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An Investigation of Teacher's 'Color-Blind' Racial Attitudes and Diversity Training Experiences: Implications for Teacher Education

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Abstract

Research demonstrates that skin color significantly impacts how students are treated (Lewis, 2001; Skiba, et al., 2002). Despite this, some teachers hold "color-blind" attitudes where they pretend not to notice or care about students' ethnicity. This study explored the color-blind attitudes and diversity training experiences of 46 elementary teachers. Teachers completed both a Color-bind Racial Attitude Survey (Neville, 2000) and a diversity training questionnaire. Teachers whose diversity training a) included a "color-conscious" curriculum, b) was longer than one day, and c) taught how to address racial issues held significantly lower color-blind attitude scores. Implications for multicultural teacher education are discussed.

Introduction

Over sixty years ago, American author Margaret Halsey wrote *Colorblind: A White Woman Looks at the Negro* (Simon and Shuster, 1946), at a time when many of the Black citizens of the United States were denied the right to eat, sleep, work, live, sit, or even cross the same path with their White counterparts. The book advocated the need to look beyond skin color in order to integrate African-Americans into schools, housing, and employment traditionally held by White Americans. Halsey's advocacy of a "color-blind" ideology was as an equalizing force: a push to combat the blatant racism of the day and to end the habitual denial of 14th amendment rights to Black U.S. citizens.

Since Harlan's book, the racial climate has changed significantly, both in the racial landscape of the U.S. and in the opportunities and rights of people of color. Yet while the Civil Rights movement banned much of the overt racism seen in segregation and the "Jim Crow" laws, skin color continues to matter in life opportunities, often beginning with how children are treated in school. When examining a large, 11,000 student public school system in the Midwestern United States, Skiba and colleagues found that even after controlling for socio-economic status, racial disparities existed in the amount of office referrals and suspensions, with African-American students more likely to be referred to the office for less serious and more subjective reasons than their White peers (Skiba, Michael, and Nardo, 2002). Opportunities for students of color to move up the "academic ladder of success" are also hindered by teachers' cultural beliefs and expectations. In 1999, one study found that teachers were more likely to nominate Anglo-American students for gifted programs than their Hispanic peers (Masten, Plata, Wenglar, and Thedford, 1999). Thus, despite wishing and hoping that race and skin color *should not* matter, they still, unfortunately, do.

In today's society, this distinction between a "race should not matter" philosophy and a "race does not matter" philosophy has become blurred. Neville refers to the modern-day notion of color-blindness as the idea that "race should not *and* does not matter" (Neville, 2000, p. 60). While the "should not matter" philosophy implies a goal of achieving true color-blindness – in the world of education, this means teachers not showing favoritism or discrimination to certain students based on skin color – the "does not matter" philosophy requires that teachers turn a "blind eye" to racial differences. According to Williams (1997), the modern-day notion of color-blindness:

> *…constitutes an ideological confusion at best, and denial at it very worst…Much is overlooked in the move to undo that which clearly and unfortunately matters just by labeling it that which 'makes no difference.' This dismissiveness, however unintentional, leaves [people of color] pulled*

between the clarity of their own experience and the often alienating terms in which they must seek social acceptance. (p. 7)

Inevitably, teachers in our changing American landscape work with students whose cultural and language backgrounds differ significantly from their own, and they must learn to address the diverse needs of these students. This includes acknowledging student differences and the ways in which their own biases and expectations may impact their students. Unfortunately, research continues to indicate that minority student status continues to correlate with lower teacher expectations and teacher bias (Irvine, 1990; Tirado, 2001). Moreover, these lower expectations and biases affect many aspects of minority students' life, from more referrals to the office for disciplinary action (Skiba, et al., 2002) to nomination for gifted programs (Madsen, et al., 1999).

How Color-blind Attitudes Affect Developing Minds

Developmental studies on children's racial cognition have found that prior to reaching the concrete operational stage (around age 7 or 8), young children are developing a growing understanding of race awareness, which includes the ability to classify individuals by race, understand that skin color and racial identity are immutable characteristics, and accurately identify themselves and others as members of racial or ethnic groups (Alejandro-Wright, 1985; Clark, Hovecar and Dembo, 1980; Quintana, 1998). At the same time, children are developing racial attitudes, during the elementary school years, which follow a general progression from a) affective to b) perceptual to c) cognitive forms of differentiation (Aboud & Skerry, 1984; Katz, 1982).

Teachers who adhere to the color-blind ideology of not noticing racial difference may minimize differences and emphasize similarities. Thus, they may avoid children's racial questions or comments in the elementary years – during a crucial time of their development of racial cognition. This avoidance can thwart the child's ability to engage in constructive discourse and to develop critical thinking on the subject, since these conversation stoppers leave the child unable to develop racial conceptions and beliefs with the informative help that an older adult can provide, the help that socio-constructivists remind us is essential to developing sophisticated reasoning in the child (Luke, Kale, Singh, Hill, & Daliri, 1994; Rodriguez & Kies, 1998).

For children of the White dominant culture, this avoidance of racial issues may emphasize that racial differences are negative and are not fit for discussion; for children of color, it may also dismiss or trivialize the discrimination that they encounter. From a developmental and constructivist theoretical perspective, ignoring or side-stepping discussions about race can leave both White children and children of color without assistance in their reasoning on these issues and may in fact encourage faulty conclusions about racial differences (Derman-Sparks, Guttierrez,& Phillips., 1989; Lewis, 2001; Schofield, 1986).

Color-blindness in the Schools

A number of studies have been published in the educational and sociological literature that acknowledges the existence and effects of color-blind racial attitudes in schools (Schofield, 1982, 1986; Larson and Ovando, 2001, Lewis, 2001).

One of the first, most comprehensive studies to examine the color-blind philosophy of "race does not matter" was Schofield's (1982) multi-year ethnographic study of a desegregated 1,200-student middle school in the Northeast U.S. The school opened as a desegregated institution with a roughly 50/50% Black/White student ratio; the majority of students had come from elementary schools that had been highly segregated. Data showed that the color-blind perspective was widely held by the school community. Teachers not only consistently denied that they noticed children's race, both to researchers and among themselves, they also believed that students did not notice the race of their peers (interviews with students revealed the opposite). Schofield also found that race was a taboo topic: Words such as Black and White were rarely used, and when used, were viewed as racial epithets.

Schofield concluded that the color-blind perspective was relied upon so heavily within the school because it served several functions, including:

1) reducing the potential for overt racial conflict;
2) minimizing discomfort or embarrassment among teachers and students; and
3) ncreasing teacher's freedom to make what appeared to be "non-race-based" decisions.

Despite these alleged advantages, the color-blind ideology caused several setbacks within the school environment. First, school personnel's failure to acknowledge cultural differences influenced the different ways that White and Black students functioned and succeeded in school and caused a number of misinterpretations and misunderstandings of student behavior – often resulting in increased discipline action toward Black students. Second, teachers' color-blindness enabled them to believe that implementing course materials that reflected this new diversity was irrelevant, since race "does not matter"; and consequently, Black students were unable to see themselves as validated in the curriculum.

More recently, in a year-long, ethnographic study of a predominantly White, middle-class suburban school, Lewis (2001) examined the racial discourse of teachers, parents and administrators and found similar evidence of a color-blind ideology among the school community. Interestingly, unlike Schofield's earlier study within the context of desegregation, Lewis purposely chose a predominantly White, middle-class school community in order to examine the impact of Whites' lack of contact with other-race members on their multicultural attitudes, beliefs, and school practices. Similar to the findings in Schofield's study, although school community members consistently denied the salience of race and advocated a color-blind paradigm, Lewis documented an underlying reality of "racialized practices and color-conscious understandings" (Lewis, 2001, p.781) that directly impacted the school's few racial minority students and indirectly supported White students' views of superiority toward their non-White peers. With the exception of parents who had biracial children in the school – who discussed race as being very relevant to their lives – race was perceived as immaterial. Yet rather than truly being a non-issue, data revealed that many White adults in the community had very distinct ideas and biases regarding people of color.

Interestingly, Lewis noted sufficient evidence of what Pappas (1996) and others have referred to as the "invisible" culture of Whiteness; the belief among White Americans that they have no unique, identifiable culture. This phenomenon of invisible Whiteness has been collectively studied under a relatively new research field known as "Whiteness studies" in the educational literature. A June 2003 *Washington Post* article defines Whiteness studies as seeking to educate White Americans that they "are so accustomed to being part of a privileged majority that they do not see themselves as part of a race" (Fears, 2003, p. A12). In this research focus, the "invisible" cultural assumptions of Whiteness and the dynamics of White privilege are seen as ultimate barriers toward social justice (see Rodriguez & Villaverde, 2000, for a detailed review). Empirical research with pre-service teachers and undergraduate students indicates that White students often do not recognize the dynamics of White privilege intuitively (Williams & Okintunde, 2000).

Taken collectively, these studies on color-blind attitudes in the schools suggest at least two important issues. First, teachers, particularly those who are White, have been found to rely on the color-blind perspective both in their dealings with students and in their classroom and curriculum decisions. This philosophy appears to be influenced by how individuals view – or do not view – their own racial identity, the culture and values reflected in the school climate, and a discomfort dealing with the topic of race. Second, the color-blind perspective is relied upon because of its seeming advantages: when there is fear of classroom or school conflict, or a fear of appearing prejudiced, the "race does not matter" approach can offer a paradigm of easy escapism to avoid dealing with the cultural reality.

Multicultural/Diversity Training: Uncovering the Blanket in a "Blanket" Term

Despite the multicultural research indicating the impact of the color-blind ideology in schools, training teachers about the color-blind ideology and its potential effects on students has not become a clear-cut goal. Multicultural training workshops for teachers continue to increase in popularity in the American

educational arena, and many preservice teacher education programs now include an emphasis on multiculturalism; yet the goals, content, and length of such training varies considerably (and depends heavily on the needs of competing stakeholders; see Gay, 2005 for a comprehensive review). Moreover, researchers have found that many teachers pass through entire stand-alone diversity courses with little signs of change, often reinforcing stereotypes of themselves and others along the way (Brown, 2004).

In his review of research on pre-service teacher education programs aimed at "teaching for diversity", Zeichner (1993) delineated several "key elements" related to the content of successful programs. Using Zeichner's research, coupled with this author's review of research on diversity training programs, two general paradigms of diversity training were identified and used within the current study: (1) "cultural knowledge" training versus (2) "color-conscious" training (see Table 1). Cultural knowledge training approaches largely emphasized learning about cultural differences and cultural learning styles, while color-conscious approaches emphasize a fundamental shift in teachers' conceptual thinking about racism, their own racial attitudes and identity, and the effects of skin color and institutional discrimination on the opportunities of non-white students. Notably, these paradigms serve as general orientations rather exact delineations; some training programs incorporate only a few of the elements listed, while others incorporate elements of both components.

Table 1. Two Paradigms of Diversity Training based on Zeichner's (1993) "Key" Elements

Cultural Knowledge Training Encourages teachers to learn the customs, beliefs, linguistic variations, and practices of different racial or ethnic cultures. Includes knowledge about the relationship between language and culture. (Adapted from Banks, 1994; Derman-Sparks, et al., 1989; Zeichner, 1993).	**Color-Conscious Training** Encourages teachers to shift their conceptual thinking about racism, their own racial attitudes and identity, and the effects of skin color and institutional discrimination on the opportunities of non-white students (Based on work from Cochran-Smith, 1995; Cooney & Akintunde, 1999; Nieto, 1992; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997, 1999; Zeichner, 1993).
Includes:	Includes:
Learning About Cultures (General) 1. Curriculum addresses the histories and contributions of various ethno-cultural groups. 2. Educators are taught procedures by which they gain information about the communities represented in their classroom.	**Examining Cultural Beliefs/Attitudes** 7.Teachers are helped to develop a clearer sense of their own racial, ethnic and cultural identities. 8.Teachers are helped to examine their attitudes toward other ethno-cultural groups.
Addressing Cultural Learning Styles 3. Teachers are given information about the characteristics and learning styles of various groups and individuals and are taught about the limitations of this information. 4. Teachers are taught how to assess the relationships between methods they use in the classroom and preferred learning and interaction styles in their students' homes and communities.	**Learning about Institutional Racism** 9. Teachers are taught about the dynamics of privilege and economic oppression and about school practices that contribute to the reproduction of social inequalities.
Learning Linguistic/Cultural Variations 5. Curriculum gives much attention to socio-cultural research knowledge about the relationships among language, culture, and learning. 6. Teachers are taught how to use various instructional strategies sensitive to cultural and linguistic variations and how to adapt classroom instruction and assessment to accommodate students' cultural resources.	**Negotiating Racism in Class** 10. Teachers are taught about the dynamics of prejudice and racism and about how to deal with them in the classroom.

Cultural Knowledge Training. The general goal of cultural knowledge training is to understand the customs, beliefs, linguistic variations, and practices of different racial or ethnic cultures. Such training can provide helpful information on the relationship between language and culture, and knowledge of various cultural learning styles of students of color. Yet this training model does not typically emphasize teachers' reflection on their own racial biases or identity, nor does it strive to shift teacher's conceptual thinking about racism or institutional discrimination. Rather, it provides knowledge and acknowledgment of differences without being set in a larger context of institutionalized racism and the dynamics of white privilege. It is argued that such an approach, in which teachers are trained in lessons about non-Anglo cultures, may reinforce certain stereotypes of cultural groups (Banks, 1994); may ignore the need for teachers to examine their own biases; and may do little to help teachers construct pedagogy that addresses the values and practices of non-white cultures (Cochran-Smith, 1995). .

Color-Conscious Training. Conversely, the focus of color-conscious training (often called "anti-bias" or sensitivity training) is to enable teachers to shift their conceptual thinking about racism, their own racial attitudes and identity, and/or the effects of institutional discrimination on the opportunities of non-white students. Such training generally encourages teachers to avoid being "color-blind" by recognizing what psychological and educational research indicate are the negative effects of racialized practices on students of color. Beyond merely educating teachers about different cultural groups, color-conscious training encourages teachers to adopt another's perspective, and to feel empathy for students of color who often feel torn between their own cultural practices or self-expectations and those of the dominant culture. The difficulties of conducting 'color-conscious' training in teacher professional development include teacher resistance to change; length of time (difficult given the numerous other demands placed on today's teachers); and lack of commitment on the part of school districts to invest resources, release-time, and experts to such training.

Study Overview

The current study examined the prevalence of color-blind racial attitudes among a sample of 46 elementary school teachers in racially diverse school settings. Of primary interest was the correlation between teachers' level of color-blindness and elements of their personal and professional backgrounds – including racial identity, age, experience, and the type, length, and content of their multicultural/diversity training experiences.

Several hypotheses about the relationship between teacher's racial attitudes, diversity training, and demographic variables were drawn within the context of these theoretical and conceptual frameworks. First, it seemed plausible that teachers who were trained in a *color-conscious* (rather than *a cultural-knowledge*) paradigm may hold fewer color-blind attitudes, since they presumably have been "awakened" out of color-blindness into an acknowledgement of institutional and skin color discrimination. Teachers who were specifically trained in how to discuss race and racism in the classroom setting may also have fewer color-blind attitudes, since the practice of acknowledging race is in direct contrast to the color-blind ideology.

Along with the content of their diversity training curriculum, teachers who participated in lengthier training sessions (e.g., ones that extend beyond a "one day" workshop) may also hold fewer color-blind attitudes, since training that requires self-reflection and a shift in conceptual thinking about race is more time-intensive and less apt to be conducted in a one-day workshop or seminar. Finally, teachers who voluntarily chose to participate in diversity training – rather than being forced to attend training due to state or district mandates – were hypothesized to hold fewer color-blind attitudes, since volunteering to learn about diversity may indicate a willingness to learn about diversity issues and imply an openness to recognizing and addressing racial issues directly.

In addition to multicultural training variables, the variables of racial identity and age were also predicted to have an impact on teachers' racial attitudes. With respect to racial identity, the authors' hypothesized that teachers who identify as "non-white" may be more naturally sensitive about the use of a philosophy that reportedly denies the experience and heritage of children of color (due to their own unique experiences as past children of color). Thus, such teachers would likely be less apt to espouse and use a color-blind

philosophy that denies the importance of differences. With respect to age, teachers under age 50 at the time of the study were predicted to hold fewer color-blind attitudes, given that they were raised at a time after the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, when school segregation was no longer an accepted legal practice and the color-blind ideology was no longer as widely promoted as an egalitarian method of responding to racial differences.

Methodology

Instrument Measures

Color-blind Racial Attitude Scale (CoBRAS). The Color-blind Racial Attitude Scale (CoBRAS) instrument is a 20-item survey that was used to measure the cognitive dimensions of teachers' color-blind racial attitudes (Neville, 2000). CoBRAS items are rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale (1=*strongly disagree* to 6= *strongly agree*). Scores are summed and range from 20 to 120, with higher scores indicating a stronger level of "blindness" to color and racial privilege. To help reduce potential response biases, seven of the items are worded in a negative direction.

The CoBRAS has been found to have strong psychometric properties (Cronbach's alpha = .86, 2-week test-retest reliability estimate = .68); established criterion validity (the CoBRAS is significantly positively correlated with McConahay's (1986) Modern Racism Scale and other racial attitude measures (see Neville, 2000, Study 2, p. 63)); and robustness under a variety of settings (five CoBRAS studies have been conducted by Neville, et al (2000) with over 1,100 observations).

Neville's (2000) exploratory factor analysis of CoBRAS identified three factors that accounted for 45% of the variance, each of which can be viewed as conceptual sub-domains of color-blindness. The first factor, termed "Racial Privilege" consists of seven items referring to color blindness to the existence of White privilege. The second factor, "Institutional Discrimination," consists of seven items referring to limited awareness of the implications of institutional forms of discrimination and exclusion on people of color. The third factor, "Blatant Racial Issues," consists of six items referring to the awareness of general, pervasive forms of racial discrimination that exist (e.g. "Social problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations").

CoBRAS has been used as an instrument to measure color-blind racial attitudes in at least five published studies, including as a pre- and post-test measure to examine the effects of a diversity training course on college students. Prior to the current study, however, CoBRAS had never been used exclusively with elementary school teachers, though its applicability is clearly relevant.

Background Demographic/Training Questionnaire. An 11-item background questionnaire, developed by this author, was administered along with CoBRAS to assess various independent variables that might be used to distinguish naturally occurring cohorts in the sample. Several of these variables were thought to be related to teachers' color-blind racial attitudes, including age, years of experience, and race/ethnicity. The questionnaire also included items asking about the length, focus, and content of teachers' prior multicultural/diversity training experiences. Variables such as gender, race (non-White or White), grade level taught, and all aspects of diversity training were treated as dichotomous variables and given a 0,1 coding. Diversity training variables were classified and coded based on research and theories of training paradigms (either cultural knowledge or color-conscious) and on ease in statistical representation. For example, one hypothesis of this study was that diversity training that is equal to or less than a "one-day workshop" may not be an adequate length to alter teachers' conceptual thinking and classroom practices about race. Thus, length of training was coded as either (0) less than or equal to one day or (1) greater than one day. Similarly, variables of age, experience, and grade level taught were coded dichotomously based on hypotheses, as: less than or equal to 50 years old versus more than 50 years old; less than or equal to 20 years experience versus more than20 years experience; and K-3 (early primary) grade level taught versus 4-6 (upper elementary) grade level taught.

Participants

46 teachers from three public elementary schools with diverse student populations voluntarily participated in the study. All teachers worked in or near the San Francisco Bay Area in California. While efforts were made to balance gender and ethnicity, statistical representation of each intersectional group was neither expected nor intended, given the mostly White and female California teaching force.[1]

Participants ranged in age from 24 to 64 years old, with a mean age of 40 (SD= 10.83). The average number of years of experience was 11.86 years (SD=9.13), with a range from 1 to 31 years. The majority of the participants (65%) were White (n=30), while 33% (n=15) labeled themselves as non-White (e.g. bi/multi-racial, or members of racial/ethnic minority groups). Two percent (n=1) did not specify their racial or ethnic background. Three-quarters (76 %) of the participants were female (n=35) and 20% were male (n=9). Four percent (n=2) did not identify their gender.

Grade levels taught ranged from Kindergarten to 6th grade, with the majority (60.8%) of participants teaching at the K-3 primary level (n=28). Specifically, six participants taught Kindergarten; seven taught 1st grade; seven taught 2nd grade; eight taught 3rd grade; two taught 4th grade; nine taught 5th grade; five taught sixth grade; and the remaining two taught a 4th–6th specialized instruction course (e.g., a gifted education program and a special education combination class).

Seventy-six percent of participants (n=35) stated that they had participated in a workshop, class, seminar, or some other form of organized multicultural/diversity training; 24% (n=11) stated that they had not participated in any form of formalized diversity training.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from three diverse public elementary schools in two neighboring school districts. Schools were specifically selected for the abundance of racial and ethnic diversity within the student body. The racial/cultural diversity of the school was a selective criterion in order to explore the multicultural thinking and beliefs of teachers who were teaching where racial and cultural diversity was clearly pertinent and evident in the school setting. A statistical representation of students in each of the participating school districts is shown in Table 2. To corroborate these statistics and to ensure that teacher participants perceived their schools to be racially and culturally diverse, teachers were asked to classify their school in terms of diversity level. Each of the 46 participants classified their school as either "somewhat" or "very" diverse.

Table 2. Ethnic Breakdown of Students by School District

Total Enrollment of Student Body, 2000-2001		
Ethnicity	School District #1	School District #2
Asian-American	35.3%	8.1%
African-American	11.7%	35.7%
Hispanic	9.6%	13.9%
Native-American	0.8%	0.4%
White	32.0%	28.2%
Other*	10.6%	13.7%

Source: California Department of Education, 2002.
*Includes Bi/Multi-Racial and/or students who did not indicate a racial/ethnic identity as reported by school data.

After introducing the study at teacher staff meetings, the CoBRAS survey was placed in teacher mailboxes accompanied by the background demographic questionnaire, two informed consent statements, and a letter of introduction explaining the general purpose of the study as one that examined teachers' multicultural training and beliefs.

[1] In the 2002-2003 school year, 70% of the teaching force in California was White and 74% was female (California Department of Education, 2003).

Results

Overall Color-blind Scores.

Each of the 46 teacher participants in this part of the study obtained a color-blind racial attitude score from the CoBRAS instrument. The higher the score, the more "color-blind" teachers were to racial privilege and institutional discrimination and the less knowledge they had about racism and its effects in the U.S. Thus, scores obtained by the CoBRAS scale indicate the level of denial of racial dynamics on a cognitive dimension.

Participants' color-blind attitude scores ranged from 22 to 81 (scale=20-120), with a mean score of 52.91 (SD=16.11, α = .89; see Table 9). Descriptive statistical data analysis revealed that scores were distributed in a way that was moderately close to a normal distribution (Skewness = -.008, SE = .35), with no significant outliers (trimmed mean = 52.93).

Taken as a whole, these results indicate that teachers within this sample—working in the Bay Area, CA, in diverse, urban school settings—held low to moderate color-blind racial attitudes. Although a comparison group of non-teacher participants was not surveyed for the current study, Neville's (2000) series of studies offers a useful comparison. CoBRAS was administered to four samples totaling over 1,100 observations, with mean CoBRAS scores of each sample ranging from 61.72 to 67.30. A fifth study by Neville, which examined CoBRAS scores among 45 participants enrolled in an undergraduate-level multicultural training course, obtained a pre-course mean CoBRAS score of 50.21 (notably, a post-course mean of 45.71 was subsequently obtained, indicating color-blind racial attitudes are sensitive to an intervention). While the markedly lower pre-course mean was expected due to the voluntary interest of those enrolled in such a course, this mean is only slightly lower than the mean score for the sample in the current study (52.91), suggesting that the mean score in this sample could be classified as low to moderate. These results suggest that teachers practicing in diverse school settings in the Bay Area generally do not hold high color-blind racial attitudes as measured by the CoBRAS survey.

Color-blind Factor Scores

As previously mentioned, both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses have been conducted on the CoBRAS survey and indicated that a 3-factor oblique model provided a good fit of the data, accounting for 45% of the variance (see Neville, 2000, p. 64-65 and Chapter 4). In the interest of checking for the emergence of a similar 3-factor model in the current study, exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the data obtained from the 46 teacher participants. As expected, examination of the data obtained in this study also suggested a three-factor solution and accounted for 45% of the variance. Nearly identical to Neville's (2000) results, the first factor (termed "Racial Privilege" by Neville) accounted for 31% of the variance; the second factor ("Institutional Discrimination") accounted for an additional 8% of the variance, and the third factor ("Blatant Racial Issues") accounted for a further 6% of the variance. All three factors are suggested to be related conceptual domains of color-blindness; correlations among the three factors ranged from .46 to .66. Alpha coefficients for each of the three factors were .84, .81, and .75, respectively, indicating acceptable reliability.

The mean, standard deviation, and score range of the three factors from the current study are displayed in Table 3. Overall, teachers' mean scores on the three factors suggest that teachers in diverse school settings in the Bay Area generally do not adhere strongly to these three facets of color-blindness. However, an evaluation of adjusted factor mean scores (to account for Factor 3's lower score range) indicates that teachers were most color-blind in the domain of "Institutional Discrimination" relative to the domains of "Racial Privilege" and "Blatant Racial Issues".

Items within the Institutional Discrimination factor (Factor 2; Adjusted Mean = 12.39) reflect a limited awareness of the implications of institutional forms of racial discrimination and exclusion on people of color (e.g. "Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin"). This indicates that teachers in the sample most agreed with this facet of color-blindness -- what

Table 3. CoBRAS Means, Factor Means, Standard Deviations, and Alpha Coefficients by Gender, Grade Level, Experience, Race, Age, and Training

	Total Color-blind Score			Racial Privilege			Inst Discrimination			Blatant Racial Issues		
	Score Range: 20-120			F1: *Range 7-42*			F2: *Range 7-42*			F3; *Range 6-36*		
Teacher Variables and Coding Classifications	Mean	SD	alpha**	Mean	SD	alpha**	Mean	SD	alpha**	Mean	SD	alpha**
Entire Sample (n=46)	52.91	16.11	0.89	8.80	4.09	0.84	20.65	7.20	0.81	13.59	5.33	0.75
Gender												
Men (n=9)	58.11	19.61		9.56	4.33		21.68	8.96		15.56	6.80	
Women (n=35)	51.46	15.37		8.66	4.07		20.06	6.87		13.06	5.02	
Grade Level Taught												
K-3: Lower Primary (n=28)	49.14	15.63		**7.68**	3.57		19.12	6.83		12.96	5.27	
4-6: Upper Primary (n=16)	57.31	15.73		**10.19**	4.42		22.25	7.33		14.25	5.70	
Experience												
<20 years (n=34)	50.85	15.90		8.59	4.19		19.56	7.28		12.79	4.85	
20 years + (n=11)	58.09	16.48		9.18	3.97		23.36	6.39		15.82	6.48	
Race												
White (n=31)	54.10	17.10		8.48	3.86		21.68	7.21		13.87	5.56	
Non-white (n=13)	51.10	13.10		9.54	4.79		18.38	6.64		13.31	4.87	
Age												
50+ years (n=11)	51.36	20.05		7.45	3.11		21.73	7.67		14.64	6.55	
<50 years (n=34)	53.03	15.03		9.15	4.34		20.09	7.11		13.18	5.01	
Diversity Training												
Attended diversity training (n=35)	51.37	15.92		8.69	4.27		19.80	7.25		12.94	5.10	
Did not attend diversity training (n=11)	57.82	16.45		9.18	3.60		23.36	6.65		15.64	5.77	
Training greater than 1 day (n=26)	**48.19**	13.11		8.35	4.31		**18.00**	5.90		**11.58**	3.32	
Training 1 day or less (n=9)	**60.56**	20.31		9.67	4.24		**25.00**	8.57		**16.89**	7.25	
Voluntary participation (n=13)	45.69	15.48		7.00	4.20		18.46	7.62		11.85	2.97	
Non-voluntary participation (n=22)	54.73	15.54		9.68	4.08		20.59	7.08		13.59	6.00	
"Color- Conscious" Content (n=18)	**43.56**	14.89		**6.944**	3.765		**17.111**	6.44		**11.17**	3.49	
No "Color-Conscious" Content (n=17)	**59.65**	12.71		**10.53**	4.08		**22.65**	7.12		**14.82**	5.93	
Taught how to address race in class (n=14)	**41.43**	12.26		**6.07**	2.62		**16.36**	5.40		**10.50**	3.82	
Not taught how to address race in class (n=21)	**58.00**	14.76		**10.43**	4.31		**22.10**	7.52		**14.57**	5.28	

Bolded = Significant group difference at the p<0.05 level
**Cronbach's alpha reliability confirmation

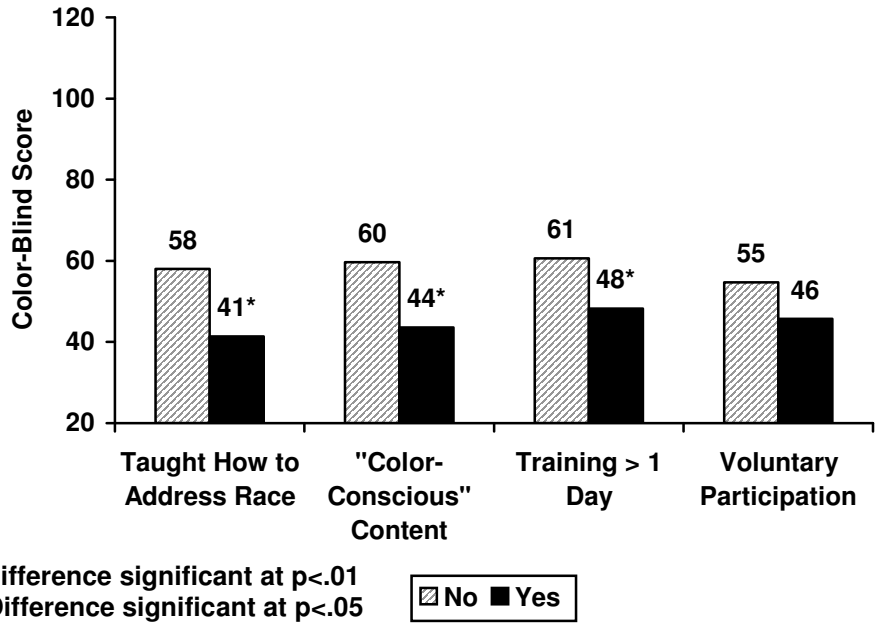
Cose (1997) refers to as "the widespread conviction" that being a person of color in today's American climate has some substantial legal, educational, and financial advantages over being White (p. 181).

Conversely, the adjusted mean of the Racial Privilege factor (Factor 1; Adjusted Mean = 5.28) indicates that teachers were least color-blind in this domain. Racial Privilege items referred to blindness to the existence of White privilege (e.g. the reverse-scored item, "White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin"). Results from this first factor run contrary to ethnographic studies indicating blindness to White privilege among teachers and administrators in schools (Schofield, 1986; Lewis, 2001), yet it is important to note that these studies differed substantially from the current study in both setting and research methods. Rather than racially diverse school settings, both of these previous studies on color-blindness were conducted in predominantly all-White schools that had little history with racial diversity (in Schofield's study, the school had just recently desegregated to include African-American students). Perhaps more importantly, these studies relied on ethnographic interview data rather than surveys to measure the color-blindness construct.

Teachers' adjusted mean score of the Blatant Racial Issues factor (Factor 3; Adjusted Mean = 9.513) was higher within this domain than the Racial Privilege factor, but lower when compared to the Institutional Discrimination Factor (falling roughly in between both Factor 1 and Factor 2). This indicates that teachers in the sample had some awareness of the general, pervasive forms of racial discrimination that exist (e.g. "Social problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations"); however, a comparison of item factor loadings indicate that several items originally identified by Neville (2000) to load highest on this Factor loaded

higher on Factors 1 and 3 during this study's analysis. This suggests that the Blatant Racial Issues domain may be serving somewhat as a catch-all for attitudes and beliefs that fall within a color-blind ideology, but whose exact classification and delineation is ambiguous.

Figure 1. Average Color-blind CoBRAS Score by Diversity Training Element



***Group Comparisons*.**

To examine group differences in several naturally occurring sample cohorts that were predicted to be statistically significantly different, a series of t-tests was conducted. Specifically, t-tests were conducted on the independent variable groups of gender, age, experience, grade level, race, and diversity training components and the overall CoBRAS and individual factor scores (see Table 3).
Teachers with over 20 years of experience and those who taught early primary grades (K-3) obtained lower overall color-blind scores than their counterparts. Only one of these group differences was statistically significant: participants teaching at the early primary level (K-3) had significantly lower scores on the Racial Privilege factor.

Examining only those teachers who indicated that they had completed some form of diversity training (n=35 out of a possible 46), statistically significant differences emerged through simple t-test comparisons. Color-blind scores were statistically significantly lower (i.e. less color-blind) for participants whose diversity training included:

1) color-consciousness education (i.e. learning about personal racial/cultural biases, White privilege and institutional racism) (p.<.05);
2) specific instruction on how to address racism in the classroom (p<.05); and
3) greater than one day of training (p<.05).

Thus, results indicate that the type (color conscious); specific content (learning how to address race in the classroom); and length (more than a one day workshop) of diversity training all appear to influence teachers' level of color-blind racial attitudes. Evaluating the strength of group differences by examining the size of differences between means reveals that the color-conscious component of diversity training, followed by training in how to address racism were associated with the greatest reduction in color-blind

scores (Difference in Mean Scores =16.57 and 16.09, respectively). The length of training was associated with the least reduction in scores (Difference in mean scores = 12.37).

All three variables relate to aspects of diversity training that may in part be dependent on each other. For example, addressing race in the classroom is likely to be accompanied by training of a color-conscious paradigm; it may also be related to the length of the training (as this type of training requires more significant time and would likely be set up to be taught in more than one day). Thus, they are not sufficiently independent to analyze them via multiple regression.

Discussion

Implications for Teacher Education

Findings from the current study lead to the conception of a diversity teacher training model that aims to incorporate three specific components:

1) A "color-conscious" paradigm that address notions of White privilege, personal biases, and institutional discrimination
2) Specific training (e.g. examples, modeling, and reflection) on how to address racial issues in the classroom
3) Extending diversity training beyond a one-day workshop

Component #1. Becoming Color-Conscious: Understanding Privilege and Biases. Color-conscious training --in which teachers recognize personal biases and become aware of the effects of White privilege and institutional discrimination--, was associated with significantly lower levels of color-blind racial attitudes in the current study. Previous research has proposed that teachers need to be more aware of various cultures, need to confront their own biases and racism, and must see reality from a variety of perspectives before incorporating this new reality into their classroom practice (Cochran-Smith, 1995; Nieto, 1992). By explicitly incorporating the color-conscious versus cultural knowledge distinction in training programs -- and showing why such distinctions are important – teacher educators may help alter the conceptions of district personnel on what is needed to adequately prepare teachers to teach in today's multicultural world.

The training and support teachers receive about diversity is only half of the battle, however, if it is not accompanied by a fostering of dispositional factors (e.g. openness to diversity, self-reflectiveness, and commitment to social justice) (Garmon, 2004). Color-conscious training must involve not only an "anti-bias" curriculum, but provide substantial personal support to foster teachers' new and changing dispositions about the role they choose to play in a diverse world. Teacher educators who facilitate open dialogue, foster a 'safe' haven for discussion, and encourage continued self-reflection through written journals and oral discourse can provide the personal support needed for teachers' conceptual change.

Component #2: Modeling and Instruction on Discussing Race and Racism. Diversity training that incorporates direct, specific instruction on how to handle race and prejudice in the classroom was significantly related to lower color-blind racial attitudes in the current study. It follows that the more practice teachers have at addressing racial questions and comments in a direct manner, the harder it is for them to adopt a "color-blind" stance. Having teachers translate the knowledge and increased awareness they gain about diversity issues into specific classroom dialogue – and providing a "safe" forum to try out this new practice, fumble, and try again – would allow them to take the abstract ideas they learn and make them concrete. Such a "theory into practice" framework is often employed to increase the effectiveness and retention of material of students engaged in courses and workshops. Incorporating this specific element into diversity training courses should be essential if the ultimate goal is to empower teachers to feel comfortable talking about race with their students rather than dismissing it.

Component #3: Beyond the "One Day" Workshop. In the current study, diversity training that went beyond the one-day workshop was significantly related to lower teacher's color-blind racial attitudes. Yet many teachers --particularly those currently practicing who may have missed out on today's preservice multicultural teacher education programs—are not given time or support to focus on issues of racial diversity and reflect on their own attitudes. Situational and time constraints, as well as the need to prioritize the myriad demands placed on teachers by the district, their colleagues, parents, students, and the state all hinder teachers' opportunities to enhance their professional development in this area. Moreover, teachers' discomfort or sensitivity to examining their own biases may keep them from considering diversity training a professional development priority. For example, White teachers' resentment and resistance to multicultural doctrine when they are exposed to it has long been documented as a primary barrier to success in diversity training programs (Groman, 2004). Thus, teacher's quick exposure to multicultural and equity issues through a short, "one day" workshop ignores what we know about a fundamental element required to overcome the resistance to new, and often challenging, ideas about diversity: time.

The answer lies in the realization that diversity training is more a developmental process than an end product (Derman-Sparks & Phillips, 1997). Armed with the knowledge of diversity training as a process that requires several steps to reach an ultimate end (in which bias and privilege are understood and seen as detrimental to opportunities for minority students), may learn to recognize that such training requires more time than a one-day workshop. Also, by viewing diversity training as a process that requires a fundamental shift in conceptual thinking, educators may begin to design courses that provide the time, consistency, and in-depth understandings that such training requires.

These findings suggest that diversity training should be seen as an ongoing, necessary component of the teaching profession. A "here today, gone tomorrow" approach that addresses only superficial cultural differences will not work if the goal is to ensure that teachers have understood, reflected, and translated complex understandings about race, racism, and discrimination into their practice.

Implications for Further Research

Limitations and Generalizabilty of Findings. Issues inherent within the research design (teachers who volunteer to participate in a multicultural survey may have overrepresented those with lower-color-blind scores) and social response bias (the well-documented phenomenon in which participants score items consistent with a socially desirably response) were limitations when discussing findings of the current study. Moreover, this study specifically investigated the color-blind racial attitudes of teachers working within *racially diverse schools*, where employing the color-blind ideology may be especially harmful to students who have questions about the racial and cultural differences they see around them. Yet the deliberate selection of the teaching sample (teaching in urban, diverse settings in a politically liberal section of the country) inherently limits the generalizability of findings to teachers in other locales.

Future studies using the CoBRAS survey that assess the color-blind attitudes and diversity training experiences of teachers in non-urban, or non-diverse settings may uncover a different relationship between attitudes and training than the current study. Ultimately, research that uncovers the relationship between specific training programs and color-blind attitudes may be useful in garnering support for teacher education about the color-blind ideology and the potentially harmful effects on students.

Assessing the Color-blind Ideology. The strong psychometric properties of the CoBRAS and its validity and reliability with over 1,000 observations indicate that the measure legitimately taps into the concept of color-blindness (Neville, 2000). As Neville (2000) states, however, the color-blindness ideology is multi-dimensional and reflects several concepts. The consistency of results for the three factors – Racial Privilege, Institutional Discrimination, and Blatant Racial Issues – may indicate that these factors are not as distinct from one another as originally suggested. The moderately high correlations among them and consistency of results among each factor suggest that the boundaries are blurred; these factors may require further investigation to understand if they are indeed separate, facets of the color-blind ideology.

Color-Blindness and Teacher Characteristics. Although several independent variables explored were not significantly related to color-blindness, the direction of the relationships may imply that teachers' color-blind racial attitudes and these variables may be more complex and multi-faceted than can be understood through a survey instrument alone. For example, it is notable that teachers who were White, those over age 50, and those who had not completed any form of diversity training also obtained higher scores of color-blindness than their inverse groups, as did those with more experience and those who teach more cognitively sophisticated students. Further research exploring these variables may prove useful in order to understand the relationship of these variables to the color-blind ideology.

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