more willing to teach others. The assignments in this course were similar to those reported in Harris, Miller, and Trego, (2004), and Paoletti, Segal & Totino, (2007). The findings from the current study suggest that reflection activities are critical to understanding race and interracial communication as a topic which is relevant to their own lives.

Class discussion was found to be beneficial for gaining knowledge and understanding about other races. It also served a means for students to rise to the occasion to speak about issues which are difficult to talk about and often go undiscussed, especially between racial groups. Examples from Dana (BF), Tara (BF), and Tanya (BF) described how class discussion was critical to student learning. Each of the students suggested that hearing about negative or ineffective communication patterns was helpful in their understanding of effective interracial communication. This is consistent with Cooks (2003) and Harris, Miller and Trego (2004) who,

through their research, found class discussions to be important for understanding student racial standpoints, community building, and the gaining of racial knowledge.

Group Work

The pedagogical tools that were discussed as pertinent placed an emphasis on both information and experiences, which included an ice-breaker activity, the end of the semester project, and a role-play activity. When asked, "What aspects of the course contributed to your learning about interracial communication?" Many students explained that an ice-breaker activity, which was used in the first two days of the interracial communication course, was beneficial in helping them in three ways: (a) to build a safe learning community, (b) to feel comfortable to talk about race openly and honestly, and (c) to feel comfortable with the course and the instructor. In this activity students were asked to write an anonymous question on a sheet of paper that they have always wanted to ask about race and turn that question in to the instructor. The class then spent the following class periods discussing each question. Students were instructed that no question would be too offensive or off limits. For example, Tara (BF) mentioned this activity and explained that it helped her and her classmates to understand other racial perspectives. She states that,

> [It was] so interesting to find out some of the responses to how other races felt about certain different racial questions and things like that. So it was actually pretty interesting and we actually learned a lot because many people said they never thought about it like that and they would either change or modify their perspective in certain things. (p. 2, 75-79)

From this comment, it is clear that this activity started the course off with students asking questions they normally would not be able to ask, which was pivotal for their learning about interracial communication and their openness towards the course.

Students also explained that this activity was beneficial in reminding them to respect one another. For example, Cathy (WF) noted that,

[the] point….was to say that [the instructor] wanted us to feel comfortable to ask anything at any time and not feel like we are going to be judged for having a question. Then also…to be respectful of like the things that we did and didn't understand about each other.

It is clear that students found this activity to pivotal in their learning about interracial communication. It taught them about individuals from other racial groups and helped build a foundation of respect and openness in the classroom.

Role-play was another Group Work Training tool mentioned in the interviews. When asked "What aspects of the course contributed to your learning?," one student, Dana (BF), described an activity called the *Crayola Activity*. In this role-play activity, students were randomly assigned to two groups, and one group chose a sheet of colored construction paper (i.e. blue, green, red, etc.) and assumed the role of interviewee. The other group of students who were interviewed and were instructed to associate racial stereotypes with the different groups. It must be noted that no racial groups were represented by a specific color of paper; rather, stereotypes were randomly assigned and not reflective of a way of thinking about certain racial groups in the real world. During the role-play, the interviewers were instructed to act on these stereotypes, and the interviewees were under the impression that they were being evaluated on their merit and

positive qualities as a member of their group. Upon reflecting on this activity, Dana comments on the way it allowed her to experience societal power,

> I felt like with that activity, it put me in a position of power and probably a position that I probably in life like could achieve, but it would just be harder because it was like, we – like we were biased against certain groups. So it just gave me like a chance to see a different side. So – and I mean it wasn't like we were just like, oh we're going to be mean to the same group. We were like okay well they're kind of like this and we don't like that, so as a whole we're just going to say we're not really going to deal with them. But I think it was something in everyday life that I definitely don't really get the opportunity to do. (p. 4, 162-169.)

Dana's (BF) explanation suggests that as a Black female she is not in the position of power to be able to make judgments about any group or to choose not to "deal" with a particular group. Her response also suggests that this activity gave her the opportunity to understand what societal power for White individuals is like.

Finally, some students mentioned that the end of the semester group project contributed to their learning in the course. For the IRC course, students were charged with the task of creating a training manual and workshop for a particular group in the community. For example, Tara (BF) explained that the project helped her to learn to teach the material to another group of students,

> my group targeted middle school kids, and we had to do like a whole itinerary and different various programs throughout the day that would teach them about race and things like that, and so that helped me to understand that because I guess we had to

actually like break it down into like a middle school type student mind and think about

how they would think about race.

(p.5, 195-200)

Tara's (BF) experience with the project helped her to understand the concepts better because she

was given the task of teaching others about it. Student responses suggest that this project was

beneficial for their learning the course material by challenging them to pool their resources of

knowledge from the course in order to create the manual and other materials that could

realistically be sued to teach others about effective interracial communication.

It was clear from the student responses that students found the icebreaker activity and

end-of-the-semester project as pivotal in their learning about interracial communication..

Specifically the icebreaker activity was able to teach them about individuals from other racial

groups and helped to form a foundation of respect and openness in the classroom. The role-play

was discussed as a tool which brought Dana (BF) the understanding of societal power. She

explained that the role-play activity actually allowed her to experience societal power, which she

normally would not experience being a Black woman. Finally, students who mentioned learning

from the end-of-the-semester project suggested that this project was beneficial for their learning

the course material through combining the many different subjects and preparing to teach it to

others. Students also mentioned this project later in the interview as useful in their work at

Helping Hands. This implies that projects which allow students to use several different aspects of

the course for one goal may be influential in their learning to apply the material to a real-world

context.

Other Pedagogical Tools

Some of the tools and experiences which students mentioned did not specifically fall under one of the three training models. These included, *Instructor Role Modeling, Building a Safe Learning Environment* and *Out-of-Class Experiences. Instructor Role Modeling* was a significant theme because of the students' ability to (or not to) relate to their gender and race standpoint. The instructor of both courses was a Black female and it was clear that students were aware of their instructor and that she had an impact on their learning experience. When Cathy (WF) was asked why she took the service-learning course she explained that she took it because she admired her instructor. She explains,

> I liked the way she looked at the world kind of thing, and I was hoping maybe I guess
>
> that more of that would rub off if I did an independent study with her, but I thought that
>
> from what I knew of her, I knew that she would make the experience as good for us as it
>
> could possibly be. So part of it was that I was really interested in the project and then part
>
> of it was also that she was heading it up because I knew that – I felt like it would be
>
> really good with her. (p.12, 507-512)

As her response suggests, Cathy (WF) chose to take the course in-part because of her admiration for her instructor.

Similarly, when Holly (WF) was asked which aspects of the IRC course contributed to her learning, she explained that the discussion facilitation by the instructor was important. She states, "like class conversations [we influential] for sure because I mean [our instructor] is great at like facilitating the conversation" [p.9, 399-400]. Many of the students expressed that the instructor played a significant role in their learning throughout the class. For example, one

student, Jason (WM) explained that knowing that the instructor wasn't prejudiced set him at ease,

> Well, see it's odd because like I have like a lot of different opinions than [our instructor], but I never got the feeling that she was prejudiced or anything like that. Like I never got the feeling [the instructor] was like engaging in racial discrimination or she was being prejudiced or anything like that. (p.14, 627-632)

From his response, it was important to the student that he knew that the instructor was not engaging in racial prejudice. Finally, many of the Black students also described that the instructor (a Black female) was influential to their learning. Dana (BF/IRC), explains,

> She's definitely inspirational to me. For me, I think [our instructor] was my first African American female professor at the University. Actually, I've only ever had one more African American professor here… I think for me that was kind of cool. It was sort of like someone I could look up to and I think it's like that with anyone. You know, just being able to have someone that you can relate to and she was definitely, you know, concerned with her students. So I don't know, just sort of seeing someone and she's like the certain level of success that I know I'm trying to obtain, it was refreshing. (p.12, 523-525, 526-531)

Having the instructor be a Black female was a very empowering experience for Dana (BF) and positively impacted her learning. For all of the students, it was made clear that the instructors' role in the classroom was important for their learning about interracial communication in several ways.

Another pedagogical tool identified as being important by both Black and White students was the development of a safe learning environment. As discussed earlier, this tool was

explained to have been developed through the icebreaker activity. The safe classroom

environment was also discussed as being developed by the instructor and their fellow classmates.

Cathy (WF) explains that, "[the professor] built a community like with us where we could really

discuss different issues and talk about things going on in our world without feeling like we were

going to offend somebody or we were going to be offended" (p.2, 79-81). Through this

reflection, Cathy, is describing the instructor's role in the development of an environment where

she and her classmates felt free to talk about sensitive racial topics without being judged. Other

excerpts from Cathy's interview suggest that, having a safe environment in the classroom made

it possible for meaningful discussions to occur, which carried over into her personal life. Dana

(BF) also expressed that having such an environment impacted her learning experience. She

explained that she would often enter discussions about race feeling defensive because she would

feel like she needed to defend her race. However, she explains that the instructor helped her to

transition away from her usual defensiveness. Dana explains, "She [the instructor] just made it

really easy to sort of like transition out of being defensive to just wanting to learn and just um…I

guess becoming more knowledgeable" (p. 2, 82-84). While Dana credits the instructor for

helping her to adopt a new communication strategy, she also credits her classmates for this

behavior change as well. Dana's explanation essentially captured the belief that a safe learning

environment was created by her instructor and her classmates, which was central to positive

experiences with the class.

It is clear through these examples that students saw a safe classroom environment as

essential to their learning about interracial communication. It is important, however, to point out

that their explanations for this attribution are slightly different. Cathy (WF) explains that the safe

classroom environment was important because she felt secure in knowing that she could have the

freedom to talk about racial issues without being judged for her comments. It is likely that as a

White female, she was discussing racial concepts for the first time and, therefore, needed the

space to ask many questions, which could be viewed as ignorant by individuals who experience

race on a daily basis. On the other hand, as a Black female, Dana expresses the importance of a

safe environment so that she is able to focus on learning instead of needing to defend her race.

These examples also illustrate how students' racial standpoints influence the pedagogical tools

they identify as important to learning about interracial communication. It is clear that fostering a

safe classroom environment is important for the both Cathy (WF) and Dana (BF) but their racial

standpoint influences their motivation for why this is so.

Finally, students also mentioned the importance of out-of-classroom experiences. For

instance, Jason (WM) explained that while he was enrolled in the IRC course, he had an

awkward experience that helped him to reflect on the IRC course material. He explained that he

walked into another class at the beginning of the semester and quickly realized that he was the

only man in the entire classroom. This experience helped in his understanding of how

marginalized individuals feel, especially when they are the only minority in a particular group.

Jason explained, that

> When I was sitting in that class, I definitely felt awkward, and then I started to think,
>
> "Well, I bet that's awkward for people who are the only one of whatever they are, too."
>
> Like [our instructor] talked about how she's like one of the few if not the – I think she's
>
> the only one in the Speech Comm. department that's a Black American woman, and so it
>
> was just sort of like a feeling of empathy, I guess, all of a sudden because you can sort of
>
> – before it's sympathy, you just feel bad for them for like the fact that they have to go
>
> through something that you don't really understand, but then when I went in that class,

there was a little bit more empathy because I sort of felt a little bit different, what it's

like. Not because that was traumatic for me, but I can imagine if I had to do that

everyday, like that would be tough. (p.13, 562-571)

This excerpt from Jason's (WM) interview illustrates how he was able to empathize with

individuals whose everyday experiences are lived as a racial minority. It is clear that as a White

male, Jason was learning for the first time about the experiences of marginalized groups. Jim

(BM) also explained that his experience outside of the classroom was imperative for his learning

about interracial communication. He explains,

I mean just life – really, like I said, being an African American student at a

predominantly, you know, White university, you're going to learn how to talk racially

pretty much. You have to so you kind of – life teaches that, so it's kind of hard to

differentiate what's class and what's just from experience. (p. 8-9, 366-569)

Jim's (BM) response is clearly coming from his racial perspective. As a Black male at a

predominantly White university, he is continually faced with his Blackness and learning to

communicate with individuals of different racial backgrounds. He credits these experiences with

being the most beneficial to his learning about interracial communication.

Student responses suggest that while a student might learn from a class lecture, their

experiences with the material once they leave the classroom are critical to their lasting practices

in interracial communication encounters as well as their learning about race, racism and

interracial communication. The experiences and classroom dynamics worked hand-in-hand to

teach Jason (WM) about the marginalized experiences of his peers. For Jim (BM), life had taught

him all that he needed to know about interracial communication. This statement was reflective of

other statements made by his Black classmates, even though many of them identified skills and

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concepts that they had learned from the course. These comments seem to suggest that life experiences are sometimes more valuable than some aspects of the IRC classroom experience. They also suggest that students with a Black racial standpoint are consistently being made aware of their race at a predominantly White university, which makes their experiences quite different from those of their White peers. This data suggests that there is a critical out-of-class component to race pedagogy classrooms and further supports the inclusion of self-reflection activities and providing outlets for out-of-class experiences, like service-learning.

CHAPTER 7

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: SERVICE-LEARNING

Research Question 3

Research question 3 asked, "How do students apply the skills and concepts which they learn in an interracial communication course to a service-learning course?" There were four specific questions which informed this question. The first was, "How do you believe your experiences in the Interracial Communication (IRC) or African American Relational Communication (AARC) course impacted your communication experiences at Helping Hands?" This question was designed to prompt the students to directly report how they thought that taking the IRC or AARC course impacted their experience in a service-learning course. The second question was, "In what ways did you apply your interracial communication skills learned from the class to your experiences at Helping Hands?" This question was also designed to prompt the students to directly report their thoughts on their experience with service-learning and to encourage them to think of the specific skills and concepts described in their previous answers during the interview. The third and final question that informed Research Question 3 was followed by a series of probes and asked, "Can you please describe a pivotal learning moment about the connection between effective communication and race in or as a result of the service-learning course?" The probes were, "How did you deal with the experience?" "Did you feel prepared to deal with the experience?" and "What prepared you to deal with the experience?"

These final probes were designed to gather additional information about how students applied what they learned from the interracial communication course but did not previously

report. Student application questions resulted in eight major themes of skill and concept

application: (1) *Bias management, (2) Conflict Management, (3) Other-centeredness, and (4)*

Listening (5*) Racial Knowledge, and (6) Critical Thinking*, *(7) Practice Makes Perfect*, and *(8)*

Did not apply.

As with the analyses for Research Questions 1 and 2, some of the themes for RQ3 were

expressed similarly across students, while others were expressed distinctly through a Black or

White racial standpoint. Since half of the students participated in phone surveys and agency

visits and the other half of the students participated in marketing and volunteering in the

community each group had distinctly different tasks. For this reason, this section has been

organized by themes which occurred for students who participated in *Info-Connect* and those

who participated in *Helping Hands Outreach*. The following analysis will address each theme,

the ways in which students discussed the themes, and identify the instances when student racial

standpoints were apparent. Students who participated in each section of Helping Hands were not

organized by course, gender or race. In order to better organize this section of the data, student

gender and the course (African American Relational Communication (AARC) and Interracial

Communication (IRC)) that they took will be indicated in parentheses.

Info-Connect

The students who participated in *Info-Connect* were Matthew (WM/IRC), Jason

(WM/IRC), Dana (BF/IRC), Cathy (WF/IRC), Tanya (BF/AARC), Holly (WF/AARC). When

these students were asked to explain their tasks with *Info-Connect*, they mentioned that they

performed follow-up calls and agency visits. During the follow-up calls students engaged clients

in a survey which assessed their experience with Helping Hands. Agency visits were explained

as a time when the students worked to build a relationship between helping hands and other

organizations. The application themes which emerged from students who participated in Helping

Hand's *Info-Connect* project were: *Bias Management, Listening, Other-centeredness, Racial*

Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Practice Makes Perfect and Did Not Apply.

Bias Management

The management of biases and assumptions was one theme which appeared in the *Info-*

Connect data. Throughout the interview*, Info-Connect* students expressed that they had applied

thought practices, concepts and communication practices to manage their own biases, all of

which guided them in their interactions at Helping Hands. An example of a student managing

biased language was Holly (WF/AARC). When she was asked to describe which communication

skills from the course she used with Helping Hands, she explained that the avoidance of biased

language was useful in developing a phone survey:

> We did compile a survey, so being mindful of like the language barriers so we can…like
>
> remain neutral and not kind of trying to persuade someone to say a certain answer. Just
>
> kind of like that neutral survey language and being unbiased and um so people that were
>
> calling would understand like- I don't know- not use like hugely complicated words just
>
> when you're calling someone on a survey. (p.18, 804-809)

Dana (BF/IRC) also explained that the course helped to prepare her to avoid biases during the

creation of the phone survey as well.

Holly (WF/AARC) and Dana's (BF/IRC) responses demonstrate the way in which the course

prepared them to be aware of their language choice in order to receive the client's uninfluenced

response.

Info-Connect students also explained that they applied the management of biases while speaking

to another individual. For example, Cathy (WF/IRC) expressed that she learned to acknowledge

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another's standpoint in the course, and this knowledge allowed her to be able to address the callers in an unbiased manner. She described a hypothetical phone call and how she would most effectively respond.

> Like it was really important for us not to assume that they were in need because of a particular reason …it's not like one caller is the same as the next caller, and so I think to provide the best service to them, we needed to listen to each one of them individually about their needs and not make an assumption… If they're on food stamps, we can't make an assumption about a person because they're on food stamps. (p.15; 651-652, 656-658, 661-662)

Student examples illustrate the ways in which they were able to apply the skill of managing biases and assumptions in their IRC or AARC course to the service-learning experience. Management of assumptions and biases seemed to be most important to *Info-Connect* because they were developing a phone survey which required an emphasis on refraining from leading the participant in a particular direction. The management of biases was also most important to this group because they were talking with a vulnerable population which easily falls prey to negative stereotypes (e.g. a mother who relies on food stamps, or a father who cannot pay his families phone bill). This theme was expressed equally by both White and Black females. None of the men mentioned bias management as a skill which they applied to working at Helping Hands. While this is an observation, there was not enough data to draw any generalizable conclusions concerning why the men would not mention managing biases. Women may have been more inclined to speak about managing biases because the White men may not have felt a need to calibrate the biases which they carried into the service-learning project. If this is the case, speaking (or not speaking) from their privilege they may not necessarily think that their biases

are incorrect. Black men's responses cannot be compared because both Black males participated in Helping Hands Outreach.

Listening

Students who participated in *Info-Connect* also expressed that they used the listening skills they gained from their IRC or AARC course to understand the individuals with whom they were working at Helping Hands. For example, when asked how she applied the IRC skills that she learned from class to her experiences at Helping Hands, Tanya (BF/ AARC) explained that she used listening skills when she made follow-up calls. Jason (WM/IRC) also expressed that listening was important when he was asked, "How do you believe your experiences with the interracial communication course last semester and with Helping Hands impacted how you communicate now?" Jason replied,

> I think that's like from all my communication classes, but this one really a whole lot because it's important that you actually listen to what this person's saying because you can't just BS it. They actually think a lot differently than you do, you know, if they're coming from a different like racial background. So I think that was like one of the biggest things I've learned from the major and the class, just in general, is that when someone else is talking, listen to them because you'll learn a lot more from listening to them than you will when it's your turn to talk. Just listen and be yourself. (p.24, 1052-1058)

While Jason (WM/IRC) is explaining how the course and Helping Hands have influenced his general communication, it is clear that he sees the importance of listening to an individual who has a different racial perspective because he cannot simply "make it up." He was essentially explaining that he saw true differences between himself and others and he found that listening was an important skill for transcending that difference. In contrast, it is clear from Tanya's

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(BF/AARC) response that listening to understand another individual with whom she was talking was critical as she worked to manage her own biases. If she listened closely to the individuals and refrained from adding her own biases, she was able to understand their true problem and not make assumptions.

Other-centeredness

Another theme that emerged from the interview data was other-centeredness. Other-centeredness was reflective of one student mentioning to have learned the skill of paying attention to the needs, desires and contributions of racially different others and applying this skill at Helping Hands. Cathy (WF/IRC) expressed other-centeredness when she was asked to describe the skills that she learned from her IRC course and how they were used in the service-learning project. Cathy explained,

> I think that…to be able to um, understand and like recognize what you're bringing to the table and to try to figure out what everybody else is bringing to the table, um, to see like how many different possibilities you have there and try to figure out, you know, like what can come out of a given situation. (p.23, 1027-1030)

As the statement suggests, Cathy (WF/IRC) had learned to consider the assets that each individual can bring to a given situation. While she acknowledges that she is bringing something "to the table" as well, she also expresses the equal need to account for what others can contribute. Because this theme was only reflected in one interview it is hard to make any generalizations regarding racial or gender standpoint.

Critical Thinking

Some students who participated in *Info-Connect* explained that they applied critical

thinking skills from the IRC or AARC course to the service-learning course. When asked to

explain the ways she applied her IRC skills to *Info-Connect*, Tanya (BF/AARC) responded,

If they said they had a bad experience with *Info-Connect*, critically thinking why this

might be considering that situation, considering that their – I don't know, their identity or

things like that, so that I was able to just really could understanding my callers, um, ya

know, just to get a better understanding of them as well as trying to figure out, ya know,

their satisfaction or, ya know, whether they're receiving the resources that they need.

Um, I was able to understand them a little bit better. (p.12, 515-521)

This response is reflective of the way in which Tanya (BF/AARC) tried to identify with her

callers by critically thinking of the ways in which the identities of the callers would impact their

experience. Cathy (WF/IRC) also explained that she was able to think "more in-depth" when

approaching her work at Helping Hands.

It was apparent from Cathy's (WF/IRC) response that the IRC course directly prepared

her to be able to question the world around her, especially when it came to her work at Helping

Hands. Later in the interview Cathy was asked to explain how the IRC course had prepared her

for her work there, and she explained that taking the course was imperative for her to have a new

lens through which to look at the world. She explained that the class helped her to start to

question normal practices.

Through student responses it was apparent that the IRC course had influenced the way

she thought about her experiences at *Info-Connect*. Direct attribution to the IRC course's impact

on their work in the community further supports the belief that the course prepared students to

critically think about their service-learning experiences in a way that they would not have without having taken the IRC course. Since this theme was not expressed by the White males it may have been reflective of their resistance to needing to "look beyond the surface." In effect, challenging the surface could be a threat to their power and privilege. These White and Black women, on the other hand, may have experiences which have taught them differently. They also do not have the same power and privilege to "protect" as White men.

Practice Makes Perfect

When asked how they used the skills they learned from their IRC or AARC course, some students referenced the final project and presentation which they did in their course and its relation to the materials which they developed and presented to Helping Hands. When asked if she used the presentation skills she mentioned to have learned in the AARC course, Holly (WF/AARC) responded affirmatively:

> Definitely. We worked, the marketing group, it was like a team of three people, and so we got together a few times, um, throughout the semester just putting together different slogans and campaigns, and we presented to the director, and his colleague and also once more again we presented to our instructor and our whole team. (p.12, 537-540)

While Holly (WF/AARC) needed to be reminded of the skills that she had mentioned earlier in the interview, it is clear that because the final projects in both courses were similar it offered further practice for her. This was not a theme which was expressed by other participants but Holly explicitly remembered the project which may mean that it was more significant to her than other students. There is a significant parallel relationship between the development of a training manual with her classmates in the AARC course and the work which was done with *Info-Connect* which as not as prevalent for Helping Hands Outreach. The similarity between the

projects may contribute to understanding why Holly would logically explain that they were connected.

Did Not Apply

Interestingly many of the White students explained that the skills and concepts which they learned in the IRC or AARC course did not apply to their work with *Info-Connect*. Often students explained that there were not any problems with race and, therefore, interracial communication skills and concepts did not apply to the situation. For example, when Matthew (WM/IRC) was asked to describe the ways in which he applied the skills he learned from the IRC course to Helping Hands, he explained,

> Hmm, there really weren't a whole lot. There weren't a whole lot, to tell you the truth. Um, what I did specifically, you know, the follow-ups, um, I'd say a third of those were disconnected numbers, people who didn't answer their phone, you know, people who weren't home and didn't want to talk. So we got shut down a lot… Nothing stands out to me that really indicates, oh, well, that applies in the course here because, uh, I just don't really think that – I mean, you get what's there. You know, all we were doing was recording and observing what exists or what we were allowed – or what we saw. I didn't really see a whole lot of instances with race that involved race. So there weren't a whole lot of ways to apply the things that we learned, if that makes sense. (p.17, 762-769; 793-798)

As his response implies, Matthew (WM/IRC) did not encounter many racial problems at Helping Hands and, therefore, concluded that he did not apply the skills and concepts learned in the IRC course.

Holly (WF), expressed a similar sentiment when she was asked how she applied the skills and concepts from the AARC course to the service-learning course. Holly's reply indicated that since race-issues were not directly addressed that she did not associate her interactions with the skills and concepts she had learned from the AARC course. She also implies that interracial communication can only occur in face-to-face interactions.

Jason's (WM/IRC) response was slightly different from Holly (WF/AARC) and Matthew (WM/IRC). Jason expressed that he did have interracial interactions, but that it was best for him to avoid approaching them with race in mind. He explained,

> I feel like if I had addressed them through race, we would have ran into walls. Uh, but I just addressed them as like people I was working with and then I got to know them a lot, … maybe on some levels like from an interracial communication perspective, you would call that maybe – we avoided it so then we didn't have conflict with it, but I think mostly the point of interracial communication is that you can interact, you can communicate, with people of different races without experiencing conflict. … I communicated interracially with people and it went fine. (p.19, 831-839)

As his comments suggest, Jason (WM/IRC) felt that the course was directed at finding conflict when communicating with an individual of a different race. He insisted later that he had learned a lot from the class but when it came to application, it was better for him to avoid race

It was clear that mostly White students claimed that the IRC or AARC course did not apply to the service-learning experience. While it could be inferred that the material was blatantly miss-matched, I would like to assert that student racial standpoint may have played a strong factor in these student's responses. Matthew (WM/IRC) and Holly (WF/AARC) explain that they simply did not see the connection between their course and independent study. As

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White individuals who are rarely forced to look at life through a racial lens, these students may have been privileged to not notice the ways in which race influenced their interactions at 2-1-1. Jason (WM/IRC) saw the connection but decided to use avoidance of race to interact in interracial communication. As a White male, confronting race seemed to be a new experience for Jason. As his comments suggest, he continued to approach race from a colorblind perspective. This may be attributed to his own struggle with understanding Whiteness, which has resulted in his efforts to avoid acknowledging race completely. These student's responses suggest that their racial standpoint may have influenced their own belief regarding the salience of interracial communication practices.

Helping Hands Outreach

Students who participated in Helping Hand included Tara (BF/IRC), Brian (BM/IRC) and Jim (BM/IRC). When these students were asked about the tasks they fulfilled with Helping Hands, they explained that they developed marketing materials to reach a Hispanic, Mexican and African American population and volunteered with various organizations where they were specifically engaging with people in their community. The application themes which emerged for students who participated with Helping Hands Outreach were: *Self-Management, Racial Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Did Not Apply.*

Self- Management

Conflict Management was a theme that emerged from one Helping Hands student. When Tara (BF/IRC) was asked how her experiences in the IRC course impacted her communication experiences at Helping Hands, she replied that she purposely avoided being offensive and would remain calm if she was ever faced with another individual who was offensive.

Tara's response emphasized the importance of the need she feels to manage her own thoughts and actions when faced with a possibly offensive situation. As a Black female, she is expressing the likelihood of finding herself in an offensive situation and that the course prepared and equipped her to be able to handle it positively, instead of becoming upset or starting a fight. It is important to point out that the White students did not mention that they may need to remain calm or step-back to think about a racially charged situation. Also none mentioned that they may need to avoid fighting. This can be attributed to student racial standpoint. Black students were more likely to mention the need to avoid fighting or a verbal altercation in an interracial encounter because they likely have felt the need to defend their racial heritage, while many of the White students have likely not had to think of or defend their race until entering the IRC or ARRC course.

Racial Knowledge

When asked about the ways in which their experience and skills learned from the IRC or AARC course were applied to their work at Helping Hands Connection, many students explained that they had used a certain racial knowledge for their interactions. Students who expressed using racial knowledge in the service-learning course explained that they had learned the knowledge in the course and that it was beneficial to their experience at Helping Hands. For example, Tara (BF/IRC) explained that the knowledge she gained from the course regarding Hispanic families was beneficial when she was developing a marketing campaign to target this population. Similarly, when Jim (BM/IRC) was asked to explain how his experiences with the IRC impacted his communication at Helping Hands, he explained that he used the knowledge from the course in order to recruit minorities for the Helping Hands program,

[The class] was what I based a lot of my facts on and a lot of my, um… I guess to go

along with the research when it came to recruitment plans, I based a lot of it on what I

learned in [the] class. Such things as whiteness or, um assimilation or normalcy…a lot of

minorities have a sense of exclusion. They don't think you're talking to them when they

see an advertisement or something like that, and so that was like my big theme or idea for

the whole thing. And I learned that in [the interracial communication] class, so

throughout the whole, I guess, campaign or recruitment ideas, my whole thing was

making it personal. (p.7; 302-305, 311-315)

Through this example it is clear that Jim (BM/IRC) used the racial knowledge he learned

regarding minorities and advertising in IRC course to directly influence his work at Helping

Hands to recruit volunteers. The responses suggested that Racial Knowledge was uniquely

important to students who worked on marketing campaigns with Helping Hands Connection.

This may suggest that the content which was learned can be specifically beneficial for students to

apply to marketing and advertising within their communities. It may also suggest that marketing

opportunities offered a clear connection between the IRC or AARC course and real-world

application.

Critical Thinking

Many students also expressed that the IRC or AARC course influenced their ability to

think critically about their experiences with *Helping Hands Outreach*. For example, Tara

(BF/IRC) explains an example of when she used critical thinking in a conversation she overheard

between employees at Helping Hands. Tara explained that she heard a man say that if President-

elect Obama didn't become president, he would just move out of the country. This comment

bothered Tara because she knew that it could be viewed as racial. She explains,

That class (IRC) did teach me a lot because now that I actually think about it, the old me

would not have even cared about what the other side would have thought. Like the old

me would just have took that comment and ran with it and not have thought anything

about, well, you can't say that if – I mean, to the non-Obama supporters – because you're

thinking the same thing. The old me would have never said that, like never cared, but I

actually do care. So I guess it, um – I don't know. It just taught me to look at both sides.

(p.18, 781-787)

This example illustrates the way in which taking the interracial communication course facilitated

Tara's (BF/IRC) development of critical thinking skills about what other people say, instead of

taking the information at face-value.

Similarly, when Jim (BM/IRC) was asked how he applied his critical thinking skills to

service-learning, he explained that,

To, I guess, think more in-depth on recruitment ideas so you just don't come up with like

a basic idea of, um, say this and you'll get it all. It's now you're thinking why does that

work, why does – you know – why does that have that effect, so now you're going to

have more ideas and get more into the job … [you start to] get to the thought process

behind why certain people do certain things and why certain things attract certain people,

and that makes them more effective. (p.8, 323-329)

As his comment reveals, Jim (BM/IRC) felt that the course had prepared him to look beyond the

surface of his work and to critically think about how to market the advertising to his target

population. While Jim (BM/IRC) and Tara (BF/IRC) explain critical thinking differently, they

both attribute their experience in the IRC course to contributing to their interactions with Helping

Hands Outreach. While all of the students who were interviewed for Helping Hands Outreach

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were Black, it is important to note that these students are making clear connections between the course material and the service-learning project. While it is hard to make generalizations without interviewing White student who also worked on the same project, this may be attributed to their standpoint. As Black individuals, they may be accustomed to thinking about interracial communication skills as tools which they will use in real-life.

Did Not Apply

Brian (BM/IRC) was the only student who participated in Helping Hands who expressed that the IRC and service-learning courses did not impact one another. When asked how the IRC course impacted his experience at Helping Hands he explains, "I'm curious what anyone else would say to that. Um, I don't feel like the two classes correlated at all and for that reason, I don't have a good answer for that question" (p.17, 763-765). His initial response reveals that he was slightly confused by the question. However, after thinking for a second, he casually suggests that the course may have slightly equipped him,

> Um, (pause) I guess with communication in general, it goes back to being patient and
> accepting the fact if it's going bad, you know, and still be cordial. Try to consider their
> perspective and why it may be going bad and be the bigger person. (p.17, 765-767)

This response reveals that Brian (BM/IRC) was able to connect the information that he learned in the IRC course with the service-learning course but that it didn't particularly carry a lot of weight for him. As explained earlier, it may be assumed that the two courses truly did not overlap. However, I would like to assert that because other students who were participating in the same activities were able to see the course connection, Brian's racial standpoint, as a privileged Black male may apparent. In the interview, Brian consistently exhibited the desire to distance himself from being defined by his race and alluded to having many White friends and going to affluent

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schools. His desire to be acknowledged by other characteristics besides his race could have

contributed to his assessment of the correlation between the courses. If this is true, even if the

courses did correlate Brian may desire to view these experiences as very different in order to

minimize the existence of racial differences and therefore his own racial reality.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

The primary purpose of the current study was to understand the ways in which the racial and gender standpoints informed the experiences of students enrolled in a race and communication course and subsequent service learning project. Thorough analysis of in-depth interviews revealed the presence of several themes regarding racial standpoint, which warrants further exploration. Regarding the initial findings, however, the four Black women and two White men expressed the strongest racial experiences in the courses. The Black women were speaking from a double consciousness because they identify with two marginalized identities (Black and female) instead of just one, as the Black males or White females might have. Since these women often times oppressed (and not privileged) by race or gender, they could be considered to be the most marginalized of the four groups, hence their experiences from those standpoints.

As the data suggests, these women expressed personal experience with interracial conflict, found that the course applied to their lives, felt a greater responsibility to defend their race, and were most readily able to relate the AARC or IRC course material to their service-learning experience than any other group. White men, on the other hand, were encountering the courses from a dual privilege standpoint. As both men and Whites, the course material challenged their privilege more than those who were Black males or White females. These men did not mention that the course applied to learning about their own race. In comparison to the other students, they were the only group who mentioned that they could not agree with all of the

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course material and exhibited a pattern for creating alternative theories or explanations for understanding racial disparities, none of which included the need or desire to face their privilege. Similarly, the White women did not claim that the course taught them more about themselves or their own race like their Black classmates; however, they did not appear to struggle with agreeing with the material or need to develop alternative explanations for power and racism. In the case of the Black men, they shared that they found that the course pertained to them because of their race but they did not express the same defensiveness as the Black women when faced with discussing the course material with White classmates and they were less able to relate the service learning course to the IRC course.

Another important finding from this study is the interaction of the students with their professor, a Black female. All of the students expressed an affinity for the instructor, but Black and White females especially related to the instructor. They readily explained that they could relate to the instructor and that they looked up to her as a role-model. This relation to their instructor seemed to help these women become more effective interracial communicators. The Black and White men expressed the same affinity for the instructor but neither group expressed that the instructor served as a role model for them, which may be due to their gender difference. Further, the White men and one Black man (who expressed a colorblind worldview) perceived the course content to be a reflection of the instructor's personal opinions rather than a presentation of information as part of the classroom learning process. In these cases, the men claimed that they could not agree with the instructor and instead chose to reject the arguments or points presented during the class with which they did not agree. This may have been a reflection of their privilege as men as well their efforts explain their responses in a socially desirable way. It would indeed be less taboo to admit disagreements with the instructor's personal opinions than

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it would be to admit disagreement with well-researched material regarding the topic of race. The interviews revealed that White men particularly encountered difficulties in unpacking White privilege, which may have been related to their inability relate completely to the instructor. Their interaction with the instructor was not observed at part of the current study, which might be an appropriate site for future student regarding student/instructor communication in the IRC course. Instruction from an individual who you cannot relate to their gender or race, especially in a race pedagogy course, may create a sense of mistrust for a student, which might be heightened if the instructor represents a marginalized race and/or gender.

Another interesting finding related to student racial standpoint was the common theme of colorblindness. A colorblind perspective attempts to avoid any and all efforts toward acknowledging race, and may be explained by the student racial standpoint.. Statements such "we are all the same" and "I don't see color" would be considered to be from a colorblind perspective. Use of a colorblind mentality by White students could have been expected, especially if they were struggling with accepting White privilege and did not want to be perceived as racist. However, a few Black students also expressed a desire for or a relief from adopting a colorblind ideology. For White students, adopting a colorblind mentality can seem to be a form of protection. It allows them to distance themselves from racism and being racist while choosing to allow their privileged status to go unchallenged. For Black students, colorblindness may be attractive because it offers a false or temporal sense of security from a life filled with overt and covert experiences with racism. If the world could operate through colorblind glasses, then they would not need to continually face discrimination, under representation and racial prejudice. As such, colorblindness may offer them security or respite from the realities of racism

that complicate their efforts to live a normal life beyond the trappings of their oppressed status in society.

Experiential Learning Model

The application of the skills and concepts learned to a service-learning course included eight themes. These application themes were also classified by the skill-sets proposed by ELM (Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001). Valuing skills included: *(1) Bias management, (2) Self-management, (3) Other-centeredness, and (4) Listening*. Thinking skills included: *(5) Racial Knowledge, and (6) Critical thinking*, and one Action skill included: *(7) Practice makes perfect.* The eighth theme, *(8) Did not apply* was not applicable to the ELM skill-sets. Again, it is clear that Decision Skills were not expressed by the students as skills which they applied from the IRC or AARC course. This is most likely due to the fact that neither technology nor quantitative analysis were germane to either course. While these categories may not be exhaustive or generalizable to all interracial communication courses, they are a clear framework for understanding the skills and concepts that students may learn within a race pedagogy classroom. They may not, however, be able to explain why some students learn in a classroom while others may not.

As explained earlier, the ELM explains that learning requires four learning stages that occur in a continuous cycle: (1) a concrete experience; (2) observation and reflection on the experience; (3) applying theories and concepts to the experience; and (4) active experimentation where the learner is able to apply their knowledge (Stein, 2004). It was clear through these student interviews in the current study that taking an IRC or AARC course in conjunction with a service-learning course opened up the possibility for students to experience all four stages of the ELM learning cycle. In some instances a concrete experience (regarding race) occurred before

they had the IRC or ARC course, then through their reflection on that experience, and the

introduction of theories and concepts students then reported experimenting with the knowledge

they had gained. However, this was not the only learning model students followed. Sometimes

students mentioned that they had applied theories and concepts to their experiences but decided

to not apply the knowledge because they disagreed with it or it would not benefit them to do so.

Others said that they did not experiment with their knowledge in the service-learning course

because they felt that the courses were not related. Other students seemed to have benefited from

the reflection in the interview and were only then putting theories and concepts to their

experiences.

These instances may suggest that the ELM functions as a descriptive device and may not

sufficiently explain the learning experience. When students had mentioned that they had decided

not to experiment with the theories and concepts, this could be categorized as experimentation in

itself: They are experimenting by not experimenting. After not using the knowledge for a little

while, they may decide it works well for them, or if they are in the right situation, they may

choose to try to use the knowledge. Unfortunately, however, the model does not explain why a

student would choose to try or not try a theory or concept.

It is not being suggested that the use of Kolb's Experiential Model is not useful for the

development of course content, activities or discussion. Rather, ELM is most helpful in

understanding the skills that students could be expected to learn in a course with a service

component. Since Kolb's Experiential Learning Model is most frequently used in learning

situations where students are encouraged to apply the skills and concepts learned in class to real-

life experiences, it would be beneficial to begin to explore the ways in which such a race

pedagogy course could be developed to facilitate student learning. While the model did not help

to explain student learning, the findings in this study suggest that the model is helpful in describing and classifying the learning which occurs within the classroom and service opportunity. The themes established in this study warrant future research to understand learning within a race pedagogy classroom. They may also be helpful in future research directed at using ELM to develop course content, activities and discussion, as it has been found to be beneficial for other experience-based courses (Jarvinen, 1989; Petkus, 2000; Saunders, 1997).

Implications for Interracial Communication Training

This study offers several implications for interracial communication training. The first is the important role that concrete experiences have for understanding race, racism, and White privilege. Many of the students expressed that they best learned through watching other individuals interact (i.e., films) and hearing other people talk about their experiences and preferences. Usually these experiences were valenced as negative or as negative and positive. Essentially, students expressed that they learned from seeing a negative interaction. They also mentioned positive interactions but always in tandem with a negative interaction. This finding may suggest that there is an important need for students to hear and observe concrete ways in which interracial communication does not work well. It also suggests that when presented with positive interracial communication tools, it is essential for a negative interracial communication experience to also be present. Showing videos such as *The Color of Fear*, *Amistad*, and *Crash* coupled with discussion may serve as training tools that ultimately contribute to the development of competent and effective interracial communications.

Another implication for interracial communication training is the importance of reflection on personal experience. All of the students mentioned that their real-life experiences were pivotal in their learning. They also mentioned that the requirement to reflect upon these experiences

pushed them into a productive conclusion concerning the experience. When students had not

spent time reflecting on the experience, they did not appear to be as equipped to discuss the

encounter or able to think critically about it. This may suggest that using reflection tools such as

journal assignments in training where participants are required to think critically about racial

encounters in their personal life may facilitate critical thinking regarding racial issues.

Limitations

While this study derived many meaningful results, it was not without limitations. The

first regards the generalizability of the study. As a case study, this qualitative study was not

designed to predict and explain the behavior of a large group of people; however, it is still a

limitation. The findings may act as a representation of only this group of students and cannot be

generalized to all students who have taken an Interracial Communication or African American

Relational Communication course, nor can they be generalized to all White or Black students, or

service-learning opportunities. This study may be read as a preliminary exploration of the ways

in which student racial and gender standpoints influence their learning and application in the race

communication classroom. Thus, the themes which emerged from this study may be used for

further exploration to determine their application to other populations.

Another consideration is that the Interracial Communication and African American

Relational Communication courses were not initially developed as a precursor to a service-

learning course. If they had been developed with the service-learning course in mind, the

instructor may have placed greater emphasis on the students' ability to apply the skills and

concepts to situations outside of the classroom. Further, the service-learning opportunity with

Helping Hands was initially intended to be an opportunity for students to be immersed in

interracial communication interactions and observations. However, due to the needs of the

organization students did not have many encounters outside of the workplace and were often working with one another or speaking with individuals over the phone. This may have resulted in many students not seeing a clear connection between the IRC or AARC course and the service-learning course.

Another limitation for this study as that students were not able to be matched with an interviewer of the same gender and race. All of the students were matched on at least gender or race, but one student (Brian, BM/IRC) was not able to be matched because of logistical difficulties. Most of the students expressed that they were comfortable with the interview and were open to discussing their own racial standpoint as well as their experience within the class. It is important to note that one student, Tara (BF/IRC), often would not maintain direct eye contact with the interviewer when speaking and her body orientation was slanted slightly away from the interviewer. Tara never verbally expressed any discomfort and answered each question thoroughly, but these nonverbal cues were not apparent in the other interviews. It may suggest that she could have been uncomfortable with the interview. While the direct cause is unknown, it may infer that said behavior may be attributed to the fact that the interviewer was a White female.

Another final limitation which should be mentioned is that the interview ran longer than the projected one hour. When students were contacted they were specifically told that the interview would last for about an hour but most interviews were an hour and a half. The students were clearly made aware that they had the option of stopping the interview at any time but none of them did so. This may have contributed to less data towards the end of the interview, as student answers were less descriptive. This potion of the interview was directly related to how

the IRC or AARC course impacted the participants' experiences with the service-learning project.

Strengths of the Present Study

Despite the aforementioned limitations, there are many strengths of this study and its contribution to social science research. This study was one of the first to approach interracial communication classrooms as a means for equipping students for a service-learning project. While the IRC and AARC course were not developed for specific service-learning preparation, they do present a more than adequate opportunity to understand how such a course could prepare students for service-learning in the future. This study was also completed eight (8) months after the students completed the IRC and AARC course and one to two (1-2) months after the service-learning course. It is therefore a unique study, because the data exhibits not only the skills and concepts which students learn but also the ones which they recall several months after the course. These findings therefore support the notion that that the skills and concepts learned in a race pedagogy course impact students well beyond the classroom experience.

Another strength of this study is the sample population. Nine of the 12 students who participated in the service-learning course were able to participate which allowed for a more than adequate sample for a case-study and qualitative research. Further, the racial and gender make-up of the participants was also a strength. Nearly equal numbers of men and women and Black and White students participated. This study was therefore able to equally study members of each group. Finally, this study was the first of its kind to lay the ground work to be able to understand the ways in which Experiential Learning Model may be applied to race pedagogy classrooms.

Future Direction

  Since the courses in this study were not specifically developed for a service-learning component, future research would benefit from assessing a course which was designed specifically for this end result. Since the goals of a race pedagogy course are often to encourage students to effect societal change and to practice their knowledge in the real-world Experiential Learning Model may play a pivotal role in the development and execution of course race pedagogy courses. Understanding the skills and concepts which students are learning along with the ways in which they are learning and applying these skills and concepts prepares the way for the development of a race pedagogy course specifically tailored to the Experiential Learning Model. In future research it would be helpful to see how a course which is designed to help students experience all four stages of the model is successful in doing so.

  It would also be beneficial to include the instructor's role in the race pedagogy learning process. Many of the students explained what they have learned and how, but it would be beneficial to also identify instructor purposes behind their teaching techniques and practices. This may serve as not only an evaluation of the effectiveness of the teaching techniques and pedagogical tools but it may also give insight into whether students are learning what the instructors have aimed to teach. Understanding and evaluating specific pedagogical practices which the instructor uses may add depth to the understanding of student learning.

  Finally, future research may choose to measure student racial identity through development scale, such as the White Racial Identity Assessment developed by Helms (1990). Using an identity measure may facilitate the understanding of student racial standpoint through understanding the development of their personal racial identity. Using a consistent and

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measurable scale may aid in establishing the ways in which student racial identity development may contribute to their experiences with and application of course material.

As discussed earlier, this study is important to social science research because it adds to the interracial communication (Critical Communication Pedagogy and Critical Race Theory) literature through addressing how classrooms that focus on race impact students' interracial communication skills and application after the course has ended. Further, this study reveals the particular assignments, class discussions, and pedagogical tools which students report as most influential for learning about interracial communication. Finally, this research project has thoroughly addressed the ways that both Black and White men and women address their learning through their racial and gender standpoint. This research is beneficial in furthering the accuracy of development and implementation of courses which focus on addressing race and racism through Race Pedagogy.

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APPENDICIES

Informed Consent

Research Participant Consent Form

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study entitled, "Understanding the Intersection of Interracial Communication Pedagogy and Service Learning." This study is being conducted by Angela N. Nowicki (M.A. student) under the direction of Dr. Tina M. Harris, in the Department of Speech Communication at the University of Georgia (anowicki@uga.edu). The researchers are conducting this research in order to understand the relationship between race education and service learning opportunities in undergraduate education. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I also understand that my journal entries for the independent study on the service-learning project will be used for this research study. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The interview will last for approximately 60 minutes. If I agree to participate, I will be asked to answer questions about my personal experience with either SPCM/AFAM 3820 Interracial Communication or SPCM/AFAM 4830 African American Relational Communication, and the independent study I am currently enrolled in with Dr. Tina M. Harris. In addition, my responses will be audio-taped, transcribed, and later reviewed by the investigators of this project. The audio tapes and written transcripts will be secured in a locked file cabinet in the principal investigator's office and at no time be handled by anyone other than the investigators of this study. All materials will be retained for at least three years in a locked file cabinet in the principal investigator's office and will be subsequently destroyed.

The benefit expected from this study is that it will help researchers, and interview participants understand how an interracial communication course prepares students for service learning and subsequent real-life experiences. Understanding student experiences will help future researchers to develop interracial communication course content which is most helpful to impact undergraduate student race perceptions. In addition, participants will gain an understanding of social research pertaining to interracial communication. No risks, distresses, or discomforts are seen.

The tapes used in this interview will be transcribed and subsequently destroyed. The researchers are required to retain the transcribed material for 3 years after the study is completed. Afterwards these transcripts will be destroyed. The names of all participants will be removed from transcripts and replaced with pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. However, participant age, race and sex will remain for analysis. No individually-identifiable information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission. My interview will be assigned an identifying number and this number will be used for the transcription of the interview and any subsequent coding. All of this information will be protected in a locked file cabinet and will only be accessed by the principal and co- investigators.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

_____   _____   _____

Name of Researcher   **Signature**   **Date**

Telephone: _____
Email: _____

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   **Signature**   **Date**

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu
Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Understanding the Intersection of
Interracial Communication Pedagogy and Service Learning

Introduction:

> *"First, let me begin by thanking you for your willingness to participate in this study. We are seeking to understand your experience with the communication skills you learned in your interracial course and how you applied them to the Helping Hands project. Your thoughts and opinions are valuable and I appreciate whatever experiences you wish to share during this interview. If any time you wish to cease participation, please disclose that and I will conclude the interview. However, we do not anticipate any questions that are problematic or may cause discomfort."*

Part I: Interracial Communication/African American Relational Communication Course

> *"Before we begin the interview, can you please tell me your name, age, year in college, your major, and anything else you would like to add?"*
>
> *"Thank you. We will now begin the interview questions. If a question is unclear, please ask for clarification and I will be glad to clarify it for you."*

1. Which class were you enrolled in last spring, Interracial Communication or African American Relational Communication? Why did you choose to that specific course instead of others? Was it in partial fulfillment of the University's multicultural requirement?

2. How would you describe your overall experience with that course?

3. What was the greatest benefit of taking this course?

4. What aspects of the class contributed significantly to your learning in general your learning about effective communication in general and effective interracial communication specifically? (e.g., videos, self-reflection journals, in-class discussions, film reaction papers, the Crayola Activity, *The Color of Fear*)

5. What communication *skills* would you say you learned through the interracial communication course? In what ways are those communication skills used?

6. Please take a moment to tell me a story about a pivotal learning moment related to communication that you had in class (or outside of class) as a result of taking the course?
>   a.   Was this an overall negative or positive experience for you, and why?

b.   How did you deal with this experience? Did you feel prepared to resolve or deal with the experience? Why or why not? *How* do you believe you were prepared?

c.   What did you learn from this experience that made you better at communicating about race, or communicating in general?

d.   What was the overall communication skill (lesson) you learned?

7. Can you please describe a time where you had a negative (or positive) pivotal learning moment about the relationship between effective communication and race? (THIS QUESTION WILL BE THE OPPOSITE OF HOW THEY ANSWER #6.)

a.   Was this an overall negative or positive experience for you, and why?

b.   How did you deal with this experience? Did you feel prepared to resolve or deal with the experience? Why or why not?

c.   What did you learn from this experience that made you better at communicating about race, or communicating in general?

c.   What was the overall understanding you gained from the class regarding how to engage in effective interracial communication (i.e., skills you learned)?

8. In both experiences, how would you say this class prepared you to deal with issues of (interracial) communication in the *real world*? In other words, what specific communication skills did you learn from the class or other communication classes that better equip you to engage in communication about race?

Part II: Independent Study with Helping Hands

> *"Now we are going to direct our attention toward the current independent study you took."*

1. Why did you choose to take this independent study with Dr. Harris at Helping Hands?
    a) Did you work with 2-11 or Hands on?
    b) Can you please describe your specific tasks with Helping Hands?

2. How would you describe your overall experience with the independent study? Helping Hands?

3. What aspects of working with Helping Hands (Hands On or 2-1-1) have contributed to your learning about interracial communication? Communication in General?

4. What specific communication skills would you say you learned from working with Helping Hands?

5. Please take a moment to tell me a story about a pivotal learning moment related to communication that you had at or as a result of Helping Hands?

       a.   Was this an overall negative or positive experience for you? Why?

       b.   How did you deal with this experience?

          a. Did you feel prepared to deal with this experience? Why or why not??

       c.   What did you learn from this experience about communication? about race?

6. Can you please describe a time where you had a negative (or positive) pivotal learning moment about the connection between effective communication and race? (*THIS QUESTION WILL BE THE OPPOSITE OF HOW THEY ANSWER #5.*)
    a. Was this an overall negative or positive experience for you? Why?

    b. How did you deal with this experience?

      i. Did you feel prepared to resolve or deal with the experience? Did you feel prepared to deal with this experience?
    c. What did you learn from this experience about communication? About race?

7. What was the overall understanding you gained from Helping Hands regarding how to engage in effective interracial communication (i.e., skills you learned)?

Part III: Multicultural Communication Course and Service Learning

1. How do you believe your experiences in the Interracial Communication or African American Relational Communication course impacted how your communication experiences at Helping Hands?

2. In what ways did you apply your interracial communication skills learned from the class to your experiences at Helping Hands? *(You may need to remind them of what they said).*

3. What would you tell others about taking a service-learning course?

4. In what ways do you believe the course (spring semester) and your work with Helping Hands together impacted your communication skills overall? Your interracial communication skills?

Part IV: Conclusion

"Thank you so much for taking the time to participate in this very important study. Before we conclude, is there anything else you would like to add that we have not discussed? I really appreciate your participation, and if you would like to review a final copy of the analysis, feel free to contact me (Angie Nowicki) directly at anowicki@uga.edu. If you have further questions after this interview, you are more than welcome to either contact me or Dr. Harris to address them. Thank you very much."