Race and Sexual Orientation Issues in Graduate Classrooms: How Faculty in Psychology Experience them Emerging Alongside One Another

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RACE AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION ISSUES IN GRADUATE CLASSROOMS:
HOW FACULTY IN PSYCHOLOGY EXPERIENCE THEM EMERGING
ALONGSIDE ONE ANOTHER

by

Raymond L. Sheets, Jr.

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Psychology
Western Michigan University
December 2017

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The inclusion of sexual orientation and race-related issues into mainstream psychology has gained much needed momentum in recent years. The field of counseling psychology, in particular, has helped fuel this momentum with its appreciation for, and commitment to, developing academic and applied psychologists who attend to an evolving multicultural society. Within the academic environment, faculty members have the responsibility of facilitating student learning in their respective classrooms; this facilitation becomes challenging in the face of emotionally charged topics such as race and sexual orientation. How then do graduate faculty who teach these courses experience race and sexual orientation comingling within the classroom? How do faculty promote student vulnerability around sensitive topics? Additionally, how do faculty members manage their own insecurities, perceived lack of knowledge, or personal biases in their teachings around race and sexual orientation? Questions such as these have far-reaching implications for the training and practice of professional psychology; however, little empirical research has addressed how faculty experience race and sexual orientation issues emerging alongside one another in graduate classrooms.

Participants from this study were twelve doctoral-level faculty teaching multicultural counseling courses in APA-Accredited Counseling Psychology programs. Utilizing a qualitative
phenomenological framework, participants engaged in semi-structured, in-depth interviews. A total of 6 main themes emerged across participants: \textit{Generational Training Influences Faculty Multicultural Perspectives, Departmental Culture Impacts Multicultural Teaching, Socio-political Influences on Multicultural Teaching, Faculty Exploration of Personal and Teaching Philosophies, Student Reactions and Barriers Around Race/Sexual Orientation Intersections, and Multicultural and Intersectional Conversations Extend Beyond Classroom}. These themes are translated into a collective narrative representing findings across all participants and are then viewed in lieu of previously published scholarship and research. Further implications for training and practice, a critique of the study, directions for future research, and final participant reflections are also addressed.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is difficult to imagine acknowledging all those who took part in a doctoral journey spanning an entire decade. There are just too many individuals to name, but I wanted to highlight a few special people who helped lift my spirits when some of the obstacles seemed too great to surpass. First, I would like to acknowledge my family, who watched closely on the sidelines, from many states away, as I moved through the years toward this finish. More specifically, my mother championed me sometimes on a daily basis, especially when times became difficult. She did not always understand the academic jargon or overall process, but she was consistently present, cheering me from the sidelines. When I walk across the stage during commencement, I will be searching for her face in the crowd.

I would like to also acknowledge my family of choice, my tribe, my assortment of friends and loved ones who have provided encouragement, comedy, and who helped me see the value of sharing my burdens; these individuals laughed and cried with me, making this process feel much less lonely. I relied heavily on “The Cross-Country Psychology Friends,” who despite geographic restrictions were always just a click away. The ones deserving a special shout-out, who held the majority of my emotional experience across the years were: Sophie, Jen, Rebecca, Phil, Julie, Brandon, Sarah, and Nancy. And one special acknowledgement to Nick, who lifted me in those final years and final hours. These are my people…without them, I would not be where I am today.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the mentorship, advisement, and overall academic coordination that I received from so many professional psychologists over the years. To my third
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction
The inclusion of sexual orientation and race-related issues into mainstream psychology has gained much needed momentum in recent years. The field of counseling psychology, in particular, has helped fuel this momentum with its appreciation for, and commitment to, developing academic and applied psychologists who attend to an evolving multicultural society (Croteau, Bieschke, Fassinger, & Manning, 2008; Gelso, Williams, & Fretz, 2014). Counseling psychologist have aided in elevating diversity issues with their delivery of contemporary scholarship and research that benefits academic training and professional practice (Buki, 2014; Caldwell & Vera, 2010). Indeed, how best to implement sufficient training and supervision around race and sexual orientation issues for the newly emerging psychologist has become paramount (Bieschke, Eberz, Bard, & Croteau, 1998; Godfrey, Haddock, Fisher, & Lund, 2006; Grove, 2009; Perosa, Perosa, & Queener, 2008). More specifically, there is an increasing need for pedagogy that bolsters how faculty members navigate difficult classroom dialogues and overall experiences around multiculturalism, exchanges that can be quite challenging when more than one area of diversity (e.g., sexual orientation and race) is simultaneously addressed.

Many graduate psychology programs provide opportunities for students to wrestle with topics related to diversity and multiculturalism. For example, it is commonplace now for faculty and students to talk openly about marginalized topics in their classrooms while also exploring constructs such as privilege, oppression, and power; however, these classroom
experiences can lead to uncomfortable intersections. Some authors have discussed difficult classroom experiences when sexual minority issues are discussed in conjunction with racial minority issues (Ressler, 2001; Sheets, Larson, Croteau, & Anderson, 2012). For example, it can sometimes be easier for White students to talk about issues pertaining to sexual minority stress without being able to similarly talk about issues involving race. The tension within the classroom is understandable as such tension is also felt within the counseling psychology field when race and sexual orientation are held together in the same conversation; these tensions are observed and felt within academic institutions, clinical settings, as well as in annual professional meetings (Croteau & Constantine, 2005; Perez, 2005). Often at the root of these tensions is the complicated overlap of various held privileges and oppressions, as well as the questioning and acting out of which population (e.g., Black men, lesbian women) is more marginalized (Bingham, Porché-Burke, James, Sue, & Vasquez, 2002; Sue, Bingham, Porché-Burke, & Vasquez, 1999).

Within the academic environment, faculty members have the responsibility of facilitatating student learning in their respective classrooms. As mentioned, this facilitation can become challenging in the face of emotionally-charged topics such as race and sexual orientation. Nonetheless, faculty members not only need to encourage these difficult dialogues around sexual orientation and race, but also need to navigate these dialogues without contributing to further marginalization. These classroom conversations can (and should) occur across all graduate level coursework; noteworthy, courses that are more likely to foster opportunities to wrestle with race and sexual orientation are those often devoted to diversity issues (i.e., multicultural counseling courses, elective courses on race, elective courses on sexual orientation). How then do graduate faculty experience and facilitate said dialogues effectively, especially if students having them
find themselves in confusion or conflict with one another? How do faculty promote student vulnerability around sensitive topics? Additionally, how do faculty members manage their own insecurities, perceived lack of knowledge, or personal biases in their teachings around race and sexual orientation? Answers to questions such as these could have far-reaching implications for the training and practice of professional psychology; however, little empirical research has addressed how faculty experience race and sexual orientation issues emerging alongside one another in graduate classrooms. The logical first step to answering questions such as these begins with finding out what is actually occurring in these classrooms when race and sexual orientation issues mix together. As such, the focus of this dissertation offers some of the first qualitative data around faculty members’ experiences of how race and sexual orientation issues arise together within their classrooms.

**Literature Review**

This literature review is comprised of four main sections. In the first main section, a brief introduction provides the reader a conceptual overview of the dissertation. The second main section highlights the placement of sexual orientation within the broader context of professional psychology. In the third main section, the location of race within the broader context of professional psychology is addressed. In the final section, the manner in which scholars and researchers believe sexual orientation and race intersect with one another (i.e., both in and out of the classroom) is discussed.

**Sexual Orientation and Professional Psychology.** In this section, how sexual orientation issues are addressed in professional psychology is examined. More specifically, how sexual orientation issues fit within the broader discipline as a whole is discussed prior to presenting how they (i.e., and their intersections with other multicultural variables) emerge in
academic and professional training. To accomplish this, this section has 5 subsections: 1) the first subsection describes sexual orientation terminology utilized throughout the dissertation, 2) the second subsection reviews the American Psychological Association’s (APA) stance on the legitimacy of sexual orientation and gender identity issues in practice and training, 3) the third subsection reviews the scholarly and research contributions of counseling psychologists, specifically indicating their leadership with respect to sexual orientation issues, 4) the fourth subsection summarizes scholarship and research around how sexual orientation has been infused in graduate training programs, and 5) the fifth subsection explains how scholars and researchers have explored students’ experiences engaging coursework that emphasizes sexual orientation.

**Terminology.** Determining how individuals label or define their sexual orientation is multifaceted and not easily distinguished (Fassinger & Arseneau, 2007). These complexities, though noteworthy, extend beyond the scope of this literature review. For the purposes of this inquiry, the general phrase “sexual orientation issues in training” is used to describe the ways that sexual orientation material is included, or addressed, within training and academic settings. The phrases “lesbian/gay/bisexual individual(s)” and “sexual minority individual(s)” are used throughout this manuscript. There are instances where varying terminology (e.g., queer, pansexual) is used to uphold the voice, particular sample used, or specific intention offered by authors of published scholarship or research.

The focus of this dissertation project is solely on sexual orientation. This singular emphasis does not mean, however, that gender identity (or transgender issues), along with other gender minority statuses do not emerge at different points within the literature review and subsequent data analysis. Historically, the acronym “LGBT” has been used loosely in scientific inquiries, where the “T” is often tacked on in an effort to be inclusive. While this action by
various scholars and researchers is fairly commonplace (and usually done in solidarity), there is
also criticism centering around the need to distinguish sexual orientation identity from gender
identity. In other words, the two constructs are inherently different and should be treated as such.
The debate on whether transgender issues should always be included in tandem with sexual
orientation issues has been addressed in the literature (e.g., see Bieschke, Perez, & DeBord,
2007; Gainor, 2000; Lev, 2007) but also extends beyond the scope of this research inquiry.

Professional Psychology’s Commitment to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.
The Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct are periodically updated by the
American Psychological Association (APA) with the most recent update occurring in 2010.
These updates take into account newly published scholarship and research, as well as
adjustments made in legal and public policy domains, all of which are intended to ensure
adequate care and safety for sexual minority consumers. Clear and concise guidelines were
issued to

provide practitioners with 1) a frame of reference for the treatment of lesbian,
gay, and bisexual clients and 2) basic information and further references in the
areas of assessment, intervention, identity, relationship, and the education and
training of psychologists (Division 44/Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual
Concerns Joint Task Force on Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay,
and Bisexual Clients, 2000, p. 1440).

These guidelines have been updated since their inception well over a decade ago; the
newly revised guidelines are bolstered by current scholarship and research and now extend into
practice realms that once offered challenges to practicing clinicians (Practice Guidelines for LGB
Clients, 2011). For example, the newer guidelines provide primers on how clinicians can better
negotiate issues of religion and spirituality in their work, as well as how to guide sexual minority people as they navigate workplace and employment discrimination. Perhaps one of the most crucial enhancements to the guidelines include sharper focus around intersections of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Council of Representatives of the APA first appointed a task force in 2005 to address how gender identity and gender variance impacted our psychological communities. Although this task force generated numerous suggestions, many of which focused on education and training recommendations, it was not until 2008 when the APA formally issued their policy paper titled “Transgender, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression Non-Discrimination.” This publication officially outlined the organization’s affirmative stance on gender issues. Now, with the updated 2011 guidelines, psychologists are urged to: 1) distinguish sexual orientation identity from clients’ gender identity, 2) work with LGB clients to help them understand their gender identity in light of their sexual orientation identity, 3) recognize that gender non-conforming clients could be at greater risk of further stigmatization from society, and 4) become acquainted with updated online resources, as well as research and scholarship that APA has designated as exemplars in working along the intersections of gender and sexual orientation (Practice Guidelines for LGB Clients).

*Counseling Psychology as a Leader in the Study of Sexual Orientation Issues.* The field of Counseling Psychology, historically, remains committed to multicultural education and training, as well as the recruitment and retention of diverse groups of students and faculty within graduate training programs (Forrest & Campbell, 2012). Furthermore, counseling psychologists have held prominent roles in national and political conversations that eventually led to the construction of nearly every set of guidelines associated with marginalized populations. It is no
surprise, then, that counseling psychologists became heavily involved in carving a legitimate place for sexual orientation issues in multicultural conversations (Forrest & Campbell).

It was not until the early 2000s that the field of Counseling Psychology emerged as a leader in the advancement of sexual orientation issues in professional psychology (Croteau, et al., 2008). In their review of the scholarly and empirical literatures, Croteau and colleagues noted a significant turn of events away from the historical paucity of lesbian/gay/bisexual published works toward one that is inclusive of sexual orientation issues. Indeed, these authors found a dramatic increase, specifically within counseling psychology and related journals, in the complexity and frequency of sexual orientation research and scholarly inquiries. Moreover, this increased visibility not only included the addition of independent articles and stand-alone book chapters, but it also included multiple major contributions in flagship journals such as “The Counseling Psychologist.”

Perhaps one of the most significant ways counseling psychologists have made prominent contributions is their work around sexual identity paradigms that extend beyond historically referenced linear models (e.g., see Carrion & Lock, 2005; Cass, 1979; Coleman, 1985; Troiden, 1979). Indeed, Fassinger and Arsenau (2007) noted how our previous conceptualizations of sexual identity were limited, specifically around the diversity between, and within, sexual minority groups. Said differently, identity trajectories should not always be assumed to form similarly for bisexual men, bisexual women, lesbian women, or gay men. Furthermore, the existence of, and potential confound around, other sociocultural contexts have remained unfocused, at best. For example, it seems unrealistic to presume that other demographic elements (e.g., race, gender), with their attached privileges and oppressions, would have no consequence or not contribute elements of complexity in any way.
Fortunately, contemporary identity models introduced by counseling psychologists challenge the notion that sexual identity surfaces across isolated stages; rather, they purport that sexual identity emerges in complex, non-linear ways (e.g., Fassinger & Arsenau, 2007; Fassinger & Miller, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). This newer way of viewing sexual identity formation is useful for the current research inquiry because it respects the complexities of managing multiple identities. Indeed, gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals are tasked to understand their marginalized sexual identities within a society built around various privileges, with the most salient one arguably being privilege as it applies to race. As such, graduate students who find themselves enrolled in courses highlighting diversity and multiculturalism (i.e., race-related courses, multicultural counseling courses, elective courses focusing on sexual orientation) will no doubt be tasked to wrestle with intersections, commonalities, and potential disparities.

**Scholarship and Research on Sexual Orientation Issues in Graduate Psychology**

**Training.** Despite having existing stances around sexual orientation issues by governing bodies of psychology, concerns still remain as to how mental health professionals truly acquire the skill and training needed to work with sexual minority individuals (Bieschke et al., 1998; Godfrey et al., 2006; Grove, 2009; Perosa et al., 2008; Rutter, Estrada, Ferguson, & Diggs, 2008; Sherry, Whilde, & Patton, 2005). Many of these concerns lie in the actual translation of guidelines issued by APA. As illustration, the guidelines state that students should acquire the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to work with sexual minority concerns; this objective, however, is a more daunting endeavor, as the pedagogy to achieve the goals must be calculated and deliberate. Indeed, graduate faculty must be intentional when infusing sexual orientation issues into their teaching, especially with courses that are not elective courses in multiculturalism. In
any case, more focused research inquiries, such as the current one, are needed to address concerns related to student growth around sexual orientation concerns.

Previous scholars and researchers have gained an understanding of how trainees, themselves, assess their own personal and professional development around working with sexual orientation in their professional work. One of the earliest studies, conducted by Buhrke (1989), sampled 213 female counseling psychology doctoral students to better understand their individual perceptions of how lesbian and gay issues were incorporated into their respective training programs. In this sample, approximately 30% of participants found absolutely no incorporation of sexual orientation issues into their coursework; those participants who did encounter topics surrounding sexual orientation in their classes reported doing so at an average of just one course across their whole curriculum. At the time of participation, students indicated they were more uncomfortable seeing sexual minority clients in therapy than heterosexual clients; they also felt that supervision directly related to sexual minority clients was less effective than supervision with clients who were heterosexual. Perhaps most alarming was the participants’ overall negative perceptions of their graduate program’s inclusiveness toward sexual minority students. Indeed, participants reported that they, in general, would not suggest disclosing a sexual orientation status that was not heterosexual to the greater faculty and student body. Finally, participants noted there being minute access to effective role models (e.g., faculty, supervisors) that were either lesbian or gay themselves, or who conducted sexual orientation research openly within the department.

Having affirmative educators seems particularly salient given the previous findings, as well as those elicited from Pilkington and Cantor’s (1996) later study addressing ways bias and discrimination can be emphasized across entire campus communities. These researchers sampled
64 graduate psychology students in clinical, counseling, or school psychology programs who were also members of Division 44 (i.e., Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues) of the APA. Participants in their sample completed written surveys describing their perceptions of heterosexist bias perceived to exist in their training programs. Particular emphasis was placed on the heterosexist slant in course materials (e.g., textbooks, course assignments), verbal statements made by faculty, and other forms of discrimination against sexual minority people. Participants reported their faculty’s support for LGBT issues as existing along a continuum ranging from feigned support to open hostility. Some participants reported experiencing discouragement or lack of support in studying LGBT-related topics from their educators, while others experienced overt homophobic remarks and actions that bordered on threatening. These challenges were experienced across classroom interactions, within practicum experiences, and also within teaching assistantships supervised by faculty who were perceived to be non-affirming.

Phillips and Fischer (1998) continued to find discrepancies between graduate students’ preparation and their perceived ability to work therapeutically with sexual orientation concerns. Using a mixed-method design, these authors sampled 108 doctoral students from 50 randomly selected APA-accredited doctoral programs in Counseling and Clinical Psychology (25 each). A survey created specifically for the study was offered to participants; this survey asked participants to openly reflect on their overall training experiences with respect to courses, inclusion of sexual orientation issues in training, practicum experiences, and visibility of affirmative faculty members. In addition, participants took a 25-item self-report measure capturing their attitudes toward gay and lesbian people. The authors noted how a majority of their sample reported feeling ill-equipped to work effectively with gay and lesbian clients.
Interestingly, graduate students from counseling psychology doctoral programs consistently reported feeling more prepared to work with sexual orientation issues than their clinical and school counterparts. Specifically, participants felt deficient in their ability to work with clients who do not subscribe to the typical sexual dichotomy (i.e., heterosexual, lesbian/gay). These authors also reported that nearly 75% of participants indicated not having sexual orientation included on comprehensive examinations. Further, the number of articles read dealing with sexual orientation, the number of sexual minority clients seen during a clinical practicum, and the number of didactic hours spent discussing sexual orientation during practicum each had a mode of 0. Finally, only 15% of the represented graduate programs sampled offered courses that specifically focused on sexual orientation or encouraged heterosexual students to openly examine their personal biases when working with sexual minority clients.

Soon after the publication of Phillips and Fischer’s (1998) piece, Wiederman and Sansone (1999) conducted a larger scale study sampling all APA-accredited psychology doctoral programs, as well as all APA-accredited pre-doctoral internship sites; the authors’ global objective was to gauge how well sexual orientation issues were represented within the training context. Wiederman and Sansone’s study is significant given its representation of training experiences across academic and clinical training settings in professional psychology. Out of all of the disseminated surveys, these authors obtained a final sample size of 323 training programs. Within this sample, 860 full-time faculty and 6,436 full-time doctoral students represented academic programs, while 2,688 full-time faculty and 1,141 full-time interns represented internship programs. Participants in this study completed a one-page questionnaire regarding their demographics, faculty members’ expertise areas, and how they perceived sexual orientation being covered within their training programs. The authors reported that over 80% of the doctoral
programs and more than 70% of pre-doctoral internship sites (i.e., a definitive increase from Phillips and Fischer’s (1998) study) reported training with regard to issues surrounding sexual orientation. Participants indicated that this training occurred across a variety of formats including coursework, practica, and professional seminars. Of note, however, is the underlying assumption of the training directors at internship sites: the matriculating interns would have had adequate training in sexual orientation issues. The same was said for training directors of academic doctoral programs; they, too, admitted to assuming that students would receive further training (and subsequent hands-on experience) with sexual orientation issues at their clinical internship site.

The research around sexual orientation training within professional psychology training programs then slowed. The next significant contribution occurred when Sherry and colleagues (2005) conducted an empirical study on the inclusion of sexual orientation into graduate level coursework. These authors forwarded surveys to training directors at APA accredited doctoral programs in Counseling and Clinical Psychology; their resulting sample consisted of 104 completed questionnaires. Within their survey packet was a modified version of the Multicultural Competency Checklist (see Ponterotto, Alexander, & Grieger, 1995) that addressed how sexual orientation issues were represented in training curriculum, research, practice, supervision, and overall department climate. Of their sample, 71% of doctoral programs reported having sexual orientation issues visible within their required coursework. Additionally, approximately 89% of programs sampled indicated that their doctoral students gained exposure to sexual minority clientele while completing outside practicum experiences. This finding is in direct contrast to that of Phillips and Fischer (1998) who found that most students reported having little to no experience working with sexual orientation in their clinical practica.
Academic programs seem to be attending to sexual orientation issues in training; what remains uncertain is how and what exactly trainees are learning. Biaggio, Orchard, Larson, Petrino, and Mihara (2003) argue that preparing new clinicians to increase awareness, knowledge, and skills related to how sexual orientation enters into the clinical milieu begins first with the educators charged to train them. Indeed, novice counselors who have little or no historical context in which to hold sexual orientation issues will require not only an adequate introduction, but more specifically, concrete tools to meet the needs of their sexual minority clients. Faculty themselves must acknowledge their own beliefs and experiences about sexual orientation so they can stay as objective as possible in presenting material to students. Pilkington and Cantor (1996) highlight how faculty can wrongly misuse their positions of power within the confines of academic training programs to encourage heterosexist and homophobic treatment of clients. For example, student participants in their research sample shared numerous verbatim statements offered by faculty within their classrooms pathologizing, ridiculing, and stereotyping sexual minority people; there were even suggestions from faculty around the possibility of helping clients change their sexual minority status. These statements issued by faculty can have lasting effects and extend well beyond degree completion. In fact, there have been a number of published works detailing the attitudes and beliefs toward sexual orientation held by therapists who have graduated from their programs and our now practicing (e.g., Garnets, Hancock, Cochran, Goodchilds, & Peplau, 1991; Jordan & Deluty, 1995). Results from these studies have been mixed; some suggest a change in negative attitudes and beliefs toward sexual minority clients, while others have indicated non-affirming attitudes and beliefs being translated from the classroom to the practice realm.
Fortunately, the majority of graduate psychology programs now teach students ways to affirm and celebrate sexual minority clients rather than pathologize them. This trend has gained momentum with successive generations of graduate students. In other words, newer clinicians who are emerging from graduate training programs show more LGB affirming attitudes paired with greater skill and awareness in attending to sexual orientation in the counseling room than students from earlier generational cohorts. This finding is corroborated by a study conducted by Kilgore, Sideman, Amin, Baca, and Bohanske (2005), which showed a significant generational effect on exposure to formalized training on sexual orientation. In their study, 32% of psychologists who were in the 30- to 39-age bracket reported receiving some training on how to provide affirmative therapy to sexual minority individuals. This finding was significantly different from those obtained from older cohorts of psychologists in the age ranges of 60-69 and older than 70, of which only 9% and 11%, respectively, received training related to working with sexual orientation issues. Although these authors do not report or directly comment on the same data obtained from participants in the middle-age brackets, it can be assumed that exposure and confidence in working with sexual minority concerns is negatively associated with time of graduation based on their interpretation of study findings.

The empirical works described above show promise: training programs are introducing greater visibility of sexual orientation issues within their curriculums. Indeed, when comparing more recent findings from those found in earlier works shows that students are finally gaining additional opportunities in the classroom and in clinical settings that expose them to sexual minority issues. What seems relevant now is how sexual minority concerns are impacted, or changed, in light of other psychosocial variables. Contemporary empirical inquiries, such as the one currently being proposed, not only tracks the degree to which sexual orientation issues
continue to be visible within training programs, but also offers further process contributions to the literature (e.g., how sexual orientation intersects with race in training).

There have been numerous suggestions proffered by scholars to increase student involvements with sexual orientation issues in professional psychology programs. These suggestions occur across varying levels (e.g., pedagogy, administration, mentorship) and are suggested to be complementary to the existing multicultural foci already emphasized in many training programs. For example, Phillips and Fischer (1998) noted how programs could target specific interventions at the faculty level via in-service presentations or colloquium training opportunities for those who are already on staff. An even stronger approach would be to have academic departments engage new faculty searches aimed at recruiting sexual minority faculty. This latter suggestion is salient given how useful it can be to have openly identified faculty within training departments who can serve as advisors (or even role models) for other faculty and students (Bieschke et al., 1998; Buhrke & Douce, 1991; Israel & Selvidge, 2003). Indeed, having faculty with who openly celebrate their sexual minority identities offers invaluable opportunities for students and faculty alike; moreover, these individuals can serve as a recruitment mechanism for future graduate students who would likely view an openly lesbian/gay/bisexual faculty member as being synonymous with sexual orientation visibility within the department.

Bieschke and colleagues (1998) highlighted the need for faculty to create and maintain active research agendas inclusive of sexual orientation issues. Since it is fairly common for faculty to share research findings and published studies with their colleagues, active discussion of said findings undoubtedly leads to greater inter-faculty dialogue around sexuality. Additionally, fostering the development of student research efficacy (i.e., in general and related to sexual orientation) is another way that faculty can encourage active, inclusive research
experiences for their students. Finally, these authors commented on the importance of simply being available to students who are interested in LGB-related research to discuss obstacles, concerns, or fears around pursuing this line of research.

One of the most notable ways in which graduate departments, and the faculty teaching within them, can incorporate sexual orientation issues in training is with adjustments in pedagogy and overall curriculum (Grove, 2009). With respect to the teaching that occurs in graduate programs, faculty themselves have opportunities to create learning initiatives, course assessments, and in-class dialogues that challenge students’ perceptions around privilege and oppression. Moreover, the classroom is an ideal place for graduate students to address their own personal responsibility in creating and maintaining varying degrees of oppression in their surrounding communities.

Gaining insight and awareness from personal exploration was one salient finding illustrated in an Adlephi study conducted by Godfrey and colleagues (2006). Participants in this study endorsed that exploration around students’ personal sexual orientation journeys and their relationship with heterosexism led to meaningful reflection at individual and systemic levels. A more recent study conducted by Sheets and colleagues (2012) further corroborates personal exploration as being instrumental in their qualitative study on graduate students who completed an elective course on sexual orientation. Participants in this course were asked to reflect on their own identity journeys (i.e., not just around sexual orientation) and then share these journeys with the class as a whole. Nearly all participants in the study indicated that this type of “journey exercise” not only encouraged them to think of their own identity formation and continued maintenance, but also how best to express these identities to others.
Creating safe but challenging opportunities for graduate students to focus on self-exploration should be integrated into all graduate coursework; however, there is definitely a place for such focus in specialized courses addressing discussions of human difference (i.e., general and specialized courses on diversity and multiculturalism). The task for faculty, then, is to identify and maximize how to engage such difficult reflection within their classroom environments. Rather than relying on moment-to-moment decision-making, faculty should be proactive and deliberate in how they promote interactions between their students, especially when their students are pushed into meaningful zones of discomfort. Research inquiries, such as the current one, specifically speak to this; learning about how faculty foster student growth and development when holding issues of race and sexual orientation together in the same classroom could be beneficial and suggest needed changes in pedagogy.

Encouraging discussions on sexual orientation should not be limited to multicultural classrooms, as some scholars believe that faculty can highlight sexual orientation issues broadly across coursework. For example, Buhrke and Douce (1991) offer extensive illustration around how they believe sexual orientation connects to a counseling psychology framework. Within their discussion, these authors suggest the following list of courses where lesbian/gay/bisexual issues could be easily included: introductory counseling courses, theory courses, group counseling courses, career counseling courses, professional issues seminars, practicum courses, assessment courses, research courses, and multicultural counseling courses. Not only do these authors suggest the list of potential courses but also they offer detailed explanations and suggestions for each that are supported by published scholarship and research.

More recently, Betz (2010) offered additional suggestions for how faculty could incorporate sexual orientation into the courses in which they teach. She strongly emphasized the
need for greater self-reflection on the part of faculty so that they are better able to recognize their own biases and beliefs regarding sexual minority individuals, as well as their personal feelings around incorporating sexual orientation material into their classroom experiences. This suggestion mirrors that proffered above by Godfrey and colleagues (2006), as well as Sheets and colleagues (2012), with the only difference being a focus on faculty themselves rather than their students. Betz then describes how faculty can invite support from other professionals regarding current literature and material that can be used as bibliographic references, or for the purposes of exams and in-class exercises. Related to access of resources, Bahr, Brish, and Croteau (2000) suggest how faculty can easily locate reference lists, articles, professional resource lists, and texts that support their pedagogical needs. Faculty support is not, however, relegated to academic or professional societies only: it can include information and speaking engagements offered by guest speakers from the community (Betz). Incorporating guest speakers (or panels) into classroom discussions provides students an alternative perspective on how sexual minority issues prevail in their surrounding communities. The most salient outcome of such talks is the incorporation of “in-voice” examples that could trigger better real-world application.

The decision of how and when to incorporate issues of sexual orientation into graduate classrooms does not fall solely on the shoulders of faculty members; there is a responsibility for training programs, as a whole, to address how sexual orientation places into overall curriculum. Grove (2009) asserted that one of the most significant decisions required of training programs is whether to devote an entire course to counseling sexual minorities versus a more traditional, infused approach that incorporates sexual orientation material within the context of other coursework. Similarly, Israel and Selvidge (2003) contended that sexual orientation might best fit within the purview of multicultural courses; however, they also proffered that multicultural-
type courses often leave sexual orientation out completely or address it peripherally in ways that are not as meaningful to students. Designing entire courses on sexual orientation, although likely the most comprehensive option, poses many logistical problems given space limitations that are already experienced due to stringent accreditation standards. For many graduate programs, however, there usually is some requirement that allows for students to engage in complimentary elective coursework, such as a course on sexual orientation.

**Graduate Students’ Experiences of Specialized Coursework in Sexual Orientation**

**Issues.** Despite arguments within the literature that sexual orientation is not fully represented in graduate psychology curriculum (Godfrey et al., 2006; Grove, 2009; Perosa et al., 2008; Rutter et al., 2008), great strides have been made to better train students on sexual orientation issues (Sherry et al., 2005). In fact, a number of graduate psychology programs are not only carving out places for affirmative sexual orientation training within already existing courses, but also are now offering elective courses that focus entirely on sexual orientation (see Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Concerns Office, 2009). Having access to a full course experience is likely different from addressing sexual orientation issues peripherally in other classes, but there has been little research conducted in this area to determine how and to what extent these differences truly exist.

There have been a number of scholarly and empirical contributions made in the higher education disciplines exploring student experiences in sexual orientation-specific coursework. For example, Cavin (1991) wrote about her experiences teaching a women’s studies undergraduate course titled “Homosexuality and Society.” In this scholarly piece, Cavin provides the reader her entire syllabus and then describes in more detail her experiences with teaching the course. She noted the precarious balance between promoting academic learning (i.e., via the
dissemination of information, dates, influential leaders, etc.) while still promoting personal
growth within her students. Additionally, she discussed the need for caution when navigating
how students with extreme viewpoints enter a course like hers. For example, Cavin reported that
every sexual orientation course she taught had at least a few students who were either extremely
homophobic, or overly aggressive in their views on gay rights.

Ji, Du Bois, and Finnessy (2009) added to the previous scholarly work by conducting an
empirical study encompassing the experiences of students undergoing coursework focused solely
on sexual orientation issues. Participants in this qualitative inquiry were 11 undergraduate
students enrolled in the honors college at a four-year university. The elective course that these
participants chose to enroll in was designed to help students become better allies to the
lesbian/gay/bisexual community. Some of the more relevant findings in this inquiry were that
students required direct guidance and support from their peers, as well as their instructor, on how
best to navigate the complexities surrounding sexual orientation. The emotional experience of
resolving conflict (i.e., either in their personal lives or in society) around the intersection of
sexual orientation with other variables (e.g., religion) was particularly poignant for many
participants. Additionally, participants utilized the different components of the course (e.g.,
presentations, writing projects) to engage the process of becoming a heterosexual ally.
Interestingly, the authors of this study noted how participants each had their individually
constructed ideas and conceptions of what constituted a successful ally and how these
conceptions helped frame new awareness and discussions among the class as a whole.

There have also been scholarly accounts suggesting ways that sexual orientation could be
included within classes that did not focus entirely on sexual orientation. For example, Gyory and
Tran (2002) describe a detailed experiential exercise that can be used to highlight sexual
orientation issues for students. In their example, students are asked to take part in an in-class stereotype exercise where they generate lists of popular stereotypes found in society. Students were then led through a visualization exercise where they were placed into virtual worlds where these sexual minority stereotypes were their reality. Following the visualization, participants were asked to provide written reflections that were later read to the class in their entirety. Final feedback was elicited from all participants, as well as a guided group reflection where participants were encouraged to process the exercise. These authors described several qualitative examples offered by students from a graduate-level student development theory course after they engaged in the above exercise. Students reported that the exercise utilized a different type of learning style that allowed students to reflect before being required to process. Students also shared that the exercise promoted inclusivity and allowed students to be at different places while still hearing alternative viewpoints.

Pearson (2003) offered an example used in one of her past general graduate counselor education courses that emphasized sexual orientation. More specifically, this author intentionally introduced topics dealing with oppression and heterosexism, mental health risks, sexual identity development, and “coming out” into her professional seminar courses. In addition to having her students read journal articles in preparation for the sexual orientation seminar, Pearson also utilized a number of creative avenues to facilitate active discussion. Some of these creative approaches included the use of poetry and music, mediums which allowed for a different kind of emotional expression within the classroom. Following the reading and listening of multimedia material, students were then engaged in a process dialogue. Data was obtained from a group of master’s level community counseling students following the completion of this sexual orientation-specific seminar. This author first compared averages obtained surrounding students’
self-reported knowledge, interest, and attitudes with respect to sexual orientation. Pre-course evaluations showed averages for the above to be, 51, 55, and 60, respectively, while post-course evaluations found the same values to be 72, 77, and 79, respectively. Additionally, students provided a number of positive, written comments around the classroom activities and how the exposure of sexual orientation-specific material helped students visualize helping a gay, lesbian, or bisexual client.

A recent empirical study conducted by Sheets and colleagues (2012) addressed how graduate students in psychology and education experience an elective course devoted entirely to sexual orientation issues. This unpublished study is particularly relevant to this dissertation research in that it illuminates how sexual orientation intersections can occur alongside of other diversity variables such as race, religion, and spirituality in the graduate classroom. These authors completed a phenomenological investigation with 10 masters- and doctoral-level counselor trainees who were in graduate counseling, psychology, and higher education programs at a medium-sized Midwestern university. These authors sampled participants immediately following the end of a 15-week, semester-long course and interviewed them using a semi-structured format on two separate occasions. The first interview gathered an initial set of data that were analyzed; the second interview served as a member-check and allowed participants to clarify any unclear findings, as well as offer additional data as they deemed appropriate.

A number of findings from this study have implications for the proposed research inquiry, and psychological training, overall (Sheets et al., 2012). First, participants noted how their course experience led to an acquisition of new knowledge, as well as a deepening of previously learned knowledge for those who had already been introduced to some sexual orientation information. Second, participants offered numerous examples of personal movement
in their own sexual orientation identities and how the structure of the course (e.g., assignments, in-class discussions) facilitated said movement. Finally, all participants commented extensively on the challenges met around topics related to race and spirituality; more specifically, participants found the negotiation of their personal, as well as their family’s, relationships with race, racism, religion, and spirituality to be challenging and sometimes painful. This latter finding is particularly significant given the aim of the current research inquiry’s focus on how race and sexuality commingle within graduate psychology classrooms. Having limited data describing students’ perceptions of said comingling is only part of what occurs in the classroom; it would be helpful to discover if faculty have similar or different perceptions of race and sexual orientation emerging alongside of one another.

**Race and Professional Psychology.** How race issues are addressed in professional psychology serves as the topic area for this third main section. Before discussing how race issues emerge in academic and professional training, as well as how they intersect with other multicultural variables, it is important to highlight how they generally fit within the discipline of Psychology as a whole. To accomplish this objective, this third main section has 6 subsections: 1) the first subsection describes the multicultural terminology utilized throughout the dissertation project with scholarly definitions offered for multiculturalism, culture, race, racism, and ethnicity, as well as comparisons between them; 2) the second subsection offers a short review of how the American Psychological Association has issued calls highlighting the legitimacy of race and ethnicity issues in practice and training; 3) the third subsection reviews the scholarly and research contributions of counseling psychologists, specifically, emphasizing their leadership with respect to race issues; the fourth subsection describes relevant research and scholarship related to graduate training on issues pertaining to race; the fifth subsection summarizes
scholarship and research around students’ experiences of multicultural coursework; and 6) the final subsection discusses students’ experiences with coursework that is devoted entirely to race.

**Terminology.** Terms associated with multiculturalism are often used interchangeably when they should be viewed as distinct constructs. Serving as a general umbrella term, multiculturalism encompasses numerous attributes, all of which inform individuals’ personal identities. For example, multiculturalism represents a broad focus on sexual orientation, gender, social class, race, ethnicity, age, disability status, religiosity/spirituality, education status, as well as any other human differences that set individuals apart from one another (American Psychological Association, 2003). This term can be confused with that of culture, which represents an entire personal belief system that is influenced by family, society, and institutions; culture is also referred to as a worldview that represent one’s past and current histories (American Psychological Association).

Moving beyond the generalized definitions described above are the more specific terms closely related to this research project: race, ethnicity, and racism. Delgado-Romero, Galvan, Machino, and Rowland (2005) demarcated the complexities with viewing race and ethnicity as distinct, but related, concepts. These authors asserted how both terms create discomfort and confusion, and as a result, they emphasized the importance of sharpening awareness and understanding around how race and ethnicity as represented in individuals’ lives. For the purposes of this research inquiry, race will be defined as groups of people with similar phenotypic characteristics (e.g., hair, skin color, eye color) (McAuliffe, Gomez, & Grothaus, 2008). Although appearing to be based purely in biology, the concept of race is one that has been socially constructed, having its evolution dependent on society and the people within it (Delgado-Romero et al.; Pope-Davis, & Liu, 1998). It is this notion of race that has historically
classified individuals into groups having clear delineations of what is acceptable, or successful, in mainstream society (McAuliffe et al., 2008). Fouad and Brown (2000) further contended that definitions of race require examination of historical and political characteristics that, when combined with visible phenotypic traits, indicates a “social stratification construct” (Fouad & Brown, p. 381). These authors believed that race influences individual behavior and that nuanced social and psychological consequences exist for individuals who are seen to be (or perceived to be) a racial minority.

On the other hand, ethnicity represents how individuals share commonalities linked by culture, geography, and custom (McAuliffe, Kim, & Park, 2008). Ethnic heritage is generally thought of as evolving along a continuum with blended dimensions that are not always clear-cut (Delgado-Romero et al., 2005). It is not uncommon (i.e., in professional practice, training, and writing) to see ethnicity confused with race. Fouad and Brown (2000) provided a scholarly explanation for this typical confusion pointing first to researchers’ need to oversimplify constructs carrying emotional weight. These authors further argued that conflating race and ethnicity minimizes the complexity of individual experience; in other words, researchers and scholars often know very little about how one truly identifies with respect to race and ethnic grouping, nor do they have a comprehensive understanding of the multiple contexts that individual has lived through; as a result, oversimplifying the terms aligns with the limited knowledge. For the purposes of this inquiry, these constructs (i.e., race and ethnicity), when possible, are separated. However, the identified labels or terminology used in the studies or conceptual pieces reviewed are distinguished in an effort to maintain consistency with the original authors’ voice and intention.
The construct of racism, as is represented in the current research inquiry, is guided by the definitions asserted by Sue (2005) in his presidential address to the Division of Counseling Psychology of the American Psychological Association. In this address, Sue draws attention to three distinct forms of racism: individual, institutional, and cultural. First, individual racism refers to any conscious act, intended or not, that in some way subordinates another individual based on a racial minority group membership. Historically, these acts are steeped in prejudice and discrimination, and can occur in overt, as well as covert ways. Institutional racism, however, focuses on the ways in which organizations, policies, and organized structures exhibit power over racial minority groups. This type of racism can often be seen in social structures where people of color are notoriously placed at a disadvantage from those in the White majority (e.g., income, access to healthcare, education). Finally, Sue notes how cultural racism is the mechanism by which individual and institutional racism are continually fueled; this form carries an assumption that there are culturally superior groups that are dominant, and as such, exert control and power over those groups who exist within the minority.

Professional Psychology’s Commitment to Multiculturalism and Race. Newer generations of psychologists are now witnessing what it is like to be part of a profession that celebrates multicultural awareness and training. Focus on issues of race and multiculturalism, however, has not always been considered at the forefront of professional psychology. In their review on models of multicultural counseling, Ponterotto, Fuertes, and Chen (2000), paying tribute to D. W. Sue and Janet Helms for their work around cross-cultural counseling competency and racial identity, discuss the emergence of multicultural and race ideas within the profession. In fact, Ponterotto and colleagues highlighted how the work of these two seminal
psychologists encompassed the entirety of available scholarship and research around race and multicultural issues during the 80s.

The discipline of Psychology during the 80s started gaining momentum in the next decade around multicultural issues with graduate faculty and clinical supervisors legitimizing the need for better training and experience. This newfound attention focused broadly on human difference, often citing the term “multiculturalism” to describe how one conceptualizes diversity across a number of variables; contemporary scholars, however, feel such generalizations can permit some degree of safety from directly addressing issues pertaining to race (Buckley & Foldy, 2010). Indeed, scholars have noted that the generalization and lack of operationalization around multicultural competence has hurt the counseling professions (Sanchez-Hucus & Jones, 2005).

It was not until the late 80s that APA orchestrated a thorough review of the psychological needs of ethnic and racial minority populations. A task force was generated to address the delivery of services to ethnic minority individuals including a number of scholars, researchers, and practitioners; these individuals created a set of nine guidelines that are still referenced to this day. As with similar guidelines issued for working with sexual minority individuals (described above), these guidelines are meant to be aspirational rather than fully achievable at all times. The following provides a brief synopsis of these guidelines: 1) psychologists must provide psychoeducation to their clients around the counseling process, limits to confidentiality, and overall informed consent, 2) psychologists should be aware and knowledgeable about the particular population they are serving, 3) psychologists must accept that one’s ethnicity and cultural heritage influences the counseling process, 4) psychologists should provide space within treatment to accommodate one’s cultural history (e.g., family members, institutions, etc.), 5)
psychologists should respect differences in, and expressions of, religiosity and/or spirituality, 6) psychologists should make every intention to communicate with their minority clients in the language they prefer or provide a suitable referral if this is not possible, 7) psychologists must consider political and societal implications that may impact the treatment relationships, 8) psychologists should endeavor to recognize and eliminate any prejudice, bias, or other stereotype that could impede treatment, and 9) psychologists should record any salient cultural factors in their documentation.

A significant update to the above guidelines occurred in 2003, drawing from newly available scholarship and research, as well as anecdotal evidence obtained from practicing psychologists (American Psychological Association, 2003). The new guidelines were more streamlined and provide an added focus on the importance of organizational change. The following provides a brief summary of the updated guidelines: 1) psychologists need to recognize that they themselves hold beliefs and attitudes that influence their work with others, 2) psychologists should employ cultural sensitivity and responsiveness when working with diverse clientele, 3) psychologists should promote the education of multiculturalism in academic training, 4) Psychologists must employ sound, research that is culturally and ethically appropriate, and which includes minority populations, 5) psychologists who are providing clinical services should be considering how multicultural influences are affecting clients’ lives, and finally, 6) psychologists should use their expertise to implement institutional and organizational change with respect to multiculturalism (American Psychological Association).

One other way that the psychological communities hold issues of multiculturalism and race at the forefront is the development and continued maintenance of the biennial National Multicultural Conference and Summit (NMCS). This conference first began in 1999, when
leading psychologists identified an increase in mental health needs for minority populations; at the same time, these leaders noticed that emerging psychologists were ill-equipped to meet these needs. Sue and colleagues (1999) shared in their American Psychologist article introducing the NMCS that early connections between culturally-oriented divisions of APA (e.g., Society for the Psychology of Women; Society for the psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues, etc.) began having critical discussions and cross-collaborations because of this conference.

**Counseling Psychology as a Leader in the Study of Race Issues.** As with their commitment to sexual orientation research, training, and practice, counseling psychologists have been front-runners in how professional psychology attends to issues of race. Indeed, counseling psychologists have been “on the scene,” so to speak, for the last three decades, delving into issues related to definition, construction, and execution of research and scholarship agendas focusing on race (Delgado-Romero et al., 2005). It seems pertinent, then, to include discussion surrounding this attention given that the current research inquiry attempts to highlight how race-related issues can emerge alongside of other diversity variables (i.e., sexual orientation) in graduate classrooms.

Earlier conceptualizations around the role of race in professional psychology have emerged from a reactive place, emphasizing the destructive forces inherent in the discrimination and oppression committed against people of color; current attentions, however, are more proactive, showing a refreshing openness to how our field can better attend to issues of race in our work as psychologists (Neville & Carter, 2005). Rather than focusing purely on the existence of negative consequences as they relate to racist oppression, newer paradigms are seeking to promote greater understanding on how to positively change societal climates. Additionally, changes in political structures over the past few decades have decreased stigma and stereotyping
around race with an evolving goal to better integrate people of color and minority issues across social structures (e.g., housing, education) (Bell, 2002).

Another significant contribution from counseling psychologists in the realm of race relations lies in their development of scholarly and empirical agendas placing race at the forefront of multicultural training. It seems important to mention these contributions since this study focuses on the experience of faculty members, many of whom are teaching various iterations of multicultural counseling in their graduate courses. Indeed, several of the most respected models of multicultural counseling and supervision currently being referenced and utilized emerged out of the counseling psychology community. Constantine and Sue (2005) summarize several of these models.

Prioritizing diversity and multicultural issues is salient given the changing sociopolitical climate in the United States, especially with respect to demographic evolutions being captured by current census data (Casas, 2005). Indeed, American society has become much more racially diverse, such that in some locations, the number of racial minority populations has increased above and beyond that of the White majority. That is not to say that this rise will in any way contribute to how the White majority continues to understand and/or assert their racial privilege, but it seems noteworthy, nonetheless. One question that remains, then, is how emerging psychologists attend to such changes across individual and systemic levels.

Delgado-Romero and colleagues (2005) published a review article highlighting their interpretation of how counseling psychologists attend to race and ethnicity, as well as how researchers disseminated study findings. These authors began their review by noting the challenges of accurately representing racial diversity within empirical research. Much of this discussion revolved around methodological considerations and how unlikely it was for most
psychological inquiries to adequately attend to within-group differences in racial groups. At the heart of this review was an analysis of nearly 800 empirical research studies spanning major counseling psychology journals published in the 1990s. One of the authors’ original intentions with this review was to assess to what degree researchers and publishing outlets were reporting findings related to race and ethnicity. Across their identified journals, authors reported a significant increase (i.e., from 26% to 86%) in empirical studies that captured race- and ethnicity-related data; however, these authors cautioned the superficial interpretation of these results given their comments that reporting was not consistent across all studies. Even so, these data imply a clear increase in visibility with how counseling psychologists conceptualize race in their samples.

Advances in scholarship and research can then inform how psychologists attend to issues of race in their clinical practice. This, in some ways, connects to the proposed research inquiry since it focuses on how faculty are engaging their students in the classroom around issues pertaining to race in broader treatment communities. Related to practice issues, Pope-Davis and Liu (1998) commented on the need for clinicians to participate in their own personal self-reflection around how definitions of race factor into their lives, as well as how these definitions may or may not be in concert with those of current and future clients. These authors further reminded clinicians that clients attribute their own histories and cultures to how they typically define race, which again requires the need for careful exploration on the part of the clinician.

Beyond simple definitions of race, and how these definitions emerge in therapy, Utsey, Gernat, and Hammar (2005) offered empirical evidence aimed at how White counselors in training respond when confronted with racist experiences in therapy and supervision. These authors employed a qualitative, focus group methodology with 8 masters- and doctoral-level
counselor trainees who were in their first and second years of training. A number of interesting findings emerged from this study; however, the two most significant themes captured related to the emergence of counselor trainees’ awareness of their White racial consciousness, and how trainees managed discomfort that arose when racial issues were raised.

Scholarship and Research on Race Issues in Graduate Psychology Training. One outcome emerging from the first NMCS in the late 90s was how important training and education is at preparing new psychologists to work effectively in a multicultural society (Sue et al., 1999). Scholars at this event proposed that the best way to bolster multicultural and race-related training and education was for departments to consider a total curriculum reform. Incorporating multicultural inclusivity into courses can occur in a number of ways, one of which involves subscribing to a separate course model approach. This approach is the simplest, only requiring the implementation of one multiculturally identified course that students would be required to take (e.g., Multicultural Counseling; Diversity Issues in Psychology). The second possibility proposed at this conference, known as the “area of concentration model,” intentionally incorporates multicultural topics and activities across more than one course (e.g., discussing race issues across multiple courses). A third model involves an interdisciplinary approach where students can supplement their coursework outside of their academic department (e.g., taking diversity courses in Social Work or Sociology). The final and most comprehensive approach follows the “integration model,” which incorporates multicultural material in every required course (Sue et al.).

No matter how they are intentionally placed, topics of race can surface naturally in classroom discussions and activities. In fact, one of the lines of research inquiry, in both the Education and Psychology literatures, encompasses how the phenotypic race of university
faculty and students influences classroom experiences. Indeed, when students and faculty meet for the first time, is the racial composition of the class is noted; these realizations are usually not fully processed, however. To address perceptions and experiences of faculty race, Harlow (2003) conducted a qualitative empirical study with 58 full-time university faculty who teach at predominantly white institutions. Focus of this research inquiry compared how White and Black faculty members perceived their race influencing their overall teaching experiences.

The above author (i.e., Harlow, 2003) indicates significant discrepancy between how White and Black faculty experienced their race in the classroom. White faculty members rarely had to anticipate or worry about how students would react to the color of their skin, while Black faculty often considered this when meeting their students for the first time. Similarly, White faculty admitted to rarely considering how their visible race might affect student perceptions of them. Most Black participants, however, offered contrasting experiences: they felt that students questioned their authority and overall credentials based on their skin color. This finding was most salient for Black, female-identified participants who believed gender to be a mediating or moderating factor around how they were perceived by students (and colleagues). Many of the Black participants demonstrated knowledge and examples of how race influenced classroom dynamics but did so with distance from their own experience. Said differently, Black faculty displayed how race, operating on a societal level, was important to consider in higher education, but required probing that illustrated personal experiences in the classroom. In fact, over half of the Black participants denied their race as having any influence on their teaching strategies and classroom experiences, but instead internalized, or made self-deprecating excuses for why they were feeling uncomfortable or slighted by students. Despite downplaying their personal race, a majority of the Black faculty discussed their need to over-prepare lectures and classroom
activities, appear perfect and deserving to be in front of a classroom, and in control (authoritatively) of student behavior. In contrast, White faculty were often seen to downplay their credentials to appear more approachable and did not perceive as much challenge to their position (Harlow).

When faculty do engage difficult dialogues around race in the classroom, navigating these dialogues can carry an emotional charge for all involved; scholars have asserted that graduate faculty in psychology not only need to recognize when difficult dialogues occur but also be able to facilitate them since students are known to carry a high level of resistance around such conversations, especially around topics of race (Sanchez-Hucles & Jones, 2005). Sue, Torino, Capodilupo, Rivera, and Lin (2009) drew attention to how such dialogues increase students’ exposure to race, but highlight how faculty sometimes struggle to perceive dialogues occurring. In their study of graduate psychology faculty members, nearly all participants were wary of two distinct things occurring: losing control of their classrooms and not successfully navigating the emotionally-charged nature of racial discussions.

Faculty members perceived their students to have affective and behavioral reactions when race was being discussed (Sue et al., 2009). Perceived affective reactions included anxiety, anger, defensiveness, and sadness, all of which lie within the negative spectrum of emotional expression. Some of these feelings were perceived to occur even before race was overtly addressed; participants noted they could sense a build-up in the emotional intensity of the room, as if students were rallying themselves for a difficult interaction with others. Behaviorally speaking, participants perceived their students to handle discussions around race either by crying, rising up and simply leave the classroom, or withdrawing from the discussion. Study participants attributed these behavioral perceptions to be based either in general disinterest in racial topics or
fear of actively engaging. While commenting on their perceptions of what was happening with students, faculty participants also indicated powerful emotions arising within themselves. These affective states included anxiety, disappointment, and a sense of uncertainty. Although Sue et al. (2011) did not specifically discuss an interaction process between faculty’s perceptions of their students with how they perceive their own experience when race is being discussed, it is not difficult to hypothesize there being one.

Findings from this study (Sue et al., 2011) closely align with the current dissertation topic, as it involves qualitatively addressing how faculty uniquely experience their classrooms when topics of race are either intentionally or unintentionally a main focal point. Where the current research topic extends these authors’ works lies within a significant adjustment in methodology: Sue et al. (2011) sampled a variety of faculty from the school of education and the school of social work, which although informative, does not speak directly to how counseling psychologists who are teaching graduate psychology courses experience difficult dialogues. Since counseling psychologists hold multicultural training as paramount and train numerous psychologists each year, it seems both relevant and rewarding to further this line of study.

Although the work described above focuses on faculty participants, much of the current research on difficult dialogues involving race tends to involve White psychology trainees. A good example of this work can be seen in a qualitative study published by Sue, Rivera, Capodilupo, Lin, and Torino (2010) that addresses how graduate trainees experience racial dialogues in the classroom. Participants for this study were 14 White counseling psychology students ranging in age, ethnicity, and program (i.e., masters and doctoral levels); study inclusion required participants to identify as White and have experienced difficult dialogues on race in classroom discussions. Once identified, participants took part in one of two focus groups where
researchers sought responses to several interview questions about their classroom experiences around race. Individual and group-level responses were then analyzed with a modified consensual qualitative research (CQR) process executed by a team of counseling psychology graduate students and faculty.

The first theme that emerged across participants encapsulated how White participants generally perceived race in society (Sue et al., 2010). Although the goal was to consider actual difficult dialogues students had experienced around race, all participants maintained distance from true events. That is, participants struggled to reference actual dialogues, speaking more in generalizations about issues such as White privilege, colorblindness, and not having stake in discussions surrounding race because of their Whiteness. In fact, most participants struggled to identify actual dialogues to reference and when they did, the dialogues were between others and not themselves. The second theme discussed by participants involved reactions they experienced when observing racial dialogues take place during class; these reactions were mostly negative, having participants reference feelings of inadequacy, fear, and confusion. The final theme highlighted different strategies that faculty and students could employ to increase the likelihood of making race discussions in class productive rather than problematic.

Sue et al. (2011) highlighted numerous effective and ineffective ways that faculty have navigated discussions of race in their classrooms. Participants indicated that simply ignoring that a racially-charged discussion was taking place, or instead allowing students themselves to facilitate such discussions were seen as problematic. More effective strategies can involve a number of faculty attributes and intervention strategies. For example, participants suggested one of the most important ways to facilitate racial discussions involved communicating openness to all emotions in the classroom, negative and positive, as well as indicating to students that their
classroom would be a safe place to discuss issues of race and diversity. Participants shared the importance of being aware of micro-aggressive behavior between students that could derail class movement. In addition, participants indicated that students and instructors should continue processing any difficult discussions or classroom interactions even after a particular class session ends. Finally, participants noted the importance of faculty disclosing their own individual challenges around race and racism.

Since there is indication that attending to race issues in the classroom is meaningful, how then can these difficult dialogues be strengthened or better incorporated? Sanchez-Hucles and Jones (2005) suggested one of the first things required of faculty and academic departments is to engage in a process of self- and institutional-analysis regarding racial identity and degree of commitment to multicultural education. At the institutional level, department faculty must decide how they plan to challenge students directly around race and other multicultural topics, knowing there will be mixed reactions from students, faculty, and possibly even individuals outside the department. Faculty members should be aware how their own race influences students’ ability to engage in racial dialogues during class. Similarly, White students who are being trained to counsel individuals must gain awareness of their own racial experience in the world; they must examine their socialization, unearned privileges, and assumptions surrounding race and racism (Bell, 2002; Sanchez-Hucles & Jones, 2005).

The last finding described above can be particularly challenging in light of the fact that a majority of graduate faculty in psychology are White. In fact, Bell (2002) believes that having a majority of teachers be of the White majority contributes to “a serious crisis for education” (p., 236) since owning one’s contribution and participation in the racial reality of America remains difficult for White individuals. Furthermore, faculty of color who teach at predominantly white
institutions rarely are encouraged to share their personal and classroom experiences, both of which could lead to the recruitment and retention of new faculty of color (Stanley, 2006). One of the aims of the present dissertation study is to give similar voice to faculty of color who are teaching diversity courses as their white counterparts.

*Graduate Students’ Experiences of Specialized Coursework in Multiculturalism.* The current research inquiry holds race at its core, some review of students’ general experiences of multicultural coursework is presented. This decision is mostly based on the fact that before receiving primary attention within the literature, the teaching of race in graduate classrooms was often subsumed under umbrella courses identifying multiculturalism as the main focus. Moreover, beginning with a discussion of multicultural courses shows the progression of how courses solely devoted to race emerged in the field.

One of the better research inquiries around the experiences of graduate students who complete coursework in multicultural counseling was conducted by Sammons and Speight (2008). In their mostly qualitative study, having over 120 participants, authors utilized a critical incidents technique that allowed participants to reflect on the following areas: 1) personal changes related to their course, 2) elements of their particular course that instigated personal change, and 3) whether any racial differences emerged for the previous two questions. Participants for this study included counselor trainees with varied education levels (i.e., master’s-level, doctoral level), as well as varied program emphases (i.e., Counseling Psychology, Clinical Psychology, School Psychology). All participants were sampled via an Internet methodology and were asked to respond to the above listed areas in writing. A majority of participants had only completed one multicultural counseling course, while a smaller number had completed multiple
courses, or courses that they believed had significant elements of multiculturalism incorporated within them.

Sammons and Speight (2008) utilized a constant comparative method for analyzing their results. They, along with one other experienced qualitative researcher, identified a number of salient themes that emerged from participants’ data. Related to personal changes experienced, participants first noted their increased knowledge around multicultural ideas, specifically with regard to how oppression and culture factored into society. Secondly, participants commented on having increased self-awareness around personal biases, identity development, status of privilege, and how one develops cultural competency. The third theme that emerged referred to attitudinal shifting that occurred as a result of their training within the multicultural counseling courses. For example, some participants noted changes in critical thinking, as well as decreases in the ways they held cultural biases. The fourth and final theme pointed toward changes in behavior that occurred across multiple vantage points. For example, some participants felt that they increased their advocation for cultural inclusivity, while others sought out additional training experiences in the areas of multiculturalism. Some participants even felt that their coursework had positively enhanced their interpersonal relationships by decreasing their use of biased language in their interactions with others.

The vehicle for participants’ personal change seemed to be directly related to how their multicultural courses were structured, as well as how the use of multimedia was used within them (Sammons & Speight, 2008). For example, activities in which students were exposed to selected films, lectures, and research findings, as well as overall exposure to real-time application (via roleplays and in-the-moment conversations with peers) were reported to facilitate student growth. Additionally, the influence of the instructor (e.g., personality, teaching
style) and any of the reflective exercises (e.g., journal-writing, formal paper-writing) were also seen as beneficial. Lastly, chi-square analyses were employed to test whether there were any racial differences in how individuals responded to study questions; no significant differences were found between people of color and their White counterparts.

Tomlinson-Clark (2000) utilized a similar qualitative framework in her investigation of students’ experiences undergoing a semester-long course in multicultural counseling. In her inquiry, she sampled 17 masters- and doctoral-level students in counseling psychology who had recently completed their multicultural counseling course; data from these participants came in the form of written course evaluations that were completed at the end of their course, as well as semi-structured interviews with the author four months later. A number of significant findings were revealed from this author’s work. First, participants emphasized a greater learning and understanding with respect to how multicultural issues present themselves in training and clinical environments. Also noteworthy were participants’ references to how diversity within the classroom positively impacted their understanding of course-related material. Finally, many participants admitted to feeling somewhat unprepared in managing their own personal self-awareness and self-knowledge as it related to their work in multiculturalism. In fact, there was even discussion among several participants involving how helpful it would be to supplement their required coursework in multiculturalism with an identified course that was completely devoted to the development of multicultural self-awareness.

Ways in which students can access multicultural coursework are not necessarily limited to departmental classrooms. Indeed, students can undergo didactic experience within their clinical placements that hold specific training initiatives related to multiculturalism. For example, Sevig and Etzkorn (2001) reflected on their experiences offering year-long
multicultural seminars to graduate student interns in psychology and social work at a university counseling center; these seminars were required of interns and generally met weekly for 1.5 hours. Authors discussed how their seminar approach was grounded in the assumptions that students learn most effectively when they are actively challenged on issues pertaining to multiculturalism and when they are offered multiple formats from which to learn. For example, students were typically introduced to process-related activities (e.g., classroom discussions, roleplays), varied topical discussions (e.g., theory, practice), scholarship and research (e.g., published articles), as well as guest speakers who could offer specialized training on particular topics. At the core of this seminar format was the ability for facilitators to recognize and process any inter-student conflicts, that were deliberate or not, while simultaneously maintaining a sense of control and safety within the classroom. These authors anecdotally reported that student interns typically experienced growth and success with their seminar approach and began incorporating better awareness and understanding in their future clinical work within the counseling center.

**Graduate Students’ Experiences of Specialized Coursework on Race.** Several authors have addressed the need for greater focus and precision around incorporating race into multicultural classrooms (e.g., Helms & Cook, 1999). Indeed, tensions have existed within the general multicultural arena around whether multicultural courses should be presented with more of an inclusive, versus race-based, focus (Croteau & Constantine, 2005). Inclusive structures guiding multicultural training provide students with material across a broad range of issues and populations with the intent of introducing them to a comprehensive multicultural experience. Sue and colleagues (1999) offered that this approach maximizes a greater representation of diverse groups while minimizing the possibility that those same groups will feel excluded or pitted
against one another for adequate visibility. Representative diversity notwithstanding, some scholars feel that the inclusive approach to multicultural education can distract from a purer focus on race. Helms and Cook suggest that attention to issues of race is largely missing in multicultural education programs. These authors contend that race continues to be an exhorting force on access to resources and the maintenance of oppressive societal and institutional hierarchies. Therefore, when faculty are not directly addressing the impact and unique challenges of race in the classroom, it is seen as limiting.

Attending to issues of race and racism in multicultural classrooms can be particularly challenging, however, due to the emotional charge that is often associated with them. For example, Miller and colleagues (2004) noted the tendency for instructors to steer away from discussions involving race by either changing the subject completely, or somehow discounting the experience of racial minority individuals in other contexts. In addition, the authors believed that faculty members have a responsibility to create classroom environments where students feel comfortable enough to actively engage in discourse; and thus, these authors offered several ways that faculty can attempt to derail rising animosity between students (Miller, Donner, & Fraser). One such way involves creating racially homogeneous caucus groups that create opportunities for students to debrief in a space that appears less volatile than a full-class discussion. This approach decreases individual vulnerability while allowing for collective discussions that can later be folded back into the full-class milieu.

The discounting that occurs when some faculty attempt to undermine the experience of racial minority individuals in other contexts can be done in overt, as well as covert ways, all of which can create tension and anxiety for all those involved. It is this very discomfort that continually erects barriers between individuals (and society at large), all the while fueling fears
and misperceptions that can attenuate emerging counselors’ ability to work effectively with human difference (Locke & Kiselica, 1999). As such, faculty and instructors have a responsibility to not only recognize, but also intervene appropriately when issues of marginalization, and racism specifically, emerge in their classrooms. Lock and Kiselica (1999) encouraged that faculty intervene by not steering away from providing gentle confrontation when oppressive behavior within the classroom arises. These authors pointed out the need for faculty to purposely include students of color in these confrontations since holding any minority status in no way precludes one from being oppressive to others.

Recognizing and then intervening in classroom situations where racially charged material arises should occur for the betterment of student progress. This, by no means, is an easy feat to accomplish; as such, it would be beneficial to gain a better understanding of the specific obstacles that often arise when faculty engage racial dialogues in their classes. Sue and colleagues (2009) conducted a qualitative investigation that addressed how White faculty perceive and react to explicit discussion around race in their classrooms. These authors conducted semi-structured interviews with eight White faculty members who were teaching in the schools of education and social work at one graduate institution. Their qualitative analyses showed an emergence of several themes that contributed to the difficulty that White faculty experienced recognizing and managing race issues effectively. First, all of the White faculty sampled discussed their fears of losing control of emotionally-charged dialogues, which could then, in turn, risk them losing control of the entire classroom dynamic. Secondly, participants noted how significantly their perceptions of student reactions, and their personal affective reactions, influenced their discussions of race. White faculty’s personal affective reactions ranged from anxiety for losing control of the classroom, to disappointment or uncertainty for not
properly containing classroom discussions when they arose. The third and fourth themes that emerged related specifically to participants’ access to training and experience in working with issues involving race. Participants mentioned feeling that their respective graduate programs did not adequately prepare them for working effectively with race and how important it was to gain outside educational experiences to supplement any perceived deficiencies. Additionally, personal knowledge and experience around cultural phenomena and a lack of experience dealing with racial discrimination were seen as deterrents. The fifth theme that emerged dealt primarily with how White faculty managed difficult dialogues when they did arise. Strategies included acknowledging the presence of challenging affective states, continuing dialogues beyond the initial conversation, and offering personal disclosure around challenges White faculty have experienced. Finally, and possibly the most interesting, was the final theme that dealt with simple awareness around the presence of difficult dialogues emerging around race. This latter finding can best be described via reports from two different participants; one participant noted feeling challenged to even recognize when dialogues around race became problematic, while the other participant reported that they had never had a difficult dialogue around race emerge in their classroom.

Perhaps more important for the purposes of this research inquiry is a similar study conducted by Sue and colleagues (2010) in which White graduate trainees in counseling psychology discussed their experiences when difficult dialogues on race emerged in their respective classrooms. These researchers conducted qualitative focus groups with 14 graduate students to ascertain (a) examples of difficult dialogues that emerged in classrooms, (b) what it was like to experience said dialogues, and (c) how they perceived racial micro-aggressions influenced their interactions with peers and faculty. A slightly modified version of CQR was
utilized to conduct data analysis; three salient domains emerged, each of which being comprised of multiple themes.

The first domain highlighted participants’ tendency to discuss race and racism more generally as opposed to attaching their reflections to individual classroom experiences (Sue et al., 2010). Interestingly, the emergent themes in this domain all highlighted a distance of sorts between participants and race. For example, many participants rejected their own Whiteness and the privileges associated with it but instead adopted a “colorblind” ideology that ignored the significance of skin color in today’s society. Moreover, approximately half of participants showed reluctance to engage in racial dialogues since they did not feel personally victimized by racism and nearly all participants expressed hesitation to discuss race due to fear of appearing racist.

Personal reactions to racial dialogues within the were comprised of physiological, emotional, and cognitive elements (Sue et al., 2010). Similar to the first domain, participants spoke about their experiences with race generally and provided little specific information pertaining to actual discourse or dialogue they had experienced within the classroom. There was a predominant feeling of anxiety and fear underlying participants’ experiences and nearly half of them indicated feeling helpless when contributing to difficult dialogues surrounding race. Those participants who located their past experiences of racial discourse in the classroom did so with a prevailing feeling of being misunderstood by others taking part in the discussion.

The third and final domain that emerged from this research highlights the classroom strategies employed by instructors that either facilitated or limited discussions of race between students (Sue et al., 2010). A majority of participants shared how important it was to have their feelings validated, especially those that felt particularly intense. Connected to this was
participants’ need for instructors to successfully facilitate classroom discussion when powerful emotions arose; this facilitation was even more important when racial tensions between students were named out loud. Some participants indicated the importance of instructor self-disclosure and their ability to acknowledge when they themselves felt uncomfortable navigating classroom discussions. Nearly all participants agreed that what completely halted, or at minimum jeopardized how students’ experienced difficult dialogues tied directly to faculty passivity. In other words, participants felt that instructors were least effective in the classroom if they either ignored difficult exchanges between students or completely shut down discussions that became heated. Sue and colleagues did not fully hypothesize the reasons why faculty might veer more toward passivity in the classroom; however, such considerations would have direct connection to the current inquiry in that they would highlight how faculty themselves experience these difficult dialogues.

Buckley and Foldy (2010) proffered an attempt aimed at how faculty members could better increase the focus on race in their multicultural courses. These authors introduced a comprehensive pedagogical model that at its center was based on the notion of psychological safety. These authors purported that creating and maintaining safe classroom environments is vital to any kind of comprehensive discussion involving race. The complexity of psychological safety in attending to issues pertaining to race referred to: 1) department and institutional climate with respect to race; 2) the specific classroom environment that is fostered by individual instructors; 3) the need for course content to be fully representative of all racial groups (e.g., not focusing entirely on White and Black issues); 4) the need for a diversity of teaching approaches offered by the instructor; and 5) the stability of students’ individual identities. These authors believed that by actively attending to the above safeties, faculty can then encourage students to
engage more directly in difficult dialogues surrounding race. The fostering of these safeties, in a way, creates a classroom safety net for students to do the personal work required to work effectively with race issues.

**Points of Intersection Between Sexual Orientation and Race.** In this final section of the literature review, sexual orientation and race are addressed together in graduate psychology classrooms. Thus far in this literature review, scholarly and research summaries around sexual orientation and race independent from one another have been offered so as to provide a breadth of information to the reader. Moreover, information related to how these two identity constructs are generally studied and defined within the greater psychological communities has been reviewed; a review of how race and sexual orientation both have significant places within graduate-level classrooms, as well as how students and faculty alike experience discussions about them have also been included. Studying these two identity constructs in isolation is useful and has historically been the way that scholars and researchers have focused their work; however, it does not account for interactions that occur when the two are addressed (or experienced) together. As such, this piece of the literature review is comprised of scholarship and research that addresses how race and sexual orientation have been thought to intersect with one another. The final main section consists of three subsections: 1) in the first subsection, a general discussion of intersectionality with an emphasis on how it is operationalized, as well as how professional psychology has viewed its importance in scholarship and research is offered; 2) in the second subsection, a brief overview on the scholarship and research highlighting intersections between sexual orientation and race, specifically, are provided; and 3) in the third subsection, how race and sexual orientation have emerged alongside of one another in graduate classrooms is reviewed.
Intersectionality and Professional Psychology. What is clear from the preceding main sections is the commitment that professional psychology has towards issues of inclusion and multiculturalism. Academic and clinical practitioners, especially those in counseling psychology there are multiple differences existing within individuals and systems at the same time. This latter notion, although crudely defined, is referred to as intersectionality; instead of simply engaging in discourse around human difference, intersectionality seeks to capture the dynamic interplay that occurs when multiple differences/identities/variables are present (Burman, 2003; Lee, Rosen, & Burns, 2013; Miller, Forrest, & Elman, 2009; Robinson, 1999; Werth Jr., Borges, McNally, Maguire, & Britton, 2008).

Burman (2003) argues that true understanding of intersectionality has been difficult to obtain due to the oversimplification and analysis of human difference. First, this author contended that analysis of differences can accidentally lead to an elimination of power. It is easier to see difference in terms of how it is compared to normative or majority standards. Thus, the focus tends to be on marginalized differences, rather than appreciating all differences that exists among individuals. Second, analysis of difference, if done crudely, can assume that all differences are not alike and, as a consequence, should be viewed in a vacuum. This approach can then assign values to difference, pitting one against the other, all the while alienating those who do not fit the difference currently in question. Ferguson, Carr, and Snitman (2014) label this as oppression olympics…where the competition to establish one’s group as more vulnerable, one identity more salient, or one form of oppression as more virulent than another is divisive, stifles dialogue, and obfuscates the reality that all
oppression is mutually constitutive and necessarily dependent on each other in order to thrive (p. 54).

One final way that oversimplified views of difference create problems refers back to the notion of power. Those individuals (i.e., whether they be educators, trainers, or clinicians) who empower others who hold different statuses or identities are often those in positions of power and privilege themselves. Examples of this would be the white professor encouraging their black graduate student to voice their opinions on departmental racism, or the heterosexual, male psychologist who empowers their lesbian client to fight for same-sex rights in her workplace (Burman).

Robinson-Wood (2016) discussed intersectionality using her model on discourses and social constructionism. She proffered that individuals enter into a type of discourse in how they act upon other individuals and the world, at large. Hierarchies are then formed, using socially constructed dominant identities (e.g., maleness, whiteness, able-bodiedness) as the marker for success. This author further contended that the intersections experienced across dominant discourses exist based on how individual statuses are valued here in the United States. Moreover, these intersections become precarious when there are multiple devalued identities simultaneously present. Robinson-Wood also reminded the reader to consider those invisible identities that exist below one’s skin (e.g., sexual orientation, class). Taking into account invisible statuses, one can see how complex discourses become for individuals with multiple minority statuses, especially when one or more of them are visible (e.g., race, ability status).

Perhaps one of the most thorough examinations of intersectionality has been offered by Ramsay (2014). This author contended that intersectionality exists along a backdrop of social justice, where educators and clinicians “empower those who experience multiple dimensions of
inequality and support strategic action by coalitions that respect differences while pursuing common goals” (p. 455). She further highlighted that marginalized statuses (e.g., gender, sexuality orientation, race) exist dynamically and simultaneously with power and control being the driving force separating the majority from the minority. Positions of dominance and power can then be used to create sociopolitical hierarchies at macro levels (e.g., institutions), as well as micro levels (e.g., individual, psychological).

Speaking directly to one of Burman’s (2003) previous cautions, Ramsay (2014) believes that one must avoid ranking social oppressions because it defeats the notion that multiple inequalities within the same individual comingle in a dynamic way. Finally, this author rounds out her operationalization of intersectionality by drawing attention to the importance of context. In order to truly understand where one’s multiple inequalities emerge requires an examination of historical and geographic context, with the assumption that individual differences vary across space and time. Although this makes sense conceptually, it does seem somewhat in conflict with Ramsay’s earlier assertion of not ranking oppressive statuses against each other. In other words, a student or client who is raised in the deep South of the United States, for instance, may harbor stronger associations to racial inequities (i.e., rooted in family and geographic location), securing it as the most salient conflict in their contextual background.

Not surprisingly, the field of counseling psychology has devoted some attention to intersectionality both in training milieus as well as in published research (Miller et al., 2009; Reimers & Stabb, 2015). Lee and colleagues (2013) conducted one of the most extensive multicultural content analyses to date providing interesting findings related to diversity intersections. These authors reviewed 6 decades worth of peer-reviewed manuscripts accepted for publication in the Journal of Counseling Psychology. Of particular interest to the current
dissertation study are the data obtained around the category of published articles on “intersections.” There was a consistent increase of articles highlighting multicultural intersections across decades, from the 1950s to the 2000s; articles highlighting multicultural intersections comprised approximately 6 percent of all articles published in JCP throughout the above time period.

Numerous content areas and design methodologies populated the above literature review; however, there were three content areas deemed most salient when addressing intersectionality: 1) vocation/career; 2) psychological Processes; and 3) counseling Process. Indeed, all three of these content areas are heavily explored in graduate psychology training, generally with entire courses devoted to them. It seems logical, then, that faculty who are teaching these courses have ample opportunity to observe how multicultural variables (e.g., such as race/ethnicity and sexual orientation) arise together in the classroom experience. What remains less studied, however, is how these faculty members notice or experience these diversity intersections, as well as how student learning and overall classroom dynamics might be impacted.

The preceding discussion provides some context for how professional psychology has conceptualized and studied intersectionality. An exhaustive review of the intersectionality research and scholarship, however, falls outside the purview of this dissertation project. Nonetheless, it should be noted that previous work in this area has targeted individual identity statuses (e.g., disability, health, sexual orientation, race, gender, clinical supervision), intersectionality for populations of individuals (e.g., children), and models of psychotherapy (e.g., family therapy) (see Cheshire, 2013; Ecklund, 2012; Hernández & McDowell, 2010; McDowell & Hernández, 2010; Werth Jr. et al., 2008; Shawl, Chan, & McMahon, 2012).
Scholarship and Research on the Intersection between Sexual Orientation and Race.

In the section above, a general overview of intersectionality and how counseling psychologists in particular have raised awareness around intersectionality as it relates to multiculturalism is offered; however, the current dissertation explores specific intersections between race and sexual orientation. How this intersection has been addressed within the literature remains somewhat limited due to methodological pitfalls, as well as an overreliance on Eurocentric frameworks. Indeed, much of the advancement around sexual minority concerns has relied on White samples recruited from White researchers. Thus, the utilization of such biased frameworks can carry potential ramifications for how sexual minority people of color experience their multiple identities (Biesche, Hardy, Fassinger, & Croteau, 2008; Green, 1998; Green, 2003).

In this second subsection, how some scholars depict sexual orientation and race intersections, as well as an example where these intersections played out painfully at a national conference meeting are reviewed. This section concluded with a review of the methodological pitfalls that scholars have deemed problematic when working with race and sexual orientation intersectionality.

Some scholars assert that intersections between race and sexual orientation have created tensions in the general multicultural arena, specifically around inclusive versus race-based focuses on multicultural counseling (Croteau & Constantine, 2005). Put simply, attending to one or the other exclusively can lead to the minimization of some form of oppression. Inclusive approaches can “water down” the impact of racism on society by allowing White individuals to garner attention to other diversity variables at the expense of race and racism. Conversely, employing a race-based focus only can limit exploration of other marginalized areas, as well as intersections between them. Croteau and Constantine argued that these tensions emerge in faculty training discussions, as well as in discussions between colleagues and supervisors. Take,
for example, a faculty committee discussion around how to structure a trainee’s multicultural comprehensive exam question: will there be an isolation of racial oppression as superordinate in our society’s cultural history, or will the question focus more generally on privilege and oppression as it pertains to all marginalized communities? Another example could arise when a practicum clinical supervisor feels that a colleague offers suggestions that allow students to safely bypass race to focus on other diversity issues.

Difficulty at the intersections between sexual orientation and race are not limited to academic and clinical settings; rather, they have also occurred across the national conference circuit. In 2005, one of the accepted conference symposiums at the 4th National and Multicultural Summit in Hollywood, California created a public platform for psychologists and students to engage in difficult dialogue between sexual orientation and race. Noteworthy about this event is that the dialogues that ensued were unplanned, emerging from reactions to an accepted symposium presentation on conversion therapy. The APA has issued clear guidelines (bolstered by numerous empirical studies) citing conversion therapy as an unsuccessful treatment involving risk of harm (see full report findings from the Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation) (American Psychological Association, 2007). This declaration parallels those issued by other medical and psychological bodies of governance endorsing any attempts to change an individual’s sexual orientation as harboring harmful consequences.

In light of these professional stances condemning conversion therapy, many conference attendees at the multicultural summit questioned how such a symposium could be accepted. Various reactions were later summarized across several division newsletters, with the Society for Counseling Psychology offering up a special feature in their newsletter penned by Puncky Heppner (2005). This scholar describes the shock and confusion experienced during a
symposium, as well as the meetings and conversations (some official while others not) that occurred throughout the remainder of the conference (Heppner). Some of the salient concerns raised throughout these discussions included: 1) outward blame placed on the four summit coordinators, all of which were people of color, for allowing such a presentation to be accepted for professional view, 2) conference attendees felt silenced by the presenters of the conference symposium, who were White, and 3) the majority of constructive criticism (around the entire event) seemed generally aimed toward people of color.

What resulted from the above conference experience were many hurt feelings and professional alarm; however, it also created opportunity for future conversation around painful intersections between race and sexual orientation (Heppner, 2005). For example, Croteau and Cane (2005) took part in an APA symposium presentation later that year outlining three distinct points they felt should be considered when sexual orientation issues and race come together for White LGB professionals. First, these authors believed there to be merit in working through racial and sexual identity development models so that the movement through one does not interfere with movement of the other. In short, White LGB individuals can be distracted (or emotionally overworked) due to navigating heterosexism to the point that they discount or ignore the effects of their Whiteness. Second, these authors caution the use of analogy when viewing sexual orientation and race together (Croteau & Cane). Instead of equating the effects of heterosexism with that of racism, individuals should garner glimpses between the two, so as not to pit one against the other. The third and final point emphasized racism as being superordinate to heterosexism. Further illustration of this point included discussion around how White LGB professionals and students can wear culturally-loaded blinders that preclude them from seeing how their experienced oppression can be both similar and dissimilar to those of racial minority
individuals. Careful attention to these established points were thought to bolster ties between communities of color and sexual minorities while not sacrificing legitimate differences that exist between them (Croteau & Cane).

Another obstacle emerging from race and sexual orientation intersections has been seen with respect to research. DeBlaere, Brewster, Sarkees, and Moradi (2010) offered a summary addressing many of the methodological pitfalls precluding the inclusion of lesbian/gay/bisexual people of color in contemporary scholarship and research. For example, these authors drew attention to problematic terminology used in research protocols that do not speak to the nuanced ways in which people of color refer to their sexual minority status (e.g., queer, MSM, two spirit). In addition, sampling strategies that systemically omit people of color, or correspondingly do not recruit people of color, lead to significantly lower participant numbers. These authors also challenged the underutilization of particular statistical analyses (e.g., path analysis, structural equation modeling) that could better illuminate the complexities of intersecting identities.

Finally, past researchers were criticized for relying too heavily on quantitative methodologies that do little to reflect the individual voice and experience of those experiencing marginalization. The implication of this being that quantitative methodologies, in large part, are often dependent on prior published work, all of which has mostly been conducted on White participants. The present dissertation study addresses the above concerns in two ways: (a) employing qualitative methods that provide richer, in-voice data, and (b) employing a sampling strategy that actively recruits participants of color.

Other sampling flaws that confound the intersection between sexual orientation and race involve the use of psychometric instruments encouraging participants to dichotomize their identities, or choose one that resonates most strongly with their overall sense of self (Meyer,
Sarno, Mohr, Jackson, and Fassinger (2015) argued this sampling approach lends to an additive model in which experiences with one minority identity are simply summed with the experiences of the other. Not only does this approach presume that participants see their two (or more) minority identities as conflicting, or at odds with one another, but it fails to capture unique overlapping experiences of multiple identities. Phillips (2010) offered additional critique aimed at researchers who over utilize sampling venues that provide little opportunity for lesbian/gay/bisexual people of color to take part in research. Moreover, Phillips asserted that previous research methodologies have oversampled participants from late night venues (i.e., bars, clubs), which create obvious external validity problems, notwithstanding the proliferation of negative stereotypes surrounding how gay/lesbian/bisexual individuals maintain social lives.

Professional work around the intersections of race and sexual orientation are not limited to published articles solely using participant data. Indeed, scholars and clinicians with multicultural expertise have much to contribute by simply sharing personal and professional narratives about navigating multiple identities (Croteau & Constantine, 2005). Croteau (2008) emphasized the need for “experience-near” scholarship and research in an article describing his experiences with internalized heterosexism across his lifespan. This author believed that by capturing experience-near accounts, many of which displaying vulnerability and risk, provides others an opportunity for genuine empathic connection. In this vein, Croteau (1999) and Haldeman (2010) have both written about the complex negotiations in their personal and professional lives around membership in a majority context (i.e., White, male), combined with membership in a minority context (i.e., gay). Alternatively, Nabors and colleagues (2001) offered parallel perspectives on the realities of being a lesbian/gay/bisexual psychologist of color and how these experiences influenced their personal and professional work.
Not all experience-near occurrences take place in the reading of published works; graduate faculty and supervisors can provide their students with experience-near narratives in their seminars, classes, and supervision meetings. Indeed, it can be a powerful experience for psychology trainees to see professors (or supervisors) to risk transparency around their lived experiences of multicultural intersections. One classroom example of this came in a-doctoral seminar course on LGBT issues, co-taught by a White gay man and White heterosexual woman. There were numerous instances throughout this 15-week seminar when each professor provided personal context around how their various identities intersected. Some of these anecdotes related to these professors’ personal lives, while others offered professional examples that occurred throughout their respective careers. Although there were discussions about multiple intersecting identities, those discussions highlighting how their racial identities and sexual identities intersected were particularly moving. For example, one of the professors shared how the guilt and shame he experienced related to his stigmatized sexual identity overwhelmed his ability to see the impact of his White male privilege. In turn, these kinds of faculty disclosures and professional vulnerability served as a model for necessary personal reflection.

Graduate Students’ Experiences of Race and Sexual Orientation Emerging Together within Graduate Classrooms. A majority of work to date encompassing race and sexual orientation intersections remains focused on individual and group experiences living with oppressed identities. What has received little attention in the literature, however, has been how race and sexual orientation intersections emerge within academic training environments. As presented in earlier sections, emerging psychologists are required to gain knowledge, awareness, and skill to work with sexual minority and racial minority issues. To this end, graduate training programs are creating additional multicultural opportunities beyond the required general
counseling sequences. Having a plethora of clinical and scholarly opportunities allows students to gain better insights on nuanced ways of working with individuals experiencing singular, as well as multiple oppressions based on their identity statuses. Whether students are exposed to these issues in general survey courses, or specialized elective courses, what remains to be seen is how students and faculty experience topics of race and sexual orientation emerging together in the classroom. These experiences are necessary for a number of reasons: (a) they inform changes in pedagogy, (b) they provide insight into how tensions between the two might arise, and (c) they highlight how emerging psychologists become equipped in working with multiple minority issues.

To what extent, then, are graduate faculty members laying the foundation in their general and elective courses for intersections between race and sexual orientation? What is their experience of these two multicultural variables existing in tandem within their classrooms and how to they address obstacles that arise when students (or they themselves) begin to struggle? One must not look very far for guidance on these questions given the paucity of research on classroom intersections between sexual orientation and race. One scholarly account of such classroom intersections comes from Ressler (2001) who incorporated racial elements into her course on sexual orientation. To do this, Ressler had one entire class period where she invited a panel of individuals from the community, each of whom she knew could speak clearly on various topics associated with race. For example, one panelist discussed issues of institutional racism and its connection to violence in the school system, whereas another panelist was a Black drag queen whose message included concerns surrounding homophobia and the racist ramifications he had experienced from family and society. The final panelist presented her perspectives around the similarities struck between racism and gay oppression, as seen through the eyes of political
organizing. The overall goal of these discussants was to provide context around specific areas of racial oppression so that students could analyze these oppressions against the backdrop of sexual orientation stigma.

Ressler (2001) recalled that most of her students responded positively to the panel discussion, but experienced visual discomfort when addressing overt racism. For example, students continually attempted to sway classroom discussion back toward sexual orientation, with some students expressing irritation and discomfort when the focus remained on race. Ressler stated that this level of irritation morphed into anger, at times, which showed up both in classroom discussion, as well as in students’ reflective writing. Students of color who were heterosexually identified were found to use their experiences with racism to empathize and more fully understand the experiences of sexual minorities. To assist with rising tensions in the classroom, Ressler utilized psychodrama techniques that allowed students to adopt the experience of fictional characters that they could then act out in the form of roleplays from their various characters’ viewpoints. By doing this, students were able to assume roles that were more supportive, while also expressing emotions that were difficult to take responsibility for in real time.

Sheets and colleagues (2012) conducted a qualitative research study that most closely aligns with the current dissertation project. This empirical investigation was designed to assess the experiences of graduate students in counseling, psychology, and higher education who completed an elective course on sexual orientation issues. The participant pool of 10 students in counseling, psychology, and higher education programs, recruited from two separate course sections, were each interviewed immediately following the completion of their 15-week course. During the first round of data analysis, these authors discovered a primary theme dealing with
how participants experienced discussions and assignments that incorporated racial elements. As part of the original study methodology, these authors interviewed participants a second time for the purposes of member-checking and overall follow-up, but they also incorporated an open-ended question that directly addressed how students felt race intersected with sexual orientation within their course. Final analysis of participant data indicated 6 emerging subthemes that described how individuals experienced race and sexual orientation comingling together in their elective course. First, participants noted the existence of racially-charged oppression directed at sexual minority people. This subtheme encompassed the ways in which participants felt that some racial minority individuals (i.e., particularly from the African American and Asian communities) discriminated against lesbian/gay/bisexual people. These discriminations often tied to pre-established connections with family values and religious affiliations. The second subtheme that emerged dealt with how some participants felt that race overshadowed conversations around sexual orientation. The third subtheme explicated how participants felt an overemphasis on sexual orientation issues could fuel patterns of white avoidance. For example, some participants consistently noted how White individuals find it easier (and safer) to discuss issues related to sexual orientation as it relates to sexual orientation only, with any overt focus on race being more uncomfortable. The fourth subtheme that emerged in this study was observations that systemic views, as they relate to racism, could bleed into heterosexism. For example, participants strongly noted how the two constructs could be viewed similarly in terms of how painful, harmful, and extremely destructive each was at individual and institutional levels. This is not to say, however, that the two were equated; indeed, participants noted the need for caution when distinguishing between racism and heterosexism so as not to imply that the experience of one was the same as the other. The fifth subtheme that emerged addressed how the racial discourse within the
classroom experience appeared focused on the African American experience (i.e., Black and White issues), rather than encompassing a diversity of racial minority groups. This, for several participants, was more of a constructive criticism in that participants felt the scope of racial dialogue to be limited exclusively to African American and White communities only. The final subtheme addressed the mechanism by which racial tension between students entered into classroom experiences. These tensions emerged specifically around discussions where racism and its overall destructive effects took main stage, reported most often by White students who noted discomfort when engaging discussion around race with other students of color. One student participant shared that “it was hostile…[discussions] felt hostile.”

Although the preceding research study provides a glimpse into race and sexual orientation intersectionality within a classroom context, it does so from a student perspective only. Additionally, it is difficult to generalize findings from only one study whose sample emerged from only one university. To extend this line of inquiry, this dissertation study focuses on how faculty perceive this same interaction (i.e., sexual orientation and race) occurring within the classroom, a phenomenon that has rarely been explored in the psychological literatures in general, and not once in the field of counseling psychology.

Summary of Literature Review. Throughout this literature review, readers have been provided some context around how issues of sexual orientation, race, and intersectionality are positioned within the field of professional psychology. Specific attention was placed on how the APA attends to diversity and multicultural variables in and out of training programs; however, how the field of Counseling Psychology, in particular, has greatly contributed to the advancement of race and sexual orientation in the broader field of psychology was also highlighted. These two identity constructs have been studied extensively across multiple
literatures and with numerous methodologies. Indeed, scholars and researchers have studied the importance of race and sexual orientation as they relate to: personal identity development, minority stress, training of multicultural professionals, and clinical applications, to name just a few.

The frequency and scope of how graduate faculty integrate topics of race, racism, ethnicity, and sexual orientation into classroom settings has been addressed within the literature; however, much of this focus addresses race-related issues and sexual orientation-related issues in isolation. Indeed, little empirical research attends to how these issues layer, or intersect, in classroom discussions. It is in these very discussions where graduate students often learn new material, challenge previously held notions, and synthesize new insights into their personal and professional lives. Tasked to navigate these classroom discussions are counseling psychology faculty who utilize their own experiences and reactions to said discussions, thereby facilitating further dialogue between students. What remains relatively unstudied, however, is how faculty experience race, racism, ethnicity, and sexual orientation topics emerging within their classroom settings. To address this, the current dissertation utilizes a qualitative phenomenological framework to better understand how faculty members experience issues of race, racism, and ethnicity emerging alongside of issues of sexual orientation in their graduate classrooms.
CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I describe the methodological process I used to study how graduate faculty in counseling psychology experience race, racism, and ethnicity emerging alongside of sexual orientation in their classroom discussions. I will use two main sections guide the remainder of this chapter. The first section includes an overview of qualitative research and provides a methodological rationale for phenomenology. Included within this first main section is a sub-section distinguishing qualitative research from quantitative research, as well as a subsection highlighting points of interest for why a phenomenological approach best captures this study’s research question. In the second main section, I provide an outline for carrying out phenomenological research, including step-by-step descriptions of the following: reviewing the literature; identifying phenomenon and developing research questions; bracketing and self-reflection; identifying and recruiting participants; data collection; and data analysis.

Overview of Qualitative Research and Choice of Phenomenology

To begin this first main section, I provide background addressing critical distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Following this is a subsection discussing the reasons why a qualitative framework is most suitable for addressing the research question. Finally, I provide a subsection illustrating the rationale behind why a phenomenological qualitative approach, in particular, is the best choice for understanding how graduate faculty experience the comingling of race, racism, ethnicity, and sexual orientation within their classrooms.
**Distinguishing Qualitative and Quantitative Research.** Although qualitative investigation has gained considerable ground across numerous academic disciplines (e.g., education, social work), it has not been relatively popular in the field of psychology (Rennie, 1999). Many scholars and researchers assert that qualitative approaches are notoriously challenged around issues of methodological rigor and overall generalizability of findings to broader populations (Hoyt & Bhati, 2007). These challenges are then thought to contribute to lower incidences of published qualitative research in peer-reviewed psychology journals and has no doubt created confusion among which type of research is superior, or acceptable. Having this in mind, I will address some of the theoretical and practical differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches to research.

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) provide a summary of five critical distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research frameworks. First, these authors draw attention to positivistic and post-positivistic influences. Positivistic traditions not only assume that a reality, phenomenon, or experience exists, but that it can be measured and subsequently understood in its entirety; post-positivistic traditions, on the other hand, assert that there are multiple ways of measuring and knowing and that a complete understanding of any one reality is not altogether possible. More often than not, qualitative research aligns with the latter tradition in that understanding human experience involves the use of multiple perspectives and a greater diversity in research methodology. Second, distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research should be addressed in light of post-structural and postmodernist sensibilities. Denzin and Lincoln note that qualitative researchers holding such sensibilities reject the use of stringent criteria and control in the research process for fear that such rigidity ultimately leads to a silencing of participant voice.
The third area that distinguishes quantitative and qualitative paradigms surrounds the role of individual experience in the research process. Qualitative researchers believe their approach captures individual voice and experience; on the other hand, quantitative researchers question the validity or relevance of individual experience taking great pains to reduce the likelihood of individual bias, usually by incorporating statistical mathematics and experimental control. The fourth area concerns the focus and composition of typical research questions captured by quantitative and qualitative inquiries. For example, quantitative researchers operate from a nomothetic stance of seeking generalizations based on predictions and probabilities, whereas qualitative researchers operate from an ideographic stance that sees relevance and meaning in individual experiences. Finally, the notion of data richness distinguishes quantitative and qualitative methodologies in that qualitative approaches provide a level of detail that is specific to the individual participants being studied; quantitative paradigms frown on this level of detail, seeing it more as a distraction rather than something to be celebrated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

One final distinction important to note when comparing quantitative and qualitative approaches to research deals with the issue of subjectivity and the role of the researcher. Unlike quantitative researchers who do their best to eliminate—or at the very least minimize—researcher bias, qualitative researchers recognize that data and the analytic process are both rooted in some degree of subjectivity (Morrow, 2005). In fact, the qualitative researcher is typically seen as an instrument themselves, with full acknowledgement that their individual experiences and biases influence the interpretation of data findings (Stake, 2010).

**Choice of Qualitative Phenomenology.** Having provided a brief summary of the major distinctions between quantitative and qualitative approaches to research, I now offer discussion as to how a qualitative approach—and more specifically phenomenology—best fits the current
research inquiry. Haverkamp and Young (2007) proffer that one of the most significant strengths of qualitative research is its ability to capture the experience of a group of individuals in a manner that is holistic. When I consider the myriad factors likely involved in how graduate level faculty in psychology experience the comingling of race, racism, ethnicity, and sexuality issues in their classrooms, it is difficult to imagine understanding such a process without viewing it through a holistic lens. Not only are individual cognitions, emotions, and biases on the part of faculty members involved, but there are perceptions of student experiences that must be navigated by faculty, as well. All the while, faculty try striking a productive balance between lecturing, facilitating classroom discussion, and allowing for discussion to propel topics forward. Thus, utilizing an approach that explores these complicated experiences in an open-ended fashion (e.g. via semi-structured interviews), rather than an approach restricted by a quantitative, forced-choice format, is most desirable.

Two other reasons I have chosen a qualitative approach to this research inquiry are consistent with assertions made by Hoyt and Bhati (2007). First, by utilizing a qualitative approach, I am more likely to procure rich, idiographic data from a smaller number of individuals that would otherwise not be obtained with larger sample sizes. Secondly, Hoyt and Bhati comment how qualitative investigations are used to highlighting experiences of underserved or rarely studied populations. Although one might not consider faculty members who teach graduate courses in professional psychology a rarely studied population, it is the focus of their experiences around how certain multicultural issues comingle together (from their perspective) that is relatively less known. Indeed, there have been no empirical investigations to date that have targeted how graduate faculty in psychology experience race, racism, ethnicity,
and sexual orientation issues emerging alongside each other in their respective classrooms; thus, employing a qualitative platform to engage this research endeavor is warranted.

Although general reasons why qualitative approaches fit this research inquiry are important, it is most helpful to explore how a phenomenological approach, in particular, is called for. Phenomenological investigations represent an approach to scientific inquiry that is considered methodical, systematic, and critical (Wertz, 2005). In simplistic terms, Shaw (2010) offers that phenomenology attempts to study the human experience. How one defines “experience,” however, can be complex. Hoshmand (1989) characterizes experience as having temporal, spatial, and social connective components. With respect to temporal influences, phenomenological inquiries seek to understand how one is experiencing something at a given moment in time and does not suggest this experience exists in ways that remain static. Spatial elements highlight how important it is to consider the spaces, or locations, where individuals are experiencing whatever phenomenon is in question. Additionally, how an individual is connected (in terms of social communities) has important contributions to how one might view an experience or event.

Hoshmand’s (1989) definition of what comprises phenomenological inquiry can be applied to the current research inquiry. For example, to understand how faculty experience the comingling of race, racism, ethnicity, and sexual orientation within their classrooms, it would be important to understand how their experiences might be shaped by where they are in their respective careers. How a new, untenured, assistant professor experiences these issues arising in classroom discussion may be different than a full professor that has been teaching multicultural material for two decades. With respect to spatial influences, departmental culture (and even institutional, university culture) could have significant effects on how faculty experience
classroom experiences that fuse together issues of diversity. Finally, how connected faculty members are to their peers, colleagues, family, and even students likely will influence how they perceive such discussions.

The ultimate goal of a phenomenological design is to capture the lived experience, or “essence,” of several individuals, all of whom have come into contact with an identified phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007). Additionally, this methodological process has as its end goal a description of how the participants experienced the phenomenon in question; it does not, however, seek to understand said experience by controlling variables or breaking the context from which it originally came (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). These goals are consistent with my research inquiry—to describe how faculty members experience issues of race, racism, ethnicity, and sexual orientation emerging alongside of one another within the classroom setting.

In this first main section, I provide an overview of distinguishing characteristics between quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. In general, quantitative approaches to research have predominantly been hailed as the exemplar within the discipline of psychology; however, there has been more encouraging support for the use of qualitative methodologies (Hoyt & Bhatia, 2007; Morrow, 2007). When distinguishing between these two approaches, researchers must take into consideration what types of questions they are asking and how they are asking them. I then offered a targeted discussion as to why a qualitative approach—and more specifically a phenomenological approach—is best suited for this particular research inquiry.

**Proposed Outline of Phenomenological Research**

In this second main section, I provide a general outline for my phenomenological research inquiry. Hein and Austin (2001) assert that there is no right way to conduct
phenomenological research in psychology. Instead of following a rigid, standardized set of procedures, researchers instead craft their methodology from their personal backgrounds, the research questions and overall purpose of the research, as well as how the data will be collected and analyzed. Moreover, researcher flexibility, or the ability to adjust one’s methodology as the research inquiry progresses, is another important facet of phenomenological investigation (Hein & Austin).

Methodological flexibility, notwithstanding, I utilize steps continually endorsed in the literature as being useful in guiding the construction (and execution) of sound phenomenological research. These steps are now explicated with particular attention placed on the following: a review of various literatures and their connections to the phenomenon, as well as the research questions used to capture this phenomenon; a discussion of research bracketing and self-reflection; the identification and recruitment of potential research participants who have experienced the identified phenomenon; the procedures involved in obtaining data; and the procedures utilized to analyze data.

**Step 1: Review of the Literature.** There has been some argument within the literature surrounding the role of literature reviews in constructing qualitative research protocols (Creswell, 2012). Perhaps the most significant challenge to utilizing literature is the idea that too much preliminary exposure to theory and data could in some way impact the development and implementation of qualitative research. Despite this concern, many scholars and researchers do support the use of previously published works in the construction of new qualitative projects. Haverkamp and Young (2007) believe that what becomes problematic when considering the role of literature is not what one knows when constructing new projects, but rather how they actually use such knowledge. In other words, having access to empirical and theoretical works can
provide a backdrop of familiarity around what has come previously; having such awareness can have positive influences on new projects as long as the researcher does not rigidly commit themselves to past theory and approaches.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) outline four ways qualitative researchers utilize literature when crafting new research protocols: 1) literature provides detail surrounding the overall research paradigm that supports the current study, 2) literature provides researchers the opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding from relevant conceptual and empirical works, 3) literature allows researchers to identify theoretical and/or pragmatic gaps that could be filled by the proposed study, and 4) literature helps to refine research questions so that they fit appropriately within the broader research framework currently being addressed in the field.

For the purposes of this research study, I utilized the literature across a number of disciplines including psychology, counseling, social work, and education. By immersing myself within the literature, I established a conceptual and empirical context from which my research protocol, and its corresponding research and interview questions, emerged. Reviewing the literature helped me gain a working understanding for how topics related to race, racism, ethnicity, and sexual orientation have been previously studied in graduate academic classrooms. Additionally, assessing how past scholars and researchers conceptualize intersections of human diversity, and more specifically that of race and sexuality, allowed me to consider how such an intersection emerges in my own experiences as a doctoral trainee. Indeed, I have experienced multiple classes where difficult dialogues have occurred, as well as facilitated similar dialogues in my own classrooms in which I was the instructor of record.

**Step 2: Identified Phenomenon and Development of Research Question.** After reviewing the literatures, it appeared to me that graduate faculty were either intentionally
incorporating issues of race, racism, ethnicity, and sexual orientation into their graduate level courses in psychology, or they were allowing adequate space within their courses for these topics to be explored by students; however, it appeared as though topics of race and sexual orientation within classrooms often existed independently from one another. Indeed, much of what has been written about how faculty members experience multicultural issues in their classrooms primarily separates race-related issues from sexuality-related ones. Whether faculty members intentionally addressed issues of race and sexual orientation within their courses (via planned lectures or activities outlined in the syllabus), or they entertained impromptu discussions that emerged between students—much is unknown about what it is like to experience how these topics comingle together within the classroom. This latter statement serves as the impetus for my study’s identified phenomenon: how do graduate counseling psychology faculty experience the comingling of race, racism, ethnicity, and sexual orientation topics within their graduate-level classrooms.

Creswell (2012) details how phenomenological inquiry is most successful when guided by an overarching research question that can be further realized using targeted probes and interview prompts once the actual data collection process begins. Colaizzi (1978) further suggests that the development of sound research questions depends more on how identified participants actually experience the phenomenon in question rather than their academic knowledge of it. Many faculty members who teach in professional psychology will have some knowledge of sexual orientation issues, as well as race-related issues; however, in line with Colaizzi’s assertion, it was most important that sampled participants be able to articulate their individual experiences with these topics, both independently, as well as together, and how they
experienced them emerging within their own classroom structures. After reviewing the literature, the following research question emerged:

How do graduate level faculty in counseling psychology experience the comingling of race, racism, and ethnicity alongside of sexual orientation in their graduate-level classroom?”

My goal was to uncover how participants reflect on their relevant experiences and understandings teaching about sexual orientation and race-related issues within the academic milieu having this research question as the backdrop. Not only was the intention to generate discussion surrounding how participants incorporated such topics in their courses, but it was also to explore how they navigate connections, collisions, and other forms of intersection when they did arise.

Step 3: Bracketing and Self-Reflection. It is important to note the role and influence of the researcher in scientific inquiries involving qualitative elements. Throughout the research process as a whole, the researcher immerses herself or himself in the literature, begins constructing potential research questions to explore, and most importantly comes in direct contact with study participants. As such, the researcher carries a significant responsibility when it comes to their overall involvement with the study methodology and participant interaction (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). With phenomenological inquiries, there is an expectation that researchers develop and maintain interpersonal connections with participants so they are encouraged and invested in their exploration of the phenomenon in question. Moreover, the researcher is typically seen as an active player in helping to shape any results that emerge throughout the research process. Thus, having such an integral role requires researchers to highlight their history, unique experiences, and overall connections with the identified phenomenon.
There are numerous personal and professional experiences that have informed my interest surrounding sexual orientation and race-related research. I spent the first 18 years of my life in a small, Maryland town with a population of less than 10,000 individuals. I remember my hometown being conservative and slow-paced, with the closest metropolitan city being a 1.5-hour drive’s distance. Despite being in a working-class family with little excess money, I was placed in two different private, Christian schools until I reached my 8th grade year. All of this schooling had little to no visible diversity in terms of race, class, or known sexual orientation, and there was a deliberate effort placed on incorporating faith-based principles into my academic development. Within these private institutions, I was surrounded by White classmates with White families, and was taught by White teachers. All of the administrators were White and I think that I interacted with approximately 3 Black students of color the entire time I was in private schooling.

There were two defining moments—both of which pejorative—that influenced my early conceptions of race. The first was my relationship with the only Black student at my first private school—due to the very small size of this school, she happened to be the only other student in my 4th grade class at the time. This young girl was also my first Black friend. I often wanted to spend time with her after school, as well as go over to her house on the weekend to play. My parents were hesitant, however, about me spending time with her. I remember multiple times when I became upset when I felt they were not allowing me to play with the only other person in my class. After my parents had enough of my emotional outbursts, they explained to me that my friend was “different” from me and that they would prefer that I not spend time outside of school with her or her family. The vagueness of this message prompted additional questions; eventually, my parents qualified that this difference was based on skin color and that we needed to be
“careful” with people who had darker skin. Not much else was offered after this decision was made and I stopped trying to spend time with my friend outside the confines of school hours.

The second moment was more emotionally charged, occurring about one year later when my mother was brutally mugged by a young Black male in a back-parking lot of a department store—she had her life threatened and was physically assaulted. The mugging resulted in my mother losing all of her money and her bags, but also required her to be rushed to the Emergency Department due to the minor injuries she sustained. Fortunately, my mother only required treatment for superficial lacerations, as well as experienced pretty significant bruising, but was released later that night. By this time in my life, I had already experienced that people who had a different skin color were seen as “other” in my family’s eyes, but this event, in particular, had much more of a personal impact on me: it raised my fear, confusion, and anger around those with darker skin (specifically Black men). Unfortunately, I carried these destructive feelings throughout most of my later childhood and adolescence. Once I matriculated into public schooling and began socializing more frequently with racially diverse individuals, I started seeing the depth of my racist upbringing and how messages from my immediate (and extended) family assisted me in maintaining such beliefs.

My earliest recollection of sexual orientation differences occurred when I was approximately 8-years-old. I remember hearing another student at school talk about how their parents knew a couple who was “gay.” I remember going home to ask my mother what being gay meant—I was immediately directed to my father, who told me that he would not tell me what being gay meant because I was “too young.” I pressed the issue until my father frustratingly explained that “being gay” was very simple: he said that it meant two men loved each other and slept in the same bed. I did not realize at the time the relevance of my father’s definition being
slanted completely toward men. The conversation ended as quickly as it began and I was not allowed to ask any further questions. Despite further explanation, it was clear that being gay was something that was wrong and not discussed openly by my parents.

Venturing into a large public high school introduced me to larger numbers of people and social situations. As a result, many social identities and topics became more salient to me, including race and sexual orientation. My high school comprised approximately 50% racial minority students (predominantly Black) and the composition of my peer network shifted to include non-White individuals. I noticed a clear racial divide within the school and my perception was that those who did not abide by such a divide were seen as outsiders. For example, one of my closest Black friends throughout high school was mercilessly teased by other Black female students for being “too White” and for spending all of her time with the “White crowd.”

It was also during high school that I first began meeting people who did not identify as heterosexual; there were two individuals (both male) who disclosed to students and teachers that they were gay in the entire four years I attended high school. These young men were violently taunted—sometimes even in classrooms where teachers overheard—resulting in them living in fear and constant self-loathing. I know this to be a fact since they found solace and safety in the high school theatre community, where I also found haven. My own physical attractions to others emerged during these high school years—not only was I attracted to female students, but I also had similar attractions to males. Several years of confusion and hiding commenced, where I learned what it felt like to be “different.” I had a small number of relationships with women throughout high school and most of college, but did not “come out” as Bisexual until I fell in love with a man during the latter part of college.
It was during my undergraduate college years that I first began noticing the magnitude of social inequities, but this awareness was naïve and underdeveloped. I spent much of this time period navigating typical transitional experiences as an independent college student with an emphasis on managing my “out” status as a Bisexual man. In retrospect, there was only one undergraduate course (Psychology of Women & Gender) that I remember explicitly creating space within the classroom to wrestle with issues of oppression and privilege. This course was taught by a White professor who openly identified as a “radical lesbian feminist,” whose research focused on the experiences of Middle-Eastern women vying for education and acceptance in an environment dominated by men in positions of power. Much of our reading in this course came from scholarly articles that were difficult for me to synthesize at the time; classroom discussions were facilitated with somewhat of an aggressive stance, forcing students to uncover biases and stereotypes that shaped their understanding of the material. I felt unprepared to speak openly about issues of gender, race, and sexual orientation, and often sat in silence hoping that others would move the classroom discussion forward. Unfortunately, I remember most classroom discussions around these topics to be quiet, uneventful, and peppered with vocalized frustrations on the part of the professor. At the time, I thought students’ lack of involvement in discussion stemmed mostly from the rigor and esoteric nature of the source material being used (we read original writings from Betty Friedan and Bell Hooks); I now believe most of the silence to be the result of fear and confusion on the part of students. This professor and class terrified me. She came to class prepared, was aggressive in calling out students directly, and required students to take responsibility (especially for their majority identity statuses). Looking back, I believe that much of the fear I experienced was rooted in guilt and shame for being White and male, but also insecurity because I struggled to grasp many of the
concepts being discussed. Instead, I saw this professor as angry and threatening, one who would surely give me a lower grade because I was not getting the material. What is interesting, though, is how this professor came to be one of my absolutely favorite mentors in college, eventually signing on to be one of three referees for admission into my first graduate program.

I experienced an increase in the amount of academic exposure to diversity issues as I moved into my first graduate program in Clinical Psychology; however, this exposure mostly took place in the one multicultural counseling course that was required of all students completing the program. There was a noticeable difference in how graduate students (including me) navigated multicultural material in the classroom—there was more “push” offered during classroom discussions but little personal responsibility was taken around the amount of power and privilege held within the room. These individual avoidances were fueled by how the classroom discussions were typically structured: instead of evaluating how our own individual identities (and privileges) influenced our work with others, discussions focused more on characteristics of different minority populations (e.g., LGB individuals, Asian individuals). This led to “safer” discussions that seemed superficial and distant from our personal experiences. Thus, I perceived there to be little overt emotion exhibited within a majority of the classroom discussions.

Perhaps what was most salient for me during my first graduate program was the realization that the psychological space required to manage my sexual orientation—throughout adolescence and college—left little room to attend to other social group identities. For example, a true understanding and acknowledgment of my “Whiteness” had been completely lost on me up to that point in my life and it was not until I gained entry into my doctoral program that I began a focused process of racial identity exploration. Gaining admittance to a graduate program
that fostered reflection and movement along racial dimensions allowed me to place notions of White privilege and racialized oppression within a personal context. I have been challenged to understand and navigate my own privileged role as a White individual, while simultaneously holding a marginalized identity as a sexual minority person. These experiences created opportunities of growth and pain in my personal and professional life, all of which have informed my interest in pursuing this research project.

Much of what I have described has been situated within a personal framework; however, I also have professional experiences that provide additional context for pursuing this research inquiry. For example, for more than a decade, I have held several positions working in a number of clinical settings (e.g., college/university counseling centers, training clinics, community crisis center) where I have interacted with a variety of counseling professionals trained in numerous disciplines (e.g., social work, counseling, psychology). What I found throughout these experiences is that several of my colleagues had very little formal training to adequately work with sexual orientation and race-related issues. Those who had received some training around sexual orientation did so in an extremely abbreviated fashion, usually with sexual orientation issues tacked on peripherally to other culturally related course topics. Moreover, some of my colleagues have openly admitted to feeling uncomfortable and unprepared to work with clients who present with sexual orientation-related concerns.

Although many of my colleagues in these same professional environments reported receiving training on diversity and multicultural issues broadly, most of these opportunities did not necessarily lend to critical evaluation of the way race factored into our daily lives. Many graduate programs require mandatory coursework in diversity issues, but these courses are typically offered in survey format, broaching one type of diversity from chapter to chapter (like
in my first graduate program). Moreover, the topic of race and ethnicity oftentimes becomes muddled together, and is generally presented in watered-down ways that do not give historical credence to some of the origins of racial oppression. It is my belief that a majority of developing clinicians in today’s society often equate the act of becoming “multiculturally competent” simply by having exposure to diversity-related topics in classes or community presentations, all the while not doing the internal work required to understand their personal contribution to the intersections and maintenance of power, privilege, and oppression.

Of particular interest to this research inquiry is my experiences within doctoral level psychology courses focused on multiculturalism, race-related issues, and sexual orientation issues. It is within these courses (among others in my program) where I have personally witnessed various racial/sexual orientation tensions play out between colleagues, students, and sometimes faculty. These difficult interactions have sometimes arisen in courses that were not specifically targeting diversity issues (e.g., assessment, research methods); however, it has been within the courses that have held multicultural issues as the foci where most of the challenging discussions and experiences occurred. To date, I have completed the following diversity courses across my doctoral curriculum, all of which involved various levels of discussion around race and sexual orientation: 1) Multicultural Counseling, 2) Advanced Multicultural Counseling, and 3) Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Issues Seminar in Counseling and Development. It has been my experience within these three courses, specifically, where issues of race, racism, ethnicity, and sexual orientation did not always coexist within classroom discussion in ways that felt meaningful and safe.

In my perception, I have witnessed general miscommunication between individuals, argumentation over whether race or sexual orientation was more important in the context of
multiculturalism, as well as personal, painful disclosures from students that left me reeling long after classroom sessions had ended. Most of these interactions took place between students, while faculty facilitated; however, there have been a few uncomfortable experiences where I believe faculty took part in maintaining an invisible divide between sexual orientation and race. It was my experience that sexual orientation and race-related issues sometimes competed within classroom discussions—there seemed to be a general unease when they were fitted together. At the heart of all my difficult dialogues within the classroom was what I perceived to be discomfort and worry around how one navigates their personal, moral beliefs, as well as their racial/sexual identities, while still maintaining a sense of inclusion for those who are visibly or behaviorally different than you.

I felt a certain level of responsibility being one of only a few “out” sexual minority doctoral students in my program. Thus, it was important to advocate for the inclusion of sexual orientation issues in classroom discussions. This, however, led me sometimes to personalize, or over-focus, how discussions surrounding sexual orientation emerged in my classes—especially towards the beginning of my doctoral training. On a few occasions, I felt completely shut down and even disrespected by students and faculty, and these experiences were usually felt more pointedly when I perceived there to only be room for discussions on race. Being reminded of my White, male privilege in many of these discussions caused confusion, pain, and sometimes anger, which in turn prompted the emergence of my own micro-aggressive and defensive behavior toward other students and faculty. I believe that others in the classroom—of varying races, sexual orientations, and gender—experienced some variation of what I have just described, contributing to the overall difficulty of managing such complex discussions.
It was not until my third and final diversity course—Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Issues Seminar in Counseling and Development—that I observed the incredible power of exploring issues of race alongside of sexual orientation that felt safe, respectable, and egalitarian. Throughout my various interactions in this course, I experienced discussions with other students along a continuum: some were able to simultaneously hold race and sexual orientation within the same conversation while others felt that the illumination of one precluded the illumination of the other. Though these tenuous conversations were painful to witness (and participate in), they helped me place race and sexual orientation within a broader training context that has influenced my belief in the current research project.

**Step 4: Identification of Participants.** At the core of phenomenological research is an identified sample of participants who have experienced the phenomenon in question. Thus, it is paramount that researchers identify viable participants who have experienced the phenomenon—these participants will “purposely inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon of the study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). I used a criterion sampling strategy for this inquiry, which ensures that all participants meet whatever preconceived criterion initially established by the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). For the purposes of this research inquiry, I required that all participants meet two distinct criterions, both of which are described in the following paragraphs.

The first criterion used for this study required that potential participants be doctoral-level psychology faculty employed either full- or part-time at a university or college that houses a Counseling Psychology master’s program or an APA-accredited doctoral program in Counseling Psychology. These potential faculty participants needed to be either currently teaching—or have recently taught within the past 2 years—graduate-level courses in diversity and multiculturalism.
to doctoral and/or master’s students. Including a temporal component in how recently faculty had taught such courses increased the likelihood of gaining more accuracy of potential participants’ experiences. Because diversity and multicultural courses are categorized in various ways across academic departments, any general multicultural counseling courses, courses that predominantly focused on race, or courses that predominantly focused on sexual orientation sufficed. For the purposes of this inquiry, a “predominant” focus was operationalized as having at least 50% of the material discussed in class being focused on either race or sexual orientation.

The second recruitment criterion required that graduate courses being taught by potential faculty participants be “on-ground,” rather than online, to ensure that faculty could speak directly to how race and sexual orientation mixed within actual (not virtual) classroom discussions. This is not to say that parallel experiences could not have emerged for faculty in an online course venue, but rather that this project focused on classroom conversations, dynamics, and overall processes. Potential participants had to be identified and catalogued within faculty members’ respective departmental systems as graduate-level courses in psychology or counseling. Course descriptions generally vary from one department to the next, so any course descriptions that alluded closely to diversity and multicultural foci met this criterion. For example, one faculty participant’s course might have been listed as “Counseling Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Individuals across the Lifespan,” while another course listing may have read “Advanced Multicultural Counseling.”

**Step 5: Recruitment of Participants.** I employed a snowball sampling strategy, which according to Creswell (2007) allowed me to identify viable participants for inclusion based on a recommendation from some knowledgeable third-party. The recommenders had access to the two-sample criterion explicated above and had individual expertise surrounding general issues
related to training around multiculturalism, or had expertise around race and/or sexual orientation issues, specifically. These third-party recommenders were comprised of individuals who are currently on faculty at WMU, who were serving on my dissertation committee, or who I had previous teaching or clinical relationships with (e.g., supervisors and/or colleagues from past academic institutions). All individuals contacted had some connection with multicultural scholarship/training/teaching. I contacted these individuals via email to request their assistance in locating possible participants (see Appendix B: Recommendation Email Script). Within this email was a brief description of my dissertation research, inclusionary criteria, and a request for names and contact information for potential participant leads. There was unscripted email communication with third-party recommenders thanking them for participant leads, as well as to answer questions they had regarding study recruitment.

Once I received names and contact information from third-party recommenders, I then began the process of corroborating whether the identified recommendations appeared to fit the two-sampling criterion described above. To do this, I personally reviewed any documentation available via online resources highlighting potential participants’ involvement in the diversity and multicultural arenas (i.e., in teaching, presenting at conventions, and via scholarship/research). I then utilized academic department websites, as well as reliable search engines (e.g., PsycInfo, Google Scholar) to gauge activity in teaching diversity and multicultural courses. Generally, faculty members who are actively publishing or presenting on multicultural topics were thought to likely be teaching in the area. I tracked this information for perspective participants using an Excel spreadsheet (see Appendix C: Participant Recruitment Table).

Once I believed a faculty member met both inclusion criteria, I contacted them directly via email (see Appendix D: Initial Correspondence Email Script). This email communication
included: 1) a subject line that stated who referred me to them (e.g., “Dr. Eric Sauer suggested I contact you regarding my dissertation research”), 2) an introduction of myself, 3) a brief description of the proposed research project and its requirements, 4) a request for the faculty member to respond directly to the email communication whether they were interested (or not) in possible inclusion within the project, and 5) the informed consent document (see Appendix E: Informed Consent Document). Those faculty members who responded stating they were not interested in participating in the project were not contacted further. In the event that individuals did not respond within two weeks, I forwarded a follow-up email as a reminder (see Appendix F: Initial Correspondence Email Script—Follow Up). It was assumed that individuals who did not respond to this second reminder email after one additional week were not interested in participation and were no longer contacted regarding the project.

A separate email communication was sent to those indicating interest in learning more about participating in the project (see Appendix G: Further Study Information and Scheduling Script). Within the body of this correspondence was the following: 1) an explanation of the overall aim of the study; 2) details on the proposed data collection process; and 3) a request for a 1-1.5-hour time block that would be convenient for them to be interviewed—participants also indicated whether they preferred an in-person, phone, or Skype interview format (Note: further discussion around the use of Skype technology is found below in Step 6: Data Collection Procedures). Those participants who preferred to be interviewed via Skype, and who did not already have the software, were sent instructions for downloading this program (see Appendix H: Skype Installation and Use).

Those participants who scheduled initial interviews received an additional email or phone communication 1-2 days prior to their appointment date as a reminder of the time and location of
said appointment (see Appendix I: Initial Interview Reminder Email Script; and Appendix J: Initial Interview Reminder Phone Script). There was additional correspondence—either by phone or email—between the potential participants and me that was unscripted. This correspondence only took place at the participant’s request and involved the coordination of schedules or the provision of further clarification about the overall process (e.g., timing sequence of the study components, how to use Skype technology). During the initial “real-time” meeting, participants asked any follow-up questions regarding participation. Once verbal consent was given, I asked participants to digitally sign and return the consent document via email. Recording mechanisms were then initiated and participants completed their initial interview.

There was a possibility that the above sampling strategy would not recruit an adequate number of participants to complete the study and this turned out to be the case—only 7 participants were recruited using the above procedure. A second recruitment strategy was then engaged to sample faculty directly from APA-accredited Counseling Psychology graduate programs across the country. For this second round of participant recruitment, I reviewed any documentation available via online resources that highlighted potential participants’ involvement in the diversity and multicultural arenas (i.e., in teaching, presenting at conventions, and in scholarship/research). Particular emphasis was placed on online resources such as PsycInfo, Department webpages, and the American Psychological Association website, which offered detailed information surrounding all accredited graduate programs in psychology. I individually reviewed available faculty data for all APA-accredited doctoral programs in Counseling Psychology and found a total of 67 programs. Any potential participants appearing to match my criteria were contacted via email using a slightly altered initial correspondence script (see again Appendix D: Initial Correspondence Email Script). I made two minor changes to this script: the
first of which including a different email subject line (i.e., Participation in Dissertation Surrounding How Race and Sexual Orientation Emerge Together in Graduate Classrooms); the second change came in the introduction of the email correspondence. The original correspondence script began by sharing how I obtained their information through a third-party recommendation. The new introduction, however, included a message stating they had been contacted because it appeared they are currently teaching graduate courses on multiculturalism and diversity in their respective programs (i.e., “Dear (Insert Faculty Name), I hope that this email correspondence finds you doing well. It appears that you are currently teaching graduate courses in multiculturalism and diversity at (Insert University Name) and I thought you might be interested in participating in my dissertation research.) The remainder of the email correspondence exactly followed that of Appendix D. Combining both of the above recruitment strategies, I contacted a total of 157 potential faculty participants.

During the active recruitment phases of a qualitative research, researchers must consider the number of participants needed to adequately understand the phenomenon in question. With phenomenological methodologies, specifically, researchers are often contending with various phenomenon that have either been studied minimally, or have not been studied at all. As such, it is difficult to determine before data collection truly commences how many participants will be needed to understand the identified phenomenon. Some suggestions, however, have been offered in the literature to help guide phenomenological researchers in obtaining adequate sample sizes (e.g., see Creswell, 2012; Hill, Thompson, and Williams, 1997). For the purposes of this research inquiry, I attempted to sample data from approximately 8-12 participants in total (Note: the topic of data saturation, and how it influences sample size, is further addressed in Phase 1 of Step 7: Data Analysis Procedures below).
Throughout the participant recruitment phases of data collection, I communicated with several faculty members, several of which did not make it to the interview phase. Several faculty members responded to my request stating that they were no longer teaching the courses in question, while others simply responded to participant requests stating they were too busy and could not provide their time. Still, other faculty members agreed to participate (some even electronically signing and forwarding back the informed consent document) but then did not respond to requests to schedule an interview.

The final participant pool for this study consisted of 12 professional psychologists, 11 of which received their Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology and 1 who received their Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology (See Table 1). Participants ranged in age from 33 to 55 years; seven identified as either Heterosexual or Straight, three identified as Queer, and two identified as Gay. In terms of gender identity, six participants identified as Male, two identified as Female, and three identified as cis-gender; one participant identified as Gender-queer while another participant identified as Gender-queer/Fem/non-binary; and one participant identified his gender as “man who has sex with men.” With respect to racial identity, eight participants identified as White, one participant identified as Mexican-American/non-White, one participant identified as South Asian American/multiracial, and two participants identified as Korean-American.
Table 1: Participant Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
<th>Gender Orientation</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yvonne</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>Cis-gender Female</td>
<td>Mexican American/Non-White</td>
<td>Non-Identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marissa</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>Gender-Queer</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Atheist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Korean-American</td>
<td>Atheist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Korean-American/Asian American</td>
<td>Non-Identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesley</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>Trans Man</td>
<td>White/European American</td>
<td>Agnostic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sean</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Heterosexual/Straight</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White/European American</td>
<td>Non-Identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brad</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Non-Identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Agnostic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Cis-gender Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Agnostic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brianne</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>Gender-queer/Fem/Non-binary</td>
<td>South Asian American/Multiracial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Cis-gender Female</td>
<td>White/Jewish American</td>
<td>Spiritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholas</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Man Who Has Sex With Men</td>
<td>White/Italian American</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 6: Data Collection Procedures. I connected with participants during the agreed upon meeting time. Although it was preferable to meet with participants face-to-face, the geographic diversity within this sample precluded these meetings from easily occurring. As such, the next preferable method of meeting was the utilization of telephone and online computer technology in the form of Skype, which is an Internet-based program that virtually connects people in a conferencing-type format. With the use of any Internet-based technology, there is always the risk that an outside party who has no intended connection to the project could access content. Being a reputable and long-standing software application governed by Microsoft, Skype has put forth every effort to combat fraudulent online behavior by employing advanced encryption technology that is internationally recognized for its commitment to user privacy.
Additionally, Skype issues digital certificates to all users that help increase the reliability and credibility for those who utilize the program; these certificates establish and confirm identities so that online trafficking cannot occur. Finally, Skype offers an extensive written report that all potential users can access regarding the lengths to which they have reduced the likelihood that fraudulent behavior occurs via their program. Further explanation regarding the above comments—and access to the full Skype security review document—can be easily accessed through their website (http://www.skype.com/intl/en-us/security/detailed-security/).

At the beginning of my initial interview with participants, I provided a detailed overview of the informed consent document that was originally sent in an earlier email correspondence (see again Appendix E: Informed Consent Document). I then fielded any additional questions or clarifications regarding the dissertation project. I asked participants to verbally consent to participate in the project. It is important to note that no audio or visual recording took place until the time at which participants verbally indicated that they were willing to consent and proceed with the study. Once participants indicated that they would like to move ahead with participation, audio and/or visual recording was engaged.

The initial interview was open-ended, so as to encourage participants to offer any and all relevant responses detailing their experiences (see Appendix K: Initial Interview Protocol). Utilizing this semi-structured approach allowed for maximum flexibility, collection of detailed information, and expression of subjective perspectives (Creswell, 2012). The open-ended interview questions that I utilized were constructed following a careful review of the literature; questions were also influenced by my personal experiences as a student and as a university instructor, as well as through my knowledge and experiences surrounding diversity and multicultural training. Throughout the interviews, I took brief notes on the content to record any
unclear or vague ideas that might require further explication by the participant. When these instances occurred, I did my best to seek clarification from participants by asking non-leading, follow-up or probing questions. At the completion of the initial interview, participants were offered an opportunity to ask questions or share any additional information related to their interview process. Following this, participants were reminded that they would be contacted once the data from the initial interviews had been analyzed and audited—within 2-3 months—to inquire about their continued interest in completing the second portion of data collection (Note: the data analysis process is explicated fully in Step 7 below).

Participants were invited to take part in the second (and final) interview once the data from the initial interview was analyzed and audited. During this interview, participants were given access to the collective thematic structure, as well as the collective narrative describing the essence of how my participant sample experienced race and sexual orientation issues emerging alongside one another in their graduate classrooms. Participants were asked to verify whether the analyzed data captured their individual experience and had opportunity to share any new insight or reflections since their initial interview. To initiate these second interviews, I contacted participants via email (see Appendix L: Second Interview Scheduling Email Script). This communication reminded participants of who I am and asked whether they were interested in setting up a final meeting where I could: 1) discuss with them findings from the first round of interviews, 2) receive feedback on whether the analysis fit their individual experiences, and 3) elicit additional feedback or reflections on the collective thematic structure/narrative. If I had not heard back from participants after a one-week time period, I sent them an additional email (see Appendix M: Second Interview Scheduling Email Script—Follow Up). If participants did not
reply to this final attempt at communication, I assumed they were no longer interested in
continuing their participation in the project and did not contact them again.

Participants expressing interest in completing the second interview provided 1-1.5-hour
time blocks where it was convenient for them to meet with me. One participant initially
responded saying they were interested in completing the second interview but did not follow-
through when contacted to schedule; another participant asked to hold the second interview
during the early part of the Fall semester, long after analysis was complete. As with the
beginning communications for the initial interviews (outlined above)—there was additional
unscripted correspondence between the participants and myself to coordinate schedules or
provide any clarification about how to move forward with the study. A reminder email was sent
to participants 1-2 days before their scheduled second interviews (see Appendix M: Second
Interview Reminder Email Script). Not only did this email communication remind participants of
the time/date/process by which the second and final interview would occur, it also included an
attached word document of the initial data analysis that included: 1) a verbatim transcript of their
initial interview, 2) a summary of the collective theme/subtheme structure across all participants,
and 3) a collective narrative illustrating the overall essence of the phenomenon (see Appendix O:
Initial Data Analysis Findings). This information allowed participants to review and confirm
whether I had adequately captured their individual experiences, while also verifying whether
they felt the collective narrative represented how race and sexual orientation comingle in
graduate classrooms. I elicited further information or clarification from participants pending any
disagreement or generated concern. This second and final interview followed a similar approach
detailed above for the initial interview: it encouraged participants to offer any and all relevant
responses detailing their experiences and overall reactions to the data analysis (see Appendix P: Second Interview Protocol).

**Step 7: Data Analysis Procedures.** The data analysis process took place across 4 phases; it was guided by the approach advanced by Creswell (2007), which has been informed by other scholars in the qualitative arena who have offered suggested methods for analyzing phenomenological data (see Moustakas, 1994). The analysis was inductive in nature, beginning with a focused exploration of the raw data that was then slowly transformed into more specific themes; the emerging themes then informed the collective narrative, which captured the essence of how graduate faculty in professional psychology experience issues of race and sexual orientation comingling with one another in their graduate classrooms.

**Phase 1: Collective Data Processing.** I worked directly with the raw data for each individual interview during Phase 1 of the data analysis process. I first listened to recordings of each interview, which allowed me to become more acquainted with participants actual voices and how their individual stories unfolded. I then read through verbatim transcripts that were transcribed by myself and a research assistant who was supervised by me; this research assistant was trained on issues relating to proper techniques involved in data transcription, as well as the importance of participant confidentiality, with specific focus on how to protect confidential documents and participant identity. Once my research assistant completed the transcription process, I then checked the accuracy of these transcriptions by comparing them to their corresponding audio/video recordings—any transcription errors were then corrected. Following this comparison, I did my best to eliminate any identifying information from the written transcripts—such as names of people, places, or organizations—to protect participant confidentiality. The resulting transcripts were saved into “rich text format” so that they could
easily be uploaded into MAXqda 2018, a professional software program for qualitative and mixed methods data analysis. Finally, I reviewed any field notes encompassing reactions, questions, or realizations that emerged for me while interviewing individual participants. The main goal for this phase of analysis was to immerse myself in the data while becoming intimately connected to the participants’ individual stories.

Next, I utilized the analysis software to highlight and extract significant statements made by participants that in some way attended to the phenomenon of interest. This process of breaking data down into distinct parts will allowed me to view each statement as a unique data point; these data points were then categorically organized into themes and subthemes that highlighted distinct elements of the phenomenon. The emerging theme- and subtheme-groupings were correlated such that main themes represented the larger core concepts related to the phenomenon, whereas the subthemes represented descriptive elements within those core concepts. The MAXqda 2018 program provided a seamless way of executing the data organization process described above by allowing me to manually move individual data points extracted from the main transcript into thematic groups that could be designated by colors. The creation of initial main theme and subtheme groupings were then created for each participant interview, eventually informing a collective thematic structure across participants until data saturation occurred.

One simple way of describing how data saturation occurs is when there is no new information provided to the researcher that would in any way alter or adjust the already established thematic structure (Creswell, 2012). It can be argued that acquiring data saturation in a qualitative sample is one of the most important mechanisms with which one can be certain that they have, indeed, fully described an experienced phenomenon. What is interesting, however, is
that very little exists within the literature that fully operationalizes how one actually obtains a saturated data set. Moreover, there is also little guidance on how many participants are needed to reach data saturation in qualitative studies. In fact, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) recently conducted a literature review across multiple disciplines (e.g., health science, social science, and behavioral science) to understand how data saturation by various scholars is achieved. Results from their review suggested that no definitive measures exist that adequately describes how to obtain data saturation. These authors state that they were unable to locate any practical guidelines that assist researchers in estimating appropriate sample sizes needed for saturation.

For the purposes of this research inquiry, I was able to reach data saturation by completing the individual thematic analysis for a majority of the initial participant interviews. For example, I was successful at enlisting 12 participants for the study and I completed the individual analysis for the first 9 participants. I then randomly selected one of the remaining participants and analyzed their data in the same fashion, paying particular attention to whether any new theme/subtheme categories emerge, or if the analysis fit within the already fleshed out theme/subtheme data structure. When the data did fit the original structure, I randomly selected the data from another remaining participant and repeated the above process until I did not find any newly emerging theme/subthemes for at least two participants.

**Phase 2: Collective Content and Structural Auditing.** This next phase of analysis implemented an internal auditing process that was content-based by an outside researcher who was in no way connected to the project. This individual was a licensed counseling psychologist holding a clinical and administrative position in the Southwest Michigan community. She was an experienced qualitative researcher, who held specialization in the areas of multiculturalism and diversity, with an emphasis on race. The content-based audit focused specifically on detail and
checked the data that had been deconstructed and reassembled into the thematic structure to ensure that their descriptions made sense and were consistent across themes; they also checked the process around how the thematic structure evolved into the collective narrative. To do this, I randomly selected one-fourth of the participant data and provided the auditor the original interview transcripts, any process or field notes associated with said interviews, as well as all documents utilized in constructing theme/subtheme groupings—the latter of which was pulled directly from the MAXqda 2018 software package—and finally, the collective narrative. The content-based auditor then tracked the process utilized to break out original data points and how these points were later organized into a theme/subtheme structure and then a collective narrative. Any feedback detailing data inconsistencies, problematic groupings, or confusing strategies were then taken into consideration and incorporated into the original analysis, where appropriate.

Following the content audit described above, the next audit was structural and required an auditor (who was Dr. Eric Sauer) to view the analysis globally to ensure that the collective thematic breakdown, and any subsequent descriptions embedded within these structures were understandable and meaningful; this audit did not involve any connection to the original data points, but rather focused specifically on whether the overall collective theme/subtheme organization and emerging collective narrative made sense at a macro-level. Any redundancy or confusion identified within the thematic structure was addressed and adjustments were made.

**Phase 3: Data Verification (Member Checks).** The next phase of analysis occurred using data obtained from the second (and final) interviews. This phase took place after all of the data auditing was complete and after I have made adjustments based on auditors’ collective feedback; the member checks took place 2-3 months after the initial interviews. Following the completion of the second interviews I analyzed data in the exact same fashion as with the initial interviews
(as described in Phase 1 above); this process required verbatim transcription, the uploading of raw data into MAXqda 2018, and the subsequent construction of theme/subtheme clusters, the latter of which were viewed alongside of the already constructed collective structures. At this point, adjustments were made to maximize the feedback (i.e., new data) obtained from the second interviews with participants to finalize collective theme/subtheme groupings, as well as finalize a collective narrative that described how graduate faculty in counseling psychology experience the comingling of sexual orientation and race-related issues within their classrooms.

**Phase 4: Collective Content and Structural Auditing.** This final phase of analysis implemented a second internal auditing process that was content-based by the same outside researcher who was in no way connected to the project. I randomly selected one-fourth of the second round of participant data and provided the auditor the original second interview transcripts, any process or field notes associated with said interviews, as well as all documents utilized in constructing the adjusted theme/subtheme groupings—the latter of which was pulled directly from the MAXqda 2018 software package—and finally, the adjusted collective narrative. Additionally, I sent another fourth of the original data (from different participants) so that the auditor could view these initial interview transcripts in light of the newly revised thematic structure and collective narrative. Similar to the first content-based audit, my auditor then tracked the process utilized to break out data points from the second round of interviews and how these points were later organized into revised theme/subtheme structures and subsequent collective narrative. Any feedback detailing data inconsistencies, problematic groupings, or confusing strategies were then taken into consideration and incorporated into the final analysis, where appropriate.
Confidentiality of Data

To ensure that all data obtained from participants were kept confidential, I did not share the identity or any other identifying characteristics of participants with individuals who were external to this research project. Once participants officially entered into the study, they were assigned a general identifying marker (e.g., Participant 1) that was associated with their future interview transcripts. Identifying information (i.e., informed consent documents) was kept separate from interview transcriptions and only used in the initial phases of data coding for contextual purposes (e.g., needing to reference demographic information to connect a particular response to a participant, constructing an overall sample description). Kept with this identifying information was a one-page legend that linked the general identifying markers with the participants’ known identity. All identifying information described above was stored in my personal home office, which is securely locked when I am not present.

I completed nearly all of the audio transcriptions myself, but I also had some assistance from a research assistant. Interviews were recorded with a digital recorder and then immediately transferred to my personal computer, which was either with me at all times, or locked in my personal home office. I utilized encryption software installed on my personal computer to ensure the safety of participant data. During the active transcription process, I utilized encryption software and made sure to close any data files when they were not actively being worked on. Once interviews were successfully transcribed, all audio recordings were erased from the digital recorder and stored electronically on my personal computer. Additionally, I de-identified participant information within transcripts by attending to contextual variables that could in any way identify them. For example, information related to specific job positions, agencies, backgrounds, etc., that could identify participants were altered in such a way as to make them
more generic. At the completion of the research project, all electronic transcript documents
stored and encrypted on my computer will be transferred to a password protected flash drive that
will be stored in the office of Dr. Eric Sauer, which remains locked at all times.

It is likely that I will present the findings collected from this project in manuscript and/or
poster presentation form, in which case some of the participants’ exact quotes may be used to
give voice to the overall themes and experiences. When this occurs, participant information will
be de-identified and no participant names will be associated with these quotes. Access to any
research-related materials will be limited only to me. In accordance with federal laws, the Code
of Ethics for counselors (American Counseling Association, 2005), and the Code of Ethics for
Psychologists, all data from this project will be retained in the locked office of Dr. Eric Sauer for
at least 3 years after the study has been completed; however, as mentioned previously, all audio
recordings were erased from the audio recorder once the transcription process was complete. The
participants’ privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

In this third chapter, I diagram results from this dissertation study examining how graduate level faculty in counseling psychology experience the comingling of race, racism, and ethnicity alongside of sexual orientation in their graduate-level classrooms. I first offer additional description of participants that highlights demographic and contextual information used to support their inclusion in the study. Following these descriptions, I offer a visual table of the emergent thematic structure, including main themes, subthemes, and sample statements. Finally, I provide a thorough summary of the study’s findings and overall connection to the phenomenon in question.

Context for the Results

In this study, I employed a qualitative methodology focusing on participants’ lived experiences around how sexual orientation and race-related issues comingle in their graduate classrooms. In Chapter 2 above, I provided basic demographic information surrounding participant characteristics, but would like to offer additional descriptive data fleshing out participants’ positionality in this research. What follows is contextual information that connects the reader more intimately to participants’ voices throughout the remaining of the chapter.

- Yvonne is a Mexican American/Non-White, straight, cis-gender Female in her late 30s. She does not currently identify with any religious affiliation, but noted that she was raised in a Catholic home—she left the church when she was an early adolescent. She is
• the only participant in this study who was trained as a Clinical Psychologist, though she teaches full-time within a Counseling/Clinical Psychology graduate program in a large, public university in the South. She has completed approximately 10 presentations and 4 peer-reviewed journal articles surrounding diversity and multiculturalism. She has worked in university counseling centers in large metropolitan areas, as well as academic departments; she has provided clinical services for both LGBT populations and racial/ethnic minorities. Yvonne is particularly drawn to advocacy work and supervision of graduate students working with minority populations.

• Marissa is a White, queer, Gender-queer individual in her mid-30s. She identifies as Atheist and was trained as a Counseling Psychologist. Marissa teaches full-time at a large, public, Midwestern university where she advises master’s and doctoral students. She has completed approximately 20 presentations and 5 peer-reviewed journal articles in the areas of diversity and multiculturalism. Marissa has worked in a number of different academic and professional settings and has experience working specifically sexual minorities, transgender individuals, and has run groups for queer-identified clients. Marissa is currently providing limited psychotherapy services to individuals in her community.

• Nathan is a Korean-American, heterosexual man in his early 40s. He identifies as an Atheist and was trained as a Counseling Psychologist. Nathan teaches full-time at a large, public, university on the East coast where he is heavily involved in program development and department administration. He has presented extensively on topics around diversity and multiculturalism, having approximately 50 convention presentations and 25 peer-reviewed journal articles. Although he is not currently practicing clinically, Nathan
recalled many instances during his externship and internship phases of doctoral training where he worked with LGBT individuals and communities of color; he recalled working with these populations at university counseling center, outpatient clinics, as well as hospital settings.

- Roger is a Korean-American, heterosexual man in his early 30’s. He does not identify with any religious affiliation and was trained as a Counseling Psychologist. Roger teaches full-time at a medium-sized private university on the east coast and has presented approximately 15 presentations and 3 peer-reviewed articles dealing with diversity and multicultural concerns. Roger has worked in a number of professional capacities including hospitals, academic departments, and university counseling centers. He has provided individual, couples, and group therapy to a number of minority populations, though he is not currently providing clinical services.

- Wesley is a White Trans man in his mid-50s. He identifies as queer, with an agnostic religious identification. He was trained as a Counseling Psychology and currently teaches full-time at a large, public university in the Pacific Northwest and is not practicing clinically. Wesley stated that all of his professional work has been situated within a multicultural framework; he has completed approximately 150 presentations and 20 peer-reviewed publications. In addition to his current teaching load, Wesley also maintains administrative responsibilities within his academic department.

- Sean is a White, heterosexual man in his late 30s. He was trained as a Counseling Psychologist and is currently teaching part-time at a large, public university in the Midwest. Sean has completed approximately 15 presentations and 2 peer-reviewed journal articles in the areas of diversity and multiculturalism. He has a full-time, clinical
position working with Veterans Affairs, but noted a passion for teaching around diversity issues, which has fueled his desire to be an adjunct instructor.

• Brad is a White, gay man in his early 30s. He was trained as a Counseling Psychologist and is currently teaching full-time at a large, public university in the South. Brad does not identify with any religious identification and has completed approximately 5 presentations and 5 peer-reviewed articles dealing with diversity and multicultural issues. He has worked in a number of professional settings including university counseling centers and Veterans Affairs.

• Logan is a White, heterosexual man in his mid-30s. He was trained as a Counseling Psychologist and is currently teaching full-time at a large, public university in the Southwest region of the country. He identifies as Agnostic and has completed approximately 40 presentations and 20 peer-reviewed journal articles around diversity and multiculturalism. He describes most of his clinical training and experience working with college student populations but has also done consultation work with the secondary school systems.

• Peter is a White, heterosexual, cis-gender man in his mid-30s. He was trained as a Counseling Psychologist and currently teaches full-time at a large, public university in the South. He identifies as Agnostic, and has completed approximately 50 presentations and 22 peer-reviewed journal articles in the area of diversity and multiculturalism. Although Peter is not currently practicing, he regularly supervises and mentors graduate students in his department’s psychology clinic that services community residents.

• Brianne is a South Asian/Multiracial, queer, individual in her late 40s. She identifies as Gender-queer with respect to gender identity and was trained as a Counseling
Psychologist. She is currently working full-time in an administrative position at a large, public university in the South, but still teaches graduate courses on a limited basis. She has completed approximately 200 presentations and 100 peer-reviewed journal articles around the topics of multiculturalism and diversity. Brianne has a passion for working with gender non-binary and transgender individuals, as well as working with immigrant populations of color who have experienced trauma.

- Catherine is a White, heterosexual, cis-gender woman in her mid-40s. She was trained as a Counseling Psychologist, identifies as spiritual, and teaches full-time at a large, public university in the South. She has presented approximately 40 presentations and written 20 peer-reviewed publications in the areas of diversity and multiculturalism. Although she is not currently practicing, Catherine has experience working with queer populations, as well as populations of color.

- Nicholas is a White, gay man in his mid-30s. He currently teaches full-time at private, medium-sized university on the east coast. He has completed approximately 18 presentations and 1 peer-reviewed publication related to diversity and multicultural issues. He has worked in university counseling centers, as well as Veterans Affairs and has experience working with substance abuse in the LGBT community, as well as experience working with international populations.

Although all of the above participants share professional overlap with respect to their training and current employment positions, each offered unique narratives around what it is like to teach around topics of race and sexual orientation in graduate psychology programs. I first viewed the stories shared by participants individually, but then viewed them alongside one another to better understand their collective experiences. I provide a comprehensive discussion
around data analysis in Chapter 2 above, but to summarize: main themes and subthemes that emerged on the individual level were then consolidated across all twelve participants, generating a collective thematic structure. All or a majority of participants endorsed the 6 main themes and twenty-two subthemes with exact frequencies noted within the written descriptions below; four out of the six main themes, as well as four out of the twenty-two subthemes were endorsed by all participants. The main theme that provided the most overlap across participants was main theme 6, dealing with faculty participants’ exploration of personal and teaching philosophies.

Main Themes

Six main themes and 22 subthemes emerged across participants following data analysis of initial and follow-up interview data (See Table 2). All twelve participants endorsed four of the six main themes: Main Theme 1 (*Student Reactions and Barriers Around Race and Sexual Orientation Intersections*), Main Theme 3 (*Generational Training Influences Faculty Multicultural Perspectives*), Main Theme 4 (*Department Culture Impacts Multicultural Teaching and Learning*), Main Theme 6, (*Faculty Exploration of Personal and Teaching Philosophies*). Main Theme 5, (*Socio-Political Influences in Multicultural Classrooms*) was endorsed by eleven of the twelve participants, whereas Main Theme 2, (*Multicultural and Intersectional Conversations Extend Beyond Classroom*) was endorsed by eight of the twelve participants.
Table 2
Emergent Thematic Structure Related to How Faculty in Psychology Experience Race and Sexual Orientation Emerging Alongside One Another in Graduate Classrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Themes (# of Participants Endorsing)</th>
<th>Associated Subthemes (# of Participants Endorsing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Student reactions and barriers around race and sexual orientation (12)</td>
<td>a. Students struggle adopting intersectional lens (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Definition: Participants’ views around the various impediments students experience when addressing</td>
<td>b. Multicultural stigma interrupts learning (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multicultural intersections.</td>
<td>c. Outward focus rather than inward (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Multicultural and intersectional conversations extend beyond classroom (8)</td>
<td>d. White fragility and defensiveness around personal responsibility (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Definition: Participants’ discussion around how they felt their multicultural courses served as</td>
<td>a. Planting seeds for future multicultural synthesis (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stepping stones to greater awareness and skill development outside of the classroom</td>
<td>b. Initiating greater multicultural dialogues and resources (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Generational training influences faculty multicultural perspectives (12)</td>
<td>a. Mentors valued social justice work (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Definition: Participants’ experiences of past training/mentoring in multicultural psychology.</td>
<td>b. Diversity variables siloed in training (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Department culture impacts multicultural teaching and learning (12)</td>
<td>c. Generational factors inhibited multicultural teaching/learning (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Definition: Participants’ beliefs that departmental culture within their university systems impacted</td>
<td>a. Importance of department minority faculty (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multicultural learning.</td>
<td>b. Department majority faculty have responsibilities (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Socio-political influences in multicultural classrooms (11)</td>
<td>c. Diversity of students impact multicultural education (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Definition: Participants’ beliefs that current socio-political events, as well as geographic</td>
<td>d. Developmental and programmatic cohort differences (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>influences served as a backdrop to their multicultural teaching.</td>
<td>e. Department lacking intersectional conversation (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Faculty exploration of personal and teaching philosophies (12)</td>
<td>a. Social and geographic backdrop (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Definition: Participants’ views on how multiculturalism manifests in their personal and professional</td>
<td>b. Political/current events backdrop (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lives.</td>
<td>a. Approach to multicultural pedagogy and intersectionality (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Classroom activities and evaluative mechanisms (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Use of self and interpersonal process in classroom (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Constructive reflection around areas of growth (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Faculty identity management influenced by teaching (12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main Theme 1: Student Reactions and Barriers Around Race/SO Intersections

All twelve participants shared common experiences around how their students struggled to adopt an intersectional approach to multiculturalism, as well as race and sexual orientation. All participants reported difficulty inserting intersectionality into their graduate multicultural courses, since students seemed more comfortable addressing diversity variables one at a time. There was emphasis placed on how differing types of stigma emerged within classroom discussions—mostly pertaining to race, sexual orientation, and gender. Many participants shared the tendency for students to focus more on things outside of their experience (e.g., society, institutions) rather than on their internal experiences. Participants felt students wanted to prematurely leap toward developing skills on how to work with diverse individuals, before even acknowledging their own personal belief systems (and biases) around those individuals. Participants shared how they believed notions of White fragility and defensiveness emerged in conversations where race predominated, whereas undercurrents of religiosity challenged discussions involving sexual minority issues.

Subtheme 1a: Students Struggle to Adopt Intersectional Lens. Ten of the twelve participants shared how their students struggled to adopt an intersectional lens toward multiculturalism in their classes. Many participants shared how they felt their students had a cognitive block, or an overall inflexibility, to how diversity variables overlapped one another. Some participants felt that students could struggle even understanding one diversity variable in isolation, let alone address multiple ones at the same time. For example, Peter shares the following:

I think intersectionality requires a degree of cognitive flexibility that some people just don't have. Or at least don't want to have. So, when I run into problems is when people
who are super concrete, they struggle in my coursers in general, I think. And I try really hard to make it, to try to meet them at their level, try to, I should really just say my style of teaching is Vygotsky's zone of approximate development. I'm trying to find places where people need me to do it, they can't do it on their own. And those zone approximate developments are really important in multicultural stuff, because it's a complex topic.

Similarly, Brad shares:

So, it was apparent that like understanding one aspect of diversity for a couple people, 7 plus or minus 2 units of cognitive energy, and for some people who were already there, it was much easier to kind of click things together. So, people were, as an example of that, many people were sort of unable to consider multiple things happening at once in terms of intersections of identity, simply because they hadn't gotten one down yet.

Examples were offered around students who understood oppressive forces for one stigmatized group, while completely missing how those forces could change with the addition of another cultural identity. For example, Roger shares his surprise when one of his graduate students, who he believes to have a social justice oriented identity fails to see how the layering of sexual orientation stigma for a man of color puts him at greater risk:

And one guy goes, “Oh my god that just went completely over my head.” And this is a person whose very social justice minded, who is doing a lot of research around, sort of, with the Black experience, whose fighting for this, for like race and stuff like that, but who has no understanding [around] sexual orientation issues…some of them can completely get something but not get something else, despite it sort of being all within the mission of social justice.
One participant, Marissa, stated that part of the problem is that her students were unable to engage in critical reflexivity, having opposing viewpoints from readings or classroom discussion “talk to one another,” thereby missing opportunities for students to illustrate intersectional realities:

But then again, it swings to it’s terrible, no good, bad. It takes, it took me basically a whole term to even get them to the point where they can start to interrogate a little bit between the two of them. To see them as maybe being something that could be dovetailed together but that still took a lot of work because they would immediately go to deconstructing…It’s something that’s invisible to their rendering of the reading. And then when they start to realize how White hegemonic it is, how straight the narrative is, how invisible sexual, gender diversity is, how it’s prefaced on a middle-class framework, like all these things they start to notice and then they start to interrogate in a different way.

One other example offered by Nathan, illustrates how he believes defensiveness (often not even noticed on the part of students) gets in the way of seeing connections between and across multiple identities:

I think it’s difficult understanding the links between oppression for people of color and LGBT+ folks, but also understand the distinctions. And so, you know, over the years I realize that, or I’ve been around that sometimes students who are a little bit resistant to uh their awareness um to their heteronormativity or heterosexism, minimize the intersection, or overlap of racism, or they minimize it because of some of their defensiveness around it.

**Subtheme 1b: Multicultural Stigma Interrupts Learning.** Eleven out of the twelve participants reached consensus around how stigma—especially related to race, sexual
orientation, and gender—interfered with multicultural learning. Numerous examples illustrated the ways stigma from society, familial upbringing, and general miss-information all made its way into classrooms. For example, Brad shares a personal story of how he has felt discussions around race in his classrooms neglect ethnic nuances, such that students (and faculty) are not always capable of examining ethnic heritage in conversations involving race:

I know other people see I’m white. And there are issues of what, if you want to call White privilege, sort of like apply it broadly, yeah. But there’s some specific stuff about being French in Canada too. Those things can all exist in combination. Like I can be French Canadian and be seen as a White American. It’s not a contradiction. And I think that’s helped some of them open up to talk about how they felt kind of misunderstood particularly in training contexts.

Sean talks about a memory in a recent class involving discussions around racism in the Asian communities and how discussions that ensued during his class tried to address these concerns:

We talk about that sometimes to within the Asian American community and how sometimes there are very traditional roles there, a very hierarchical society, and so it’s very binary a lot of the time. That’s the expectation even though real life isn’t binary if the person doesn’t kind of conform to that binary expectation, there can be a lot of confusion, frustration. And then we talk about how that might manifest for the client. And we talk about how sometimes there can be some harming behaviors, how it increases the risk for substance abuse or suicidality or homelessness. So, we talk about that particularly within the Asian American community.

Participants shared what it was like to witness various microaggressions that occurred in class, as well as the ones that emerged in written reflection papers. Wesley shared how he received
stinging teaching evaluations from students in one of his recent multicultural classes for what he perceived to be reactions to his trans-affirmative stance in the classroom:

You know I think the issue was for some of those folks, they had personal or religious objections to trans identities and I didn’t let them off the hook, like I wasn’t going to, I mean I was really clear from day one, this class is going to push your comfort zones and I’m okay with that because you need to be able to understand how to work through that yourself if you are going to be doing that kind of work with your clients and students.

Some participants even shared how they contributed to micro-aggressive behaviors in the classroom and the ways that they attempted to remedy them. Marissa describes how she noticed herself engaging in racial microaggressions in her classroom as she spent more time helping White students manage their guilt and shame, while not spending as much time with how her students of color advancing, or reacting to this:

What I notice is micro-aggressions around race that I engage in in the classroom that I’m not sure people know are happening, they might know, they might not, but what I notice is I was fully able to help White students in terms of their development around White supremacy and how that was playing out, both in their journals that they were doing weekly, but also in conversation in class.

There were examples provided around how students disclosed personal viewpoints in class that could be seen by others as oppressive or close-minded. Some of the relevant issues discussed included reference to: “down-low brothers”, gay parenting/adoption, LGBT kids being kicked out of homes, HIV/AIDS stigma, religious opposition, and transphobia. Roger discusses how one of his recent multicultural counseling classes had candid discussion around how students could
be “okay” with sexual minority people but that they would not be affirming if one of their children came out:

Some of the people in the room were like listen I have gay friends, or you know I have bisexual friends, and like I don’t have a problem with it, but if I was to have kids and they were a sexual minority, I’m not sure how I would feel about it…I don’t know what it would be like for me to have a gay kid or lesbian child or like a bisexual child, I want to say I would be fine with it but I don’t think that I would.

Sean shares about conversations involving race, sexual orientation, and gender and how students struggled to grasp how complex gender roles and expression can be in non-White communities:

We talk about the idea of a down low brother, about you know an African American male maybe is not out in the community for fear of some type of reprisal or non-acceptance, and so we talk about how there’s a lot of support in the African American community, but there also sometimes is more the rigid kind of gender or sexual orientation expressions.

**Subtheme 1c: Outward Focus Rather than Inward.** Five out of the twelve participants shared a concern that students preferred to focus on people, institutions, and beliefs that were outside of their individual experiences. Said differently, participants felt their students safely interrogated class material and dialogue without considering how their personal beliefs and positionality impacted their overall learning process. Participants discussed their irritations around students who “danced” around issues of personal responsibility, and how easy it was for students to protect themselves from evaluation or critique by simply not personalizing their reactions. It was easier for students to place blame on society, other researchers, institutions, anyone who is outside of their experience. Catherine begins addressing this notion with
reflection on her own graduate training and how she learned, then, that processing this material internally was paramount to her learning:

When people say what was the best part of your graduate training, I say that it was because it taught me how to think critically and then I say that was the worst part of my graduate training because then we just look at everything always as critical and what we don’t like about it, and how something doesn’t have what we wanted, or doesn’t feature people who look like us, etc. So, I think that in multicultural education, perhaps more than any other education that we do, but really all education should be multicultural, we should be directing students to focus on their inward experience and to pay attention when they have defensive responses and I actually think that defensive responses are a hallmark of doing this work.

Brad shares his belief that students come into multicultural counseling classes touting their interest in addressing diversity issues front on, but then feeling differently when they are called to do the work:

I definitely agree with the tendency to focus on external things rather than their own internal experiences, or like in mine, when I encouraged self-exploration, people were really excited until they found out they had to do it and not just watch other people do it. So, it’s both external I think in terms of other people but also you can take an external perspective like focusing on other people in the class rather than your own experiences.

Nicholas shares his belief that students who struggle the most “going within” are the ones that often share numerous complaints about all the ways his multicultural course is not successful. Like other participants, he sees this kind of defensiveness as a form of projection:
Some of them will go within and sort of wrestle with that. And the ones that don't, then I become the problem. So, "we can't talk about this," “there's no guidance in this class,” “there’s no rubrics, it was disorganized, he was late." You know, those type of things. So, I mean, it feels very American to me, just projecting it onto something else.

**Subtheme 1d: White Fragility and Defensiveness Around Personal Responsibility.**

Eleven participants out of twelve shared how a majority of their graduate multicultural courses were comprised of White students, with more women present than men. Numerous faculty accounts described a tentativeness displayed by White students particularly around any conversations involving race and the notion of White privilege. One of the explanations given by some participants around why White students become so reactive around discussions of race and privilege stems from challenging class intersections. For example, Nathan shares the following:

I was just having a conversation in one of my courses this week, we were talking about even the concept of White privilege and how you know there are spaces or communities that are predominantly White that are struggling because of the loss of industry in these communities and when they hear things like White privilege it’s sort of like where’s the privilege looking around, tell me, you know point it out to me because we are suffering and struggling right now.

A similar experience was described by Sean:

We have plenty of White poor kids that came from poor background when growing up. So, I think when we talk about privilege, like privilege is a very activating word for some of them because a lot of them feel like they don’t have privilege, despite them having White privilege you know, or male privilege, or like Christian privilege or all these
different privileges, but like for them, they’re like, “I grew up poor, I grew up in the projects.”

Other participants worried that much of the caution demonstrated by White students was the worry of “getting messy” in the classroom, or appearing to their instructor and fellow students as “racists” or “homophobes.” It was also hypothesized that the evaluative component of the course got in the way of student learning, since students worried about “saying the wrong things” and being penalized by the instructor if their ideas differed from what was being said. Marissa, for example, felt that students’ worry of appearing ignorant or even hostile to other students and faculty gets in the way of them taking responsibility for their involvement in difficult discussions around privilege:

There’s this tension that happens where people don’t, like it’s really hard to get messy. And uh it’s challenging to bump their heads…getting messy is not something people want to do…because they think being a psychologist means you have it all together, you’re not fucked up, there’s no messiness, etcetera. Um and that’s all just completely untrue.

She goes on to share how she confronts some of the silence that occurs with her White students:

[Students say things like] “I haven’t been saying things and I’m not really sure why and I’m afraid of looking stupid.” Then one of the questions I’ll ask is, after normalizing and validating and all that shit, is how is your silence serving to maintain the status quo, in this case, White supremacy? How does it serve to maintain other types of hegemonies?

Still, other participants shared experiences of White students becoming visibly activated, or defensive, when another student of color (or the faculty member themselves) challenged them on their multicultural ideas or viewpoints. Some participants pointed to this being the case due to
current societal norms for White people around issues of race—to not engage conflict openly, so as to minimize the risk of upsetting others or completely fracturing relationships. The following was offered by Roger:

And there’s a lot of sense that like I, you know I’m going to be this great therapist, and like I understand diversity issues and I’m not racist, I couldn’t be racist, I want to do this work…the White students were unable to hear what I was saying because hearing this stuff from a person of color can be so activating and it makes them so defensive that you know they will, they have a response for everything I have to say, even though we are presenting them with statistics, showing them experiences of the people, and talking about their lived experience, there’s a lot of like rationalizing why the world is the way it is.

Logan shares in his account one of the ways he tends to see White students express their defensiveness indirectly, through reflective writing:

And then I receive their final papers for the class, where I really have them in the class I have them reflect on their identities and their experiences, privilege and oppression. It’s sort of a cultural history. And I just get these really, what I find to be offensive papers from these students where it’s clear that not only have they not gotten it, but it’s, in my view, sort of a final commentary on what they thought of the class. So that’s always really deflating and frustrating.

There were, however, some defections around this subtheme, with a few participants disagreeing that there was a higher level of defensiveness in the classroom for White students. For example, Sean shared how he believed a lower level of defensiveness emerged in his classes due to the strong social justice expectations laid out by his department:
I definitely did encounter [defensiveness] but I think the fact that I was teaching in a department that really prides multiculturalism and social justice so much and weaves that through all their clinical experiences, and for many of them, this was not the first multicultural class that they’ve taken…but I think because a lot of the students had already maybe wrestled with some of that a little bit, their walls maybe weren’t as high than when they initially came into contact with some of these ideas.

Another participant, Brad, went even further stating that using terms like “fragility” and “defensiveness” to describe resistance from students actually interfered with dialogue:

Well, I mean the reality is that I think that phrases like White fragility and defensiveness are used by us liberals to feel better about ourselves and not to instill behavior change. You’re not going to get somebody to change by telling them they’re fragile, what a stupid idea…I think not calling it fragility or defensiveness…I think it was a problem when LGBT or people of color were problematized and now that liberal people have a bunch of power we are problematizing White people and heterosexual people.

**Subtheme 1e: Religious and Faith-based Morality Can Interfere.** Eight out of the twelve participants agreed that religion could interfere with classroom discussions, particularly when issues of sexual orientation were being discussed. A number of faculty shared how their university systems, being housed in mostly conservative geographies, attracted students with strong Christian ideologies. Several faculty shared anecdotes around students’ outward struggle with understanding some of the recent political movements surrounding same-sex marriage. Sean offers his take on how religiosity factors into his multicultural teaching:

Here in the Midwest, I’m very much in the bible belt, I have a lot of students that come from very small conservative towns where they’ve gone to church there their whole lives
or a lot of them went to undergraduate programs from at a religious school. I’m in no way disparaging that at all, obviously religion and spirituality is a big part of multiculturalism themselves, but I definitely saw that having an impact on a person’s awareness of, or maybe kind of acceptance or reactivity around, some of the multicultural issues.

He goes on to share that religious identification is not restricted to only certain geographic regions, and also how topics of race can intersect with religion and sexual orientation:

And then we also look at it within the European American community and how a lot of times you were from the United States depending on which research poll you look at; a very high percentage of individuals identify as religious or spiritual to some extent. And how they say that it is important to them. So, we talk about European Americans and how a lot of times that’s a very Catholic or Christian heritage there, and how religion or faith can impact sexual orientation and how race and sexual orientation there can be impacted by religion.

Participants were careful to outline how their handling of those discussions were challenging, since they wanted to encourage religiously conservative students to wrestle with how their beliefs might appear oppressive to sexual minority people, while at the same time creating space for them to exercise their personal belief systems. Nicholas, for example, discussed his difficulty teaching in a religious institution where several of his students are clergy whose religious affiliations sometimes presents challenges:

I have been working at a religious institution, that's been interesting. And some of the issues of diversity are not things I would have ever thought of. I would say about a third of my students are clergy, which winds up being a very interesting discussion about when sister Sally is working with clients and how does she navigate through what we would
call shows or wears or witness. So, she's in her habit and sort of counseling and issues that would be sensitive such as abortion or gay rights or those type of cultural issues come up and working with that…So that becomes challenging.

Yvonne also discussed her concern at balancing a proper amount of push-back when religious ideology feels oppressive within her classroom:

   I’ve had some conservative Christian students who are really uncomfortable with the material…I think based on where we are at in terms of the religious infusion into our culture, and it’s a very conservative state, it’s an interesting paradox in that the folks who are diverse don’t feel safe, and the folks who are very conservative talk about not feeling safe discussing diversity.

Main Theme 2: Multicultural and Intersectional Conversations Extend Beyond Classroom

   Eight out of the twelve participants discussed feeling their multicultural courses served as stepping stones to greater awareness and skill outside of the classroom. Focus was placed on how classroom dialogue and learning could only be seen as the beginning and that students needed to take what was gathered in class and extend it to outside conversations and experiences. Many participants used the familiar analogy of “planting seeds” to describe how they feel their courses factored into students’ overall journey toward multicultural affirming practice.

   Faculty participants saw their students increasing their involvement with multicultural dialogues and experiences outside of the classroom. For example, some participants explained how rewarding it was to have students share with them the kinds of difficult conversations they were now having with family, friends, and other professionals surrounding diversity issues. Other participants felt it equally rewarding to learn their students had engaged with outside multicultural resources and even continued journaling or thinking critically about course topics
long after their courses had ended. In many ways, this main theme highlighted the importance of faculty not seeing their multicultural courses as the only means for students to gain understanding of multicultural issues; numerous participants indicated an underlying hope that their course might lead to students having greater multicultural competence as they continue their graduate training and supervision.

**Subtheme 2a: Planting Seeds for Future Multicultural Synthesis.** Seven out of twelve participants noted there being an important temporal component to consider with respect to multicultural training. There were numerous indications from participants that their multicultural courses only served as a starting point—especially for those at the beginning of their training. Rather than seeing the development of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skill all emerging in isolated graduate classrooms, participants saw such processes occurring across years and experiences. This realization relieved some of the pressure for faculty who sometimes felt their students’ acquisition of multicultural knowledge and skill fell solely on their shoulders. Many accounts pointed to graduate multicultural courses being stepping stones, or beginning places where students can personalize and interrogate constructs like privilege, oppression, and power. For example, Brad offers the following:

> And, so one of the challenges is being more okay with not reaching the end point during the class. You’re sort of supplying a foundation, my goal is to supply a foundation that will help them to develop later. So, a lot of the benefit might not be realized until long after I’m done with the students…And, so people told me that they sort of continued to process, and ended up after class ended, after the semester was over, in a different place, like weeks or months after, considering things. Which is more of my goal than trying to make “mini me’s” out in the one semester I have.
One other account offered by Roger:

I think all this stuff about themselves, personal explorations, is affecting them tremendously but it might not all happen this semester. Like we won’t see the effects of it, or they won’t see the effects of it necessarily, maybe for years to come. You know like it could be, or for the rest of their life. I’m hoping that like this is really being digested and metabolized and that they’ll keep this with them. I think some of this stuff, I mean how could they forget some of this stuff, it’s powerful, it’s riveting.

Some participants discussed learning how their students continued writing journal entries, and having difficult multicultural dialogues about course topics with other students even though their courses had technically ended. There were even some faculty who regularly stayed in touch with students after the completion of their multicultural sequence, continuing to offer resources and encouragement. For example, Yvonne offers this anecdote:

I continue to have these conversations with the students. Like, I’ll send them articles, I’ll send them videos, um of things related to the multicultural course, because I want them, I want to role-model to them that this is like a continuing issue, right. Something that we continue talk about, continue to learn about.

**Subtheme 2b: Initiating Greater Multicultural Dialogues and Resources.** Seven out of the twelve participants shared how they saw students taking what they learned in class to future multicultural conversations and local recourses outside the university. Several participants discussed times when students indicated to them their inability to see the world in the same way before experiencing their multicultural class. For example, some participants shared how students came to them saying they could no longer see television or film the same way since
learning about the pervasiveness of racism and heterosexism in today’s society. Nathan offers the following example:

I often hear from students toward the end of these classes, I can’t enjoy movies anymore…my favorite movie, it makes me upset now. You know, because I see all these things. I apologize and I also, you know, have to say that’s unfortunate, that’s the unfortunate part of critical consciousness development, that you know, we are no longer, you just no longer can plead ignorance around these things, you know once your eyes are open, it’s part of the process.

Marissa pointed out that she regularly reminds her students of the privilege (and inherent power) in engaging multicultural issues at a graduate level, but also that said privilege comes with responsibility:

But, conversations that happen out in the real world, there’s a privilege that comes with being a student in a doctoral program focused on this stuff and that there is time and energy focused on building tools for dialogue. And developing skills for how to have these conversations.

And finally, Catherine further discussed this idea:

At our university, we have lots of students who are first generation college students, first generations graduate students, and I’ve had um sometimes over the years some very heartbreaking accounts of students who are first in their family to pursue a graduate degree, and they go home and you know they are sometimes really outwardly rejected, like oh you think you're so smart now, or you know we can’t even speak to you anymore because you speak this different language.
Other participants felt that students take their experiences from the multicultural classrooms into future training sites (and even social media) where their supervisors can help them develop skills that complement their newly emerging multicultural awareness and knowledge. In this vein, Sean shared the following:

A number of our students work [at a hospital] affiliated with the university. I know that they get pretty good training there. We have a number of students that do hospice work there, work in the oncology department there, do work there, and so I believe that they’re having those conversations there… I also really encourage my students to get into community and campus activities. So, we have safe training, we have a number of spectrum groups and organizations, student organizations too, or people wanting to increase their awareness of sexual orientation issues.

And finally, Sean offered the following anecdote around how he sees students engaging multicultural issues via social media:

I think our classes are talking about that more and more certainly with social media where some of these students are starting to really connected more and more, that’s everywhere you look on Facebook and Instagram and Snapchat and all of these things, where there is more acceptance of these kind of once considered to be alternative, but now finding their way into the mainstream expressions and experiences. So, I think that the classroom discussions do facilitate that, and a lot of times students will say, oh, check out this blog or check out this YouTube channel, or check out this person's Twitter feed.

**Main Theme 3: Generational Training Influences Faculty Multicultural Perspectives**

All twelve participants discussed their previous training with respect to their doctoral education. Much of this discussion surrounded individual mentors or faculty within their
respective departments who impacted their multicultural sensitivities. Several participants described salient memories where their faculty infused race and sexual orientation into their classrooms discussions. There were distinctions made between the frequency with which race issues were focused on, as well as distinctions where sexual orientation topics emerged in classroom discussion. Nearly all participants reported there being a “multicultural slant” to some of their training. Many participants qualified how certain individual faculty members within their departments fostered multicultural discussion more than others—these faculty members were sometimes participants’ doctoral chairs, while others were faculty members within the department at large. All participants expressed that diversity variables were siloed during their training, meaning that they were presented in classes as isolated cultural variables, rather than variables that overlap with one another.

A significant number of participants indicated that the notion of intersectionality with respect to multicultural variables was mostly nonexistent in their training; any discussion around intersectionality arose spontaneously rather than intentionally and was catalyzed by the instructor. Finally, nearly all participants articulated that generational factors (on the part of their faculty) could sometimes inhibit classroom experiences around multiculturalism, since many of their faculty trained decades earlier when the emphasis of diversity in psychology education was minimal.

**Subtheme 3a: Mentors Valued Social Justice Work.** Ten out of the twelve participants discussed how there were faculty members housed within their individual doctoral training programs who were supportive of diversity and multiculturalism. Several participants actually named mentors or doctoral chairs who were instrumental in their learning process, as well as paved the way for them to incorporate multiculturalism in their own teaching. Several programs
where participants trained had social justice foci embedded within the overall training model.

For example, Sean reflected on a general sense of how he viewed his department faculty:

[They were] champions in the field of social justice and so taking classes with them, having them as clinical supervisors, having them infuse supervision with questions about multiculturalism, not just psychopathology or treatment considerations, or you know, evidence-based treatment, so looking at it from a multicultural lens, an intersectional lens, looking at cultural considerations and then attending to those.

Similarly, Brad shared an example highlighting a temporal component for when diversity issues were first introduced in his doctoral programs:

It was introduced fairly early…in the course Introduction to Counseling Psychology, discussed issues of kind of isms, how they’re defined, how they affect both clinical work and formulation of research ideas. So, it was introduced into course work fairly early, I know it was included in a large number of my courses to a varying degree.

Because much of the focus of this study centralized around participants’ experiences within their graduate classrooms, several participants shared how faculty mentorship specifically informed their current pedagogical decisions (or approaches to teaching) stemming directly from how they remember their mentors teaching them. Nicholas offered the following:

I had really strong teaching supervision. My teaching supervisor was an African American woman and she leaned very much in on issues of race.

Similarly, Roger shared how his current multicultural teaching paralleled that of his doctoral advisor:

I mean most of us probably learn to teach [multicultural courses] based on our mentors and how they taught them and that’s, I mean I would say, half of my course is similar to
what [my advisor] does and then the other half is like things I’ve learned along the way because it’s more recent stuff.

This is not to say that all participants felt their entire doctoral faculty were inclusive toward multiculturalism since a few participants gave contrary examples. In fact, Wesley shared a memory of one of his multicultural classroom experiences:

I remember one of the students in the class who had a hearing impairment talking about deaf culture, because one of the assignments was talking about your cultural experience and they talked about their part in deaf culture. And the professor said, “there is no such thing as that,” and I’m like, okay one of the things that can define a culture is language.

Subtheme 3b: Diversity Variables Siloed in Training. Seven out of the twelve participants indicated that their doctoral faculty mostly approached teaching multiculturalism by splitting off diversity topics into sections presented in a linear fashion. Said differently, participants remembered covering multicultural topics individually and one at a time, usually in some prescribed order; however, several participants shared there being a heavier emphasis on race issues, followed by sexual orientation, gender, and then class, respectively. Focusing on individual variables also occurred for constructs such as racism and heterosexism, with little overlap between the two. For example, Nathan offered the following explanation:

Our fields are stuck in a single-axis framework, I really believe there is a lack of general awareness of even the most basic principle of intersectionality. I mean intersectionality is a super complex theory and framework and has been studied for decades, but even just the most basic principle of intersectionality, that every individual has multiple intersecting identities, some of which provide privileges and some of which result in being devalued and marginalized.
Logan describes a similar experience but adds how easily it was for him to adopt his own faculty’s siloed approach to diversity, and how his current students are the ones encouraging him to break away from siloed teaching:

People who are teaching these courses now were trained in a siloed fashion. And that coupled with the fact that we are never really taught how to teach has led to a lot of us initially approaching our work in a similarly siloed fashion. And that in some cases, especially for me, it’s been kind of my own thinking around pedagogy and also, I think students kind of pushing me as well in their evaluations of the course, to adopt a more complex intersectional lens to the work.

Several participants noted there being a lack of conversation around intersectionality, both within their classrooms and especially across the department at large. Several participants noted that any overt discussion around multicultural intersections were vague and theoretical, often not directly tying to therapeutic application or treatment. Marissa offers the following:

I think intersectionality was something that was starting to be moved towards there but I think it was still more of a multiple marginalization framework where it’s additive versus intersectional.

Nathan also found a lack of intersectionality in his doctoral training, adding that an understanding of layered oppression for diverse populations often becomes lost when topics are presented individually:

I think as good as it was addressing kind of single axes of difference, and discrimination, I feel like there could have been a stronger, more robust emphasis on how different forms of discrimination like racism and heteronormativity are really intertwined, and produce unique outcomes for diverse populations, or multiply diverse individuals and groups.
Subtheme 3c: Generational Factors Inhibited Multicultural Teaching/Learning.

Seven of the twelve participants felt generational factors (mostly on the part of their doctoral faculty members) could sometimes inhibit multicultural inclusivity. Participants cited how many of their faculty members trained decades before them, during a time when diversity issues and multicultural psychology were not at the forefront of training. It was their belief that faculty members who did not experience psychology training through a multicultural lens did not heavily incorporate it in their classes. Marissa shares:

Depending on who we had as an instructor, conversations of multiculturalism would come in...sexual orientation and gender and racial dialogues sometimes would come in but sometimes it would get relegated to the background or rendered invisible to the conversation by nature of who the instructor was...that’s kind of the typical framework for how multiculturalism, gender, sexual orientation was handled in the classroom for many of my classes, which is kind of sad but I think also it speaks to the generation of instructors that I had in my doctoral education who were not raised in the multicultural framework even if they already had one.

A few participants brought attention to the fact that despite them only recently finishing their own training, they felt somewhat removed from the cohort of students they were currently teaching—meaning that they worried their own training lagged behind where the field is today. Roger shared what it has been like for him, only recently finishing his doctorate and entering the academy:

I think we have a decent amount probably half or a third of the class is straight out of undergrad, you know, or like a year out of undergrad, they’re getting their masters, so they’re young folks, and so they’re like early to mid-twenties, I would guess and I’m sort
of part of that generation technically, but I’m still at the older end of it, so I don’t quite feel like a millennial. But, there are differences in the way people are learning, I think, and the way that people are taking in stuff…I just feel like, differences, and part of it is social media connectedness.

Main Theme 4: Departmental Culture Impacts Multicultural Teaching and Learning

Before discussing their experiences of how race and sexual orientation emerged alongside one another within their classrooms, faculty participants provided environmental context around their current academic departments. All participants shared how important it was to consider the culture within their current department with respect to how multicultural issues are approached and fostered. For example, there was a distinction struck between how participants viewed the greater administrative culture within their university setting, and how the department faculty (in general) promoted the inclusion of diversity issues in training. Some participants indicated how administrators were sometimes quite removed from contemporary multicultural teaching strategies, thus carrying significant cultural blind spots. Additionally, participants shared that the composition of the student body influenced how they experienced teaching multicultural psychology, with a greater minority representation helping foster dialogue and overall engagement with diversity issues. Similarly, having mostly White student bodies puts added pressure on students with majority identities to step-up and engage. Participants indicated that recruiting and supporting faculty with minority identities was critical, but also highlighted how faculty who rarely get tapped for teaching multicultural courses (i.e., White faculty, Heterosexual faculty) need to also take responsibility for promoting a multicultural conversation within the department.
Subtheme 4a: Importance of Department Minority Faculty. Eight out of the twelve participants felt that it was important to have minority faculty representation within their current department. Having minority faculty within department culture was thought to positively correlate to the recruitment of minority students; similarly, having lower numbers of minority faculty often translated into student bodies that were mostly homogeneous toward the majority. Logan offers perspective on how he believes a targeted approach for recruiting and maintaining minority faculty has positively influenced students’ receptivity to multicultural issues:

I think in our program we’ve hired more faculty that have a focus on diversity, multicultural issues and equality. And that has drawn more students who have an interest in those issues.

Similarly, Marissa shares how she feels faculty minority identities actually serve as a mechanism for how multicultural issues in the classroom are attended to:

What I see is some of the most important things about conversations, or content focused on race and sexual orientation, I think what’s been raised to the surface to me through [our] conversation, is again how much the identity statuses of the professor will inform how the process moves.

Academic departments with little visible diversity were viewed as relegating multiculturalism to the sideline, sometimes only discussing such issues in the context of a once-a-year meeting or in-service training to fulfill accreditation quotas. For example, Marissa shared how she felt her academic department maintained very little attention to the recruitment of faculty of color and general multiculturalism, but instead “checked off” their diversity requirements out of necessity:

We have our diversity meeting once a year, where they bring in speakers and do diversity stuff and otherwise it’s a very silenced topic.
Most participants, however, vocalized there being continuous attention placed on multicultural issues across academic semesters. Several participants, though, indicated how their departments struggled to recruit and hire people of color. Both Yvonne and Peter shared how their respective department faculties had come together to discuss the obstacles in successfully bringing on faculty of color. Peter offers insight around his experience:

> If you can get a department and administrative support to try and address these issues, I think you will see better training in this area. You’ll see less marginalization of multicultural research and scholarly activity…Already the program was really White, male dominated and that’s been an issue. We’ve had trouble attracting people who want to live in the south who are people of color.

In contrast, Yvonne, Nicholas, and Roger reported that their academic departments had all seen sharp increases around faculty members who identified as “LGBT,” and how this increase led to perceived shifts around more inclusive sexual/gender orientation discussions.

**Subtheme 4b: Department Majority Faculty Have Responsibilities.** Eleven out of the twelve Participants shared their beliefs that faculty holding majority identities also had responsibilities within the department around multiculturalism. There was extensive discussion around how faculty of color and sexual/gender minority faculty are “tapped” to teach all of the multicultural courses within programs. Not only are minority faculty often the ones teaching required and elective courses, but rarely are their White faculty counterparts even asked to teach said courses. Nathan offers his take on this:

> I think it’s interesting, when my multicultural course comes back to the cycle and it’s open for anyone to teach, it’s just never embraced by other faculty. Of course, we can all teach all of the classes, you know, when they’re offered, even if they’re not our expertise,
but somehow you get a pass, you know, if it’s the multicultural class and you’re not a person of color.

He goes on to share the emotional toll that he has felt as a person of color when he is expected to continuously teach these courses while his White colleagues show no interest:

[I invest] a lot of energy and spirit basically to help move these resistant students a couple inches forward and how much of a toll that takes, you know, when we are doing that, and then outside of the class we are struggling with our own experiences of racism and discriminations and microaggressions and so I think I’m eager for more White faculty, you know, to adopt these courses, even though it’s not their area of expertise.

A few other participants discussed the need for majority faculty to speak up when microaggressions within classrooms (and even faculty meetings) are left unchecked. With respect to collegial interactions, Nicholas noted:

[I experience] microaggressions [within the department], a lot of using me both as a minority, so as a gay minority, but also using my Whiteness to sort of buffer to people that are straight and white. I would argue that women in the department face the same things. So, they get to be White sometimes and then, when irritated, they have to be women….Just as there's all of these intersections and frameworks and issues at the student level, but also between faculty and faculty…And I think part of that is because we can all hide behind this idea that we know better because we have a PhD and we can all pat ourselves on our narcissistic backs and be really happy that we were able to talk about these things in such an enlightened way, but I don't think there's a lot of discussion between faculty.
Catherine discussed an instance where she took responsibility for one of her White female colleagues teaching multicultural counseling in a different academic department altogether: [She’s] not shy about sharing her conservative views and the students had started to come to us to complain, saying “we are queer and we don’t feel safe in this woman’s classroom.” I remember at one point having that conversation with one of our students, who I again care for very deeply, and she was saying “I feel like I have to guard myself every time I go into the classroom and just try to make it to the end of the semester, it’s everything I can take just to not be out as a lesbian and it’s so hard,” and so what I ended up telling this student was you know hearing that makes me embarrassed as an educator and I’m going to apologize to you on behalf of that professor because she never will.

One participant, Roger, shared an experience he had with respect to other White faculty and administrators within his department:

I think I have to sort of tread lightly to even, yeah, even in our meetings and stuff like that, because I mean we have our department chair, I mean everyone that’s in a position of power is a White person and so all the tenured people. And I don’t want to offend them or activate them too even though I do when I bring up this stuff, you know, I am to some degree, some people can hear that stuff but some still can’t…My department Chair actually said “I don’t know if you should be using the word privilege” anymore and I’m just like, okay, you’re White and what should I be saying, what term is better than that? Like unearned ‘privilege’ is legitimately, if you look it up in the encyclopedia, that’s what we are describing.

Three of the twelve participants for this dissertation were White, cis-gender, heterosexual men: their non-marginalized identities were openly acknowledged as being foreign to multicultural
classrooms. These individuals, however, did not feel that their classrooms were impacted greatly in either a positive or negative direction because of their held majority statuses. Peter shares:

I'm not sure how many people you're interviewing are from the dominant race and sexual orientation and gender, I feel a little weird being a White male teaching this course. I'm going to be honest with you, I do. But at the same time, we actually have a faculty member who could probably teach it, but she doesn't want to, an African American woman, and she doesn't want to. And I think a lot of the times people pass it off to the person of color in a faculty program.

Another perspective was offered by Brad:

I mean if the question is, have I been regarded as legitimate because I’m not a person of color teaching the class? I don’t think that’s been the case at all. I think the students know I’ve done research on multicultural issues, which concur some degree of legitimacy. I guess, if the question is: is it a hindrance being not a person of color? Than the answer is no. If it’s an issue of being White, I don’t think so either.

**Subtheme 4c: Diversity of Students Impacts Multicultural Education.** Nine participants out of twelve highlighted the importance of having a diverse student body and how such diversity increased the likelihood of multicultural classroom discussions. Several participants shared their experiences of teaching in homogeneous classrooms and how a lack of diversity restricts conversations around multiculturalism. Yvonne offered the following comment:

Most of the students who come through are Anglo-women and there is some, there’s some variety in terms of sexual orientation within the cohort, but most of them are White.

Brad concurs with:
In the context of this university there’s a challenge of recruiting diverse students, largely because of geographic location. Participants stated that students who carried marginalized memberships, when present, could insert first-person experience into classroom discussion; these individuals could also call out other students without faculty even needing to offer constructive critique. Logan shared the benefits he experiences teaching at a public university in a diverse metropolitan city:

And so, my sense is, and this is based on some of the conversations we have in class, that we have a more diverse student body, and students who are more willing and able to have conversations around complex issues like the intersection of race and sexual orientation.

Nathan also shares a similar experience discussing one of the most recent doctoral cohorts admitted to his department:

And, so it’s a racially diverse group and it’s really great actually, again, having that kind of diversity in this group because I think it raises sort of the bar for everyone. I think it really helps a lot that it’s a diverse cohort, one of the students is an out gay black male, and another student identifies as lesbian and she is also very open about her sexual orientation.

Finally, Marissa shares a personal account of how she believes having sexual minority students in her classes changes the way that students talk about sexual orientation and gender diversity:

What I notice is something that typically happens is that, unless there is a queer in the room, which there happens to always be when I teach, sexual orientation stuff tends to like find its way in the background of conversations or to get sent to the margins of the conversation, I think because presumed heteronormativity kind of rules students’ space, a lot.
Subtheme 4d: Developmental and Programmatic Cohort Differences. Nine out of twelve participants believed that multicultural conversations within classrooms were influenced significantly by students’ developmental and programmatic levels. Participants discussed how one of the biggest challenges in presenting multicultural issues in their courses is the different degrees of exposure and awareness that graduate students come in with. For example, Brad offers the following:

People arrived kind of at very disparate levels of familiarity with their levels of exposure to even like a single aspect of diversity. And so there ended up being a struggle for me in terms of teaching on multiple levels when it was apparent to me that there was a struggle for some individuals to kind of understand one aspect of diversity. And simultaneously, several people in the class who were very ready to understand intersectionality, and were very able to recognize how intersections of identity work…And so to ask them to do like multiple levels simultaneously can be a lot to ask some people to do. I think it can be so much that it can actually turn some people off, because then they feel like not competent or even just confused or something.

He goes on to share his shifting worry away from students at lower levels of awareness to those with a more sophisticated knowledge of multicultural issues:

And not just the students who are coming in with lower levels of awareness, you know I used to worry more about the resistance piece and the ignorance piece, now I find myself worrying more about the students who are more advanced and worrying about am I giving them what they need.

Participants also believed there to be differences between teaching multicultural courses to master’s students as opposed to doctoral students. For example, Roger offers the following:
I’m also recognizing a lot of differences between when I teach doc students things and when I teach master’s students things, I need to really adjust myself, my position, the way that I discuss these things in part because you know I think doc students typically are in a position where they’re seeing what they’re learning and realizing how much they don’t know and there’s a difference between that, and it’s a qualitative difference, but it’s an understandable difference, too, master’s students don’t quite understand what they don’t know.

Similarly, Peter shares how he prefers to work with master’s students:

I prefer to teach the masters students because they’re more open than the doctoral students, because the doctoral students think they know everything…They are green, the master’s students for sure. But that green, it also comes with openness.

There was also discussion among participants regarding the type of program students were admitted into. For example, Yvonne highlighted a programmatic distinction between doctoral students in Clinical Psychology programs versus those in Counseling Psychology:

So, there are a lot of differences already within the group. One is that philosophical differences are pretty significant. But, the second-year clinical students by that time are in the clinic, and so they’re seeing patients and they’re having experiences with these people. First-year counseling don’t have patients or clients yet and so everything is very abstract for them…Our clinical students kind of had a real blind spot, which is, yes, we talk about race, yes, we talk about sexual orientation, yes, we talk about class, but it’s not like these things happen in isolation in people.

Subtheme 4e: Department Lacking Intersectional Conversation. Participants noted a general lack of overt discussion, research, or teaching around multicultural intersections. Faculty
participants openly shared that simply attending to diversity variables within their respective departments, in isolation, could sometimes be challenging. Although nearly all participants indicated that they include the notion of intersectionality in their individual courses, none indicated there being a similar focus within department meetings, or discussions around research collaborations. Yvonne shares how she believes her department has respect for multicultural education, but that the notion of intersectionality is mostly disregarded by her department:

In terms of the department, again I think it’s kind of, it’s a non-issue, which I guess is unfortunate because it’s not been anything that we have dealt with in the department.

Nathan believes that intersectionality is not as present in graduate training programs due to individual teaching curriculums that don’t allow for it to be emphasized:

I think that it hits at the heart of your study, I think the more we do, the better we do, to integrate intersectionality, an intersectional lens to specific diversity-focused courses, that multiculturalism or social justice, it needs to be infused all throughout the program.

Nicholas echoes similar ideas with respect to his academic department:

There's this facade, or sort of lip service to being interested in this, but not really…I also don't think our current curriculum is set up that well. We have one multicultural class and that's it. I’m complaining about it. There's one, and that to me is like, whoa.

There were also several personal examples illustrating how other faculty members and administrators could appear tone deaf to notions of intersectionality, even going as far as publicly embarrassing or criticizing a professor in front of their colleagues. Wesley shared one example where he felt another faculty member completely missed the point of how different identities such as gender and sexual orientation could intersect:
On National Coming Out Day this past year, I wore a t-shirt that I had made for myself that says, “No one knows I used to be a lesbian.” And I wore that on National Coming Out Day. Just happened to be the day we had a department faculty meeting. Just happened to be a long day, I had worn a sweatshirt over it, but I had just trekked across campus and I was hot, and I was in a hurry to get to the meeting on time. And, so, I took my sweatshirt off and one of the fellow faculty members said, “You know I’m really disappointed in you for that shirt. I think that’s inappropriate in the work place, and I can’t believe you would do that.” And to me, you know, I was like, it’s National Coming Out Day, that’s like a big deal.

**Main Theme 5: Socio-political Influences on Multicultural Teaching**

Eleven out of the twelve faculty participants commented on the presence of current socio-political events, as well as how geographic influences served as a backdrop to their multicultural teaching. With respect to geographic influences, many participants referenced the importance of considering the political, economic, and social climate where their academic program and university were housed. Those individuals working in universities (and states)—particularly within the deep South—were faced with students having more traditional, conservative viewpoints with respect to diversity issues.

There were multiple inferences about political ideologies possibly influencing how students respond to multicultural teaching. In addition, recent changes within the current presidential administration were noted, as well as references to human rights movements such as “Black Lives Matter” and the recent Supreme Court decision to legalize same-sex marriage. Having an emotionally-charged, socio-political backdrop impacted how participants perceived their students wrestling with topics related to race and sexual orientation, specifically. In
addition, participants noted their own wariness around such issues and how they, too, had been trying to make sense of social justice issues in today’s society.

**Subtheme 5a: Social and Geographic Backdrop.** Ten out of the twelve participants stated that social and geographic influences played crucial roles in their multicultural classrooms. Participants who were teaching in areas of the country often aligned with more conservative, religious ideologies found it challenging to incorporate multicultural perspectives in their classes. There were several indications that “the Deep South” or “rural” areas with little visible diversity, were often associated with university cultures (and student bodies) more skeptical of non-majority contexts. Sean offers a few points related to this issue:

I teach in the rural Midwest, “the Bible belt.” There’s a lot of people that come from very religious, very conservative, Christian habits and homes and things like that…The main thing that I kind of see is that a lot of these students, and not all, but a number of them report that they come from kind of these sheltered backgrounds or small communities or farming towns. They grew up with their nearest neighbor being half a mile away. And some people say, “You know I haven’t really thought about this before,” or “I’ve been taught that people who are gay are an abomination to God, or that marriage equality is wrong because you know, that’s what my parents told me.” And, so, some of these people are starting to have these conversations for the first time and even think about it for the first time.

Brianne shares her perceptions of how geographic influences enter into her multicultural classrooms:

I think that, especially teaching in the South at this university in a larger context, right, so the departments, the faculty didn't come here because of the social justice program, you
know. [This university] isn't really defined that way, so I think that’s where some of those things get a little trickier. So, there was a legislator [here] that was targeting different faculty members for their research if it was queer.

Directly contrasting these viewpoints were participants discussing how programs in larger metropolitan cities, or geographic locales that draw diverse populations, are better suited for multicultural teaching infusions. For example, Yvonne shares perspective on her experiences teaching in a southern locality:

The larger social context where you’re teaching the course, I think, makes a difference.

That teaching this course at Berkley probably is a very different experience than teaching it here, just because, it’s kind of that notion of starting where you’re at, and or starting, starting with the person where they’re at, so we’re looking at both, the social context, we can’t ignore that this is a largely White city that is conservative Christian and therefore, the notions of race and sexual identity are understood very differently here than they might be in Berkley or San Francisco.

In contrast, Nathan shares about his experiences teaching on the East coast. In his follow-up interview after reviewing the general findings from other faculty teaching in different geographic locations, he discussed having to continually remind himself that teaching in a large metropolitan city can be buffering:

I’m really actually fortunate at [my university] because some of the themes, some of the experiences, I was like, man I’m an outlier in some of these, you know, whether it’s being located in the deep South or, you know, having to consistently work with conservative, religiously conservative students. Those are few and far between for me, to be honest.
Subtheme 5b: Political/Current Events Backdrop. Eight of the twelve participants teaching multicultural graduate courses suggested significant caveats related to current events, as well as the emotionally-charged political atmosphere in today’s society. There were references made to the current (and last) presidential administrations influencing classroom discussion. For example, Wesley shared the following example of how one of his recent courses in multicultural counseling became influenced by the last presidential election:

Because the students aren’t, we aren’t asking the students to read about it anywhere and I supposed I could bring in some other material, from you know like journal articles, that could address that but I mean we ended up talking about every week about really deep and difficult conversations about the reality of what’s going on in the world including two class periods where a significant amount of time devoted to, oh my god, there’s this election and I’m working with these students whose political beliefs are so vastly different than mine I don’t know if I can sit in the same room with them, to the day after the election saying what the fuck just happened.

Most participants, however, shared their perceptions of how current events helped shape their multicultural teaching. For example, Brad provides a number of examples that emerged in his classrooms:

We’ve talked about the Syrian crisis, we’ve talked about refugee issues, we’ve talked about the travel ban imposed by the president. We’ve talked about people wanting to build a wall between the United States and Mexico. And in regard to sexual orientation, that is obviously such an incredibly relevant and applicable issue in our society today. It's probably the biggest kind of issue that we are experiencing right now in our society I would say as far as marriage equality, equal rights, bathroom issues, sports, how people
identify, whether it be the gender assigned at birth, or whether it be the gender that they identify with, what they are allowed to do, what they are not allowed to do.

Brianne found issues of race and racism permeating many of her recent multicultural classes:

I think it’s probably a multi-dimensional process that is influenced by what is going on socio-politically. When Michael Brown had evolved, kind of more highlighting of, you know, Black men, Black women, experiencing police brutality and violence, murder.

An interesting comment was made from Yvonne, who discussed how she felt current events were playing into classroom discussion in more of a “real time” way, rather than simply reading about things from textbooks that occurred generations ago:

Usually we are used to reading history in the books after everything has happened. We’re in it right now and it’s not a comfortable place. Because we are getting buffeted and struck by the change as it’s happening.

**Main Theme 6: Faculty Exploration of Personal and Teaching Philosophies**

All twelve participants reflecting on how they view multiculturalism and diversity within their personal and professional lives. In fact, this particular main theme ended up being the only one where a majority of participants endorsed each aspect of the theme. Participants shared how they personally conceptualized the role of multiculturalism in the discipline of psychology and how they translated this into the classroom. Particular attention was placed on seeing value in understanding diversity variables in isolation, as well as during times when they overlap. For example, participants discussed the importance of focusing on race-related topics so that students can understand the contextual impact of racism on individuals and society. Similarly, participants shared how rewarding it could be to help students see the role of sexual orientation in sexual minority identity development, but how that process can emerge differently for people of color.
There was a general acknowledgement that intersectionality, as a construct, was one without much visibility in participants’ own graduate training. Still, participants shared their appreciation for intersectionality and some of the challenges surrounding how they implement it into their courses. Participants also commented how they observe multicultural issues emerging within their graduate classes and pedagogical decisions around instruction, classroom activities, and student evaluation. There was a collective focus on the power of interpersonal process within classroom discussions and how participants often used themselves—via self-disclosure or by offering direct process comments—to facilitate students going deeper into multicultural issues. Participants offered numerous constructive critiques of their own teaching and provided examples around how they could handle future teaching opportunities better. Finally, participants expressed ways that their involvement in multicultural teaching and research had influenced their personal identity locations.

**Subtheme 6a: Approach to Multicultural Pedagogy and Intersectionality.** All twelve participants described having a personal and professional commitment to multicultural training. Participants shared their own personal reflections and conceptualizations of diversity and multiculturalism, while also translating how these perspectives were incorporated in their graduate courses. For example, Peter talks about his overall approach to multicultural teaching:

> I have a motto, personally and as a teacher: face your fear and do it anyway. I think for me, teaching multiculturalism has provided me with a lot of opportunities to challenge myself, and not just learning new things, but to recognize what happens when I react to things, why am I reacting to this sort of thing…And I'm a firm believer that the most important pillar in multicultural competence is awareness. So, without that awareness, the knowledge and the skills don't really mean anything.
Catherine shares her perspective on how important it is to set the tone for students at the outset of her multicultural counseling classes, so that students feel safe enough to risk evaluation and constructive criticism from their peers:

The truth is that the first day of class especially, I really see it as in some ways the most important day because I work very intentionally on creating the community and creating the space, co-creating with my students really, a space in which the tenor of the room, the feeling of the room is one of respect and enthusiasm for the course and the recognition that though it’s hard, it’s really exciting. It applies to all of us, we’re all a blend of multiple diverse privilege and marginalized identities and this is really an opportunity for us to learn. And this is really an opportunity for us to really learn more about ourselves and the world that we live in…rather than the fiction that so many of us are taught.

Graduate student involvement within the classroom experience was seen as critical; participants saw their students as active agents within the classroom, taking part in facilitation, dialogue, and critique. For example, Sean regularly has students take responsibility for their own learning and dialogue:

Every student has to be the discussion facilitator at least one week. And so that really forces them to dive into the text and kind of become a content expert on that population. And so, they give, they facilitate the discussion on sexual orientation, on ableism, on spiritual diversity. And they lead that discussion and I think it really helps in a number of ways because, like I said they kind of become a content expert on that topic. But then also the other students in the class hear a different voice every single week.
There was emphasis placed on the need for pedagogical flexibility—in other words, not being too restricted or unable to allow a particularly salient conversation to continue at the risk of running behind in course topics. For example, Brianne shares the following:

I think that just being grounded as a faculty member and as a facilitator. And um being willing to go off script and being willing to process some emotions, being willing to bring that privilege and oppression framework back, time and time again, without making it like old and tired.

Additionally, participants explored the construct of intersectionality, as well as how they saw it incorporated into their pedagogy. Nathan offers how he conceptualizes intersectionality:

I really believe there is a lack of general awareness of even the most basic principle of intersectionality, I mean intersectionality is a super complex theory and framework and has been studied for decades um but even just the most basic principle of intersectionality, that every individual has multiple intersecting identities, some of which provide privileges and some of which result in being devalued and marginalized. And damn, if that was more embedded in our worldviews, in our society, it just seems to me that we could make more progress around inclusivity and social justice. But, I see why that’s not necessarily a motivation of some. Because, right, a core piece of intersectionality is coalition-building, and um and so much of our dominant discourses and law or policies were created to prevent that exact thing so it’s an uphill struggle.

He then goes on to share how he displays the notion of intersectionality to students by highlighting his own personal struggles understanding it:

Before I really knew the term intersectionality, I think I tried to use that as a teaching tool in approaching conversations discussions about discrimination, privilege, oppression, by
sort of identifying my social locations where I often started, to acknowledge that as a person of color, as an Asian American, I have certainly experienced overt and covert forms of racism. At the same time, being of the privileged or agent group in every other sort of critical social identity category, a big part of my life and learning has been uncovering my privileges, as someone who identifies as male, as heterosexual from a middle-class background, someone that temporarily does not have a disability, etcetera, that sort of, using that to try to model the experience of learning new concepts, or learning about privileges you sort of have never interrogated before.

Logan stated that he often approaches intersectionality in his classes from a lens of oppressions: Another thing that I sometimes think about around intentionality and talking about intersectionality, is uh, so how I talk about it. I find it sometimes works better or is more effective if I talk about it first as multiple oppressions are marginalizations. Because sometimes in the past, I have found that students, it’s possible for students to use intersectionality, especially if we are talking about a targeted identity and maybe an advantaged identity, to use that to sometimes dismiss the phenomenon of oppression.

Several participants discussed challenges deciding when to present the construct of intersectionality in their courses. For example, Roger talked about it being important for him to hold off on generating discussion involving intersections until students had more of a foundation to view the construct: I know people who would have started that class with intersectionality research, like they would have started straightaway with Crenshaw and like they would have went from there, and like that’s fine too, but for me this is my own personal bias as a person of color, but like for me I feel like there’s so much rooted in this country and the history of
it, I needed to start with that and we could build from there and not minimize any other sort of dimension of our identities but that for me that felt like really important.

**Subtheme 6b: Classroom Activities and Evaluative Mechanisms Used to Promote Multicultural Learning.** All twelve participants reflected on what actually happens within their classrooms, week-to-week, as well as how they conceptualized evaluation. For example, participants shared the ways they plan and facilitate successful multicultural activities across classes, as well as examples of things that did not work very well. There was emphasis placed on the importance of multimedia, as well as the need to have diverse, in-class activities planned to communicate subject material. Across all participants was a reliance on scholarship and research including: peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and written narratives. A majority of readings used were on individual topics of diversity, while some participants chose readings that directly highlighted multicultural intersectionality. Participants also discussed the mechanisms they used to evaluate multicultural learning within their respective classes. Catherine discusses how she, like many of the other participants, utilizes peer-reviewed articles both in an outside of the psychology profession:

And, so, one of the things I do to try to, in gender discussion, around intersectionality with race and sexual orientation is ensuring that I choose readings that cover those together that look at the intersectionality. So, for example I have required readings, looking at one study, and you're probably familiar with a lot of these, since this is your research area, a study that was in Sex Roles a few years ago on black gay and bisexual men talking about the intersectionality. I have readings from Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology on the coming out experience and how that varies according to race. There's a journal I really like called Pediatrics, about how family rejection is a predictor
of poor health outcomes among white and Latino LGB youth and adults. So, I guess one of the ways I try to think about it is by ensuring that I'm choosing readings that look at these issues across the spectrum and intersectionality rather than have some readings on race and some readings on sexual orientation. And I try to do other kinds of, I have other teaching strategies and things that I do that also tap into that intersection.

Rather than relying solely on more traditional readings from textbook chapters and journal articles, Yvonne shares her reliance on “experience-near” readings:

I feel like a lot of the academic articles, like reading about the minority stress model, it’s very important, but it’s abstract, their learning kind of algorithms or equations. Whereas if they’re reading stories about an individual who is experiencing racism, who has experienced trauma, it’s like the minority stress model in action. And so that’s what I like to do instead. I like to kind of talk about those experiences in that way for them…I have them read these first-person accounts of an individual’s experience and then we’d talk about those. And then they were able to talk about their reactions, their feelings, after they had kind of connected with these characters.

One participant, Wesley, even utilized a popular fiction novel (and blockbuster film trilogy) in his last multicultural counseling class to explore some of the biases and challenges working with what some would consider fringes in human sexuality:

And, so one of the books that I had the students read “50 Shades of Grey” and assume that the character was their client and how would they work with the client with the things that they were bringing up in that section of the book and they wrote 3 separate papers. So, you know I was dealing with what I would call sexual minorities in that so in terms of the BDSM culture, and that’s certainly not a mainstream approach.
Other participants shared how they attempted to be “creative” in their graduate classrooms, so as not to rely on textbook chapters and journal articles alone. For example, Logan talks about ways he incorporates photography and creative media:

And, so each week, after we talk about a specific “ism,” the students have been assigned to go out and actually take a photograph that they feel captures the “ism” we talked about for that week. And, so the students will come in and in small groups just share, informally share their photos and why they took them and what they mean to them. At the end, they will put all their photos together as a photo voice project and review each other’s and then do a reflection on it. And so, what we are really trying to do is get students to kind of think about and see these various isms we are talking about in our every-day life. So, I think sometimes the material really comes to life, is when you start seeing these things around you that you took for granted or that you didn't notice before.

Similarly, Marissa offers her students even greater creative liberties when choosing ways to express their views on multiculturalism:

They’re going to present some sort of like visual media, there’s not going to be a written paper, so like, painting, they could do some dancing class if they want to.

Another common finding was that participants encouraged their students to pay attention to what was occurring in contemporary media, from how news was being covered, to what was being communicated to greater audiences via literature, film, art, etc. For example, Nathan shares how he has a hallmark literacy assignment in his multicultural counseling courses:

Well, my favorite assignment that I like so much, I’ve actually made it an assignment in all of my classes, it’s a critical media literacy assignment. And, so each week students are asked to bring in an artifact basically from the media, from popular culture, from
basically their daily lives that um demonstrates the reinforcement of some form of
discrimination in our society.

Nearly all participants utilized some kind of reflective writing component, ranging from daily,
private journal sessions held at the end of class to more fleshed out reaction papers turned in
around specific topics. Most participants evaluated students’ performance through individual
assignments, though there were also some who had group project components embedded in their
courses. In the following, Brad shares his views on using reflective writing with his students:

So, my primary pedagogical tool I use in the class is a diary study that the students will
do. Not a study, a diary activity that students will do. So, essentially the students are
encouraged to keep in mind instances that happen week after week when asked like a
varying identity is in effect. So, I guess the typical thing that people do in these classes is
get people to go out and do a multicultural thing. And I really dislike that approach
because I think it has the perspective of like “I’m turning the multicultural switch on and
I’m doing a thing and I’ll turn it off.” So, rather than do some kind of discreet activity, in
order to extrapolate it out to working with patients, what I have them do is kind of see
how day-to-day things that happen to them, happen to them because of, and people will
start out because of race or gender or sexual orientation, and more advanced students will
be able to understand intersections, what helps to kind of meet them where they are. And
thus, move them forward. So, they write these things down and they can talk about them
in class.

**Subtheme 6c: Use of Self and Interpersonal Process Within the Classroom.** All
twelve participants shared the importance of using themselves as an instrument in the classroom,
whether that be owning their personal reactions to what was occurring within classroom
discussion, challenging students’ blind spots, or modeling how to engage in difficult dialogue. Several participants indicated that they freely self-disclose in their classes and that these disclosures often surround their own positionality across various identities, or include process comments about what they are feeling or observing. For example, Catherine discusses the following:

> So, I think [there’s] a delicate blend of how do I share about myself in suitable ways that encourage students to share about themselves. I think it's unfair as faculty to expect students to share about themselves in written assignments and in small-group work and in other facets of the class if we're not willing to do that ourselves. On the other hand, I know that I hold a degree more of, quite a bit more power, you know, I have the evaluative power, etc. So, it's a fine line.

Brianne also chooses to begin her multicultural courses with a transparent discussion of her own personal and professional identities, to model to students the kind of risk and vulnerability that is expected in multicultural counseling classes:

> I start off with my identity, and we talk about how that’s affected my life. I’ll share about stories about what it feels like to be South Asian and queer and then maybe what it’s like for me to be non-binary, and then these other identities. And I think that they start to engage.

In his classes, Nathan attends to power differentials by sharing memories of times he made mistakes in an effort to show students the humility and personal responsibility needed to be a social justice advocate:

> I think when I share stories um they probably tend to be more of around sort of mistakes that I’ve made or, you know, those sort of critical learning moments where I was
confronted around my sexism or [when] I realize that I perpetrated a sexual orientation microaggressions and again sort of modeling that as painful and as embarrassing and challenging as those experiences have been throughout my life and they continue to be because I’ve continued to unfortunately fall into these traps that in many ways, they’re also gifts.

Similarly, Roger uses himself to confront what he believes to be consistent across all individuals (including faculty and other social justice advocates), the notion that we all hold biases and prejudice:

I’m trying to just be sort of as transparent as possible you know I don’t want to be clever, I don’t need to show that I’m smart, I mean, I really just want to sort of make this a safe place for them. So, that they can be vulnerable, they can talk about their mistakes, they can talk about that we have biases, what I’m really trying to do is model that we’re all racist, we’re all sexist, we’re all homophobic, to some degree if we grew up in the U.S. or anywhere really, we absorb this stuff, we drank the water, you know, we breathe the air, we are all this way, and we are all working to sort of undo this stuff.

Continuing this notion of what students need to feel safe in their graduate classrooms, Brad talks about how crucial it is to set up and maintain boundaries, so that students can vulnerably risk without worrying about repercussions:

And so very early on, we kind of set in the first class, we set boundaries, rules and expectations. What is needed for people to feel safe in this class, for people to feel heard, to feel respected? For people to have different viewpoints and for there to be a civil discourse, of those different viewpoints so that hopefully we can be challenged, so we can hear other people, so that we can consider these alternative perspectives that we
ourselves may not have looked at before…So, I spent a lot of time kind of exploring that, what each person needs to feel safe. Sometimes some people talk about if conversations get too heated, we need to have a time out, or just you know excuse oneself from the classroom, to get a sip of water, fresh air.

Some participants referenced the use of clinical skills in the classroom, like being able to sense when things are being left unsaid, or noticing that certain students begin shutting down. While a majority of participants reported using process comments to further discussion (or sometimes to further discord between students), some others shared their intention of encouraging students to make their own observations without needing to coax them. Marissa talked openly about her role in such conversations with students:

And so, when I’m the facilitator of the conversation, I try to name processes that are happening in the class that might be getting in the way or disabling conversation…some of the ways that I’ve seen be fruitful is like naming the silence and asking people to explain what it’s about. I also might allow, so like in the group class, they really, because of some of the readings, what got brought up was some of their feelings of disempowerment from the program itself, and so like part of what I do as a facilitator is if something’s coming up like I give them space to talk about it. Because they’re practicing the skill set, it doesn’t really fucking matter what they’re talking about.

In a similar vein, Nicholas regularly uses his own emotional reaction toward classroom conversations to disrupt students’ reticence to engage difficult dialogues:

[I use] a lot of clinical skill in the sense of when there's anxiety in the room, and sort of picking up on the feeling, so I think clinically I work interpersonally, so I then carry that into the classroom. I'm thinking of moments where I've been like, "OK, I'm bored." Like
literally being, "This class is boring me to tears," or "I feel like I'm angry that we're not talking about this." Inevitably, I explain this at the beginning of the class and say this is how I work, it doesn't mean I'm angry or bored, but I'm just sort of picking up on the feeling of the room. And without fail we've always had 1 or 2 classes where we just sort of process feelings as a group. I always let that come up organically.

**Subtheme 6d: Constructive Reflection Around Areas of Growth.** Eleven out of the twelve participants approached these qualitative interviews from a reflective, introspective place. Participants shared how engaging with these interviews allowed them to consider how they were teaching multicultural issues in their courses, and how they might make these experiences better for them and their students. Several participants noted how qualitative research (and this study in particular) encouraged faculty to slow down and take stock of what they are actually doing in their classrooms. There was discussion about how faculty were not taught how to use pedagogy effectively within the classroom and how many learn by trial and error—or simply carrying over what their individual mentors did when they were training. Nearly all participants felt comfortable sharing their own personal journeys within the academy and how they tried to maintain an openness to new ideas and techniques. But, participants were critical of past mistakes that they made and gave several examples of times when their better intentions ended up shutting down classroom conversation. For example, Marissa shared how

I have a tendency to self-silence and to question if what I have to say is a valuable thing to say. And I think those insecurities are born of those, of the oppression that I experience with those identities, and the internalized oppression that I have with those identities and also the socialization that I’ve had, and I think this is a little bit of bootstrapping, which is another cultural thing, but like the problem I see with me silencing myself, because fear
of saying the wrong thing or not having the right intervention at this time, or whatever it might be, also stymies their learning and maintains supremacy.

Nathan talks about his awareness of his own dominant statuses and how he tries to keep himself accountable in managing privilege and reaching minority students in his classes:

And you know in a similar vein I think it’s been um in, in as a heterosexual identifying man teaching about things like heterosexism and heteronormativity and really trying to be mindful that um I can be empathic and I can be learned about um the experience of LGBTQ folks but I’ll never fully know and I will also be in the dominant privileged group. Um that awareness is a constant sort of check, um trying not to become complacent or um revert so quickly back to my privileged heterosexual lens and worldview.

Participants also discussed the power of evaluation, and how they have needed to calm some of their own fears around negative student evaluations, or other retribution from the department for being challenging around multicultural issues. Many verbalized having personal knowledge gaps and how they continue being on their own multicultural journeys, despite now being the one leading group discussions on the topic. Peter, being a White, heterosexual, cis-gender male faculty member shared the following sentiment around how he had caught himself covertly “checking things out” with students of color:

I know that multicultural confidence is a lifelong journey. I recognize that. But, honestly, I was surprised by how much I did the same thing. Unconsciously, I would look over to, one of the African American women, and then another African American woman, and I would look over to these people and see how they were reacting to people's statements. And also, really wondering how they were going to react to my statements at times.
He went on to share how he recently reached out to students who participated in his last multicultural counseling course to elicit feedback, with what he found to be concerning results:

I sent a survey to all the students who had taken my course and I asked them in what percentage or how often did someone say something in class that you found personally offensive and about 25% of people said that they agreed with that and then how often do you find that someone said something in class that someone else might have found personally offensive, or you were worried that someone might find personally offensive, about 50%, it was almost and even perfect split, and then I said how often did your professor, which is me by the way, say something that was personally offensive and 75% of the students said I had said something personally offensive.

Another story shared by Catherine recounts her decision to connect with a sexual minority student who stormed out of class after they had felt personally attacked by her:

I thought you know this was a really good opportunity for me to apologize to her for discounting her experience and feelings and so I wrote her what I hope was a really heartfelt email after, you know, explaining that I felt terrible for having hurt her, owned it, and said of course I would be happy to meet with you, if you’d like to meet, the next time we were both on campus, just let me know, and she wrote back a very equally lovely email where she appreciated what I said and we had sort of a mutual understanding of what happened and we both cared about each other.

Yvonne, a faculty member of color, shared how she realized over the past several years that she carried a bias around poor White individuals that she needed to attend to, and how intersections of race and class have changed for her after teaching in a rural, Appalachian culture:
For lack of a better way to put it. I’m more sympathetic to them. Even though you could say that there’s a lot, and it’s a big generalization but there’s a lot to that particular group that furthers a lot of the homophobic, racist kinds of attitudes. I think living here…I’ve tried to be more empathic with them as we talk about these issues because I see their intentions now as being less toxic or less progressive than I might have before.

Subtheme 6e: Faculty Identity Management Influenced by Teaching

Multiculturalism. All twelve participants shared how teaching multiculturalism in graduate psychology courses has influenced their personal identity management. Indeed, a number of participants included themselves in the learning process that occurs within classrooms alongside students. Some participants shared how they viewed issues of oppression and power taking place in real time, while others noted realizations about their individual racial, sexual, and gender identities. Although the previous three identities were the most discussed across participants, other personal identities such as class, religion and spirituality, and ability-status were shared. For example, Logan shares how teaching multicultural counseling has influenced his role as a White educator, holding multiple majority status memberships:

I think for me it helps keep me in check. It helps me think about and reflect more on my own privilege and advantage because teaching these classes is hard. It’s hard for everyone and I think for me, when I’m having a hard time teaching them, or say we start the quarter and I’m thinking, I’m really feeling like I don’t want to teach the class this year because it’s emotionally challenging to me to do it. You know I have to check myself and think about, well is that because I don’t have to think about this stuff on an everyday basis? Why am I experiencing that kind of resistance and why is it after class I feel so emotionally depleted? So, I think for me it helps me check my own, certainly my
White fragility, but also other things as well, heterosexual fragility, class fragility. And, so it helps keep me on my toes. I think when you have so many different advantaged social implications, yeah especially as a faculty member, it’s easy to say, well I’m not doing that. Or I don’t have to.

Brianne shared how she noticed shifting in some of her personal identities—specifically around gender—and how these shifts led to other intersections and new insights:

I think when I first got here, even though my racial ethnic identity is probably my most salient identity, [it] influenced a lot of how I experienced my gender and sexual orientation. All of a sudden, my queer identity was like Whoa! And you know, as I was teaching these courses and setting up my pedagogy the way I did, it was a risk. So, I think, you know, the queer, gender-queer, non-binary part, I didn't really come out with the non-binary part until maybe a year or two ago. And you know you’re talking mostly about sexual orientation, but for me those are really interlinked, together…I was able to access more, you know that racial ethnic part of my identity. So, I talked about how my religious spiritual affiliation is really linked to my race ethnicity, as well. And so, I think that I’ve settled more into talking more openly about that part of my identity as I encourage students to, you know, talk about what it’s like to be straight, cis, and White and Christian, or Jewish.

Similarly, Yvonne shared reflection on how her own gender expressions and identity continue to be a source of discovery and how teaching multicultural classes facilitates this for her:

I think why I’m mostly interested in the gender identity piece is for my own background, I’m fairly, I’m a fairly masculine Latina and where I grew up, the notions of femininity were incredibly rigid, for Mexican-American women. And so, I remember having my
own kind of questioning like, you know, I’m not like these very feminine women, so I thought maybe I’m gay, and I thought, no that’s not it, so that notion of gender really started getting highlighted for me when I was younger. I didn’t have the words for it. Um and as I’ve gotten more training and experience in kind of gender identity, it allowed me to kind of develop my own sense of gender identity. So, I say cis-gender but I’m fairly masculine in terms of my presentation, um, and so yeah, I mean part of the, I think, part of the fun of teaching this course is that it allows me to continue to learn about things that, um you know, it’s a big world and there’s always stuff to pick up.

Catherine spoke at length about how she views her sexual orientation that visibly looks one way on the surface (due to her being married to a man):

I identify as heterosexual or “heteroflexible,” and heteroflexible I guess is something students maybe aren't as familiar with, and I guess I feel that when I do talk about my sexual orientation, it's more in terms of saying, "I partner with a man and that's part of my privilege to be able to refer to him, to be able to, I have a picture of him framed in my office so students can see when they come in. You know that kind of thing that sort of marks my privilege there. I'm less inclined to talk about more of the nuances about my sexual orientation, just not out of any glaring reason I can think of other than it's really complicated and I don't really talk about it with very many people at all.

Another participant, Nicholas, discussed his surprise around how salient his sexual orientation identity became after joining the faculty at a private, religiously-oriented institution:

I'm White, I'm male. And I'm gay, and that is not a place of privilege. But even within the gay community, being White is a privilege. What I think has changed about my identity management this year, is being within a religious institution, being gay and that part of
my identity has become unbelievably challenging, in terms of just the outside part of my life. Both in terms of the microaggressions but also having to assert, at some moments fairly uncomfortable realities, at a religious institution, well in life, like if I were to go outside the gates and go into the world, I may carry more privilege than a straight, Black woman. But in these gates, in here, I have to contend that I actually, at this particular intersection, this is a very not privileged place for me, and let's sort of talk about what that looks like. And that's been met with a lot of blowback.

**Auditing Feedback and Data Processing**

As mentioned previously, the results and data analysis process were audited by an outside researcher who was in no way connected to the project. The auditor was an African American woman trained as a Counseling Psychologist; she brought expertise around qualitative research methodologies, as well as race and minority stress issues. The first data audit took place after the initial interview data had been analyzed. Feedback was communicated in written form, where the auditor commented on the strengths of the study, as well as areas of potential limitation. Overall, the auditor fully endorsed the analytic structure finding support for the main theme and subtheme categories; however, there were two areas that the auditor expressed some concern. First, she stated that the data set felt large and overwhelming to make sense of; thus, she suggested finding a way to share the “broad strokes” of the data in table format so that the reader would be able to more easily orient themselves. This feedback led to the construction of Table 2 above. The second suggestion dealt with the auditor’s concern around not knowing if certain multicultural identities (e.g., race and religion/spirituality) on the part of study participants might have impacted how they responded to research questions. Specifically, the auditor wondered if religious identification on the part of participants could influence sexual orientation issues, since
some religious communities do not fully accept sexual minority individuals. The auditor offered how she, being raised in a traditionally conservative African American Baptist church, was taught that same-sex attraction was wrong and unacceptable. This personal history, coupled with the sexual orientation stigma known to be heavily experienced in some religious communities, made her question whether inserting additional questioning during the member checks was warranted.

After careful consideration, it was determined that I would not insert new content questions surrounding the role that religion and/or spirituality had in participant’s respective classrooms. This decision was made so as not to overly complication the data by spontaneously incorporating a third multicultural variable, when the original research question dealt specifically with race and sexual orientation. It was determined, however, that I would ask a follow-up demographic question during the second interviews to simply report this data and reflect on how such information could be folded into future studies. This is the reason why I was able to gather demographic data as it relates to religiosity for only 9 participants. Further discussion as it relates to religious identity and overall sample characteristics are offered in the next chapter.

The second data audit occurred after the member checks were complete and after adjustment were made to the thematic structure. Again, feedback was communicated in writing, and focused mostly on the analytic decision to change demographics in the collective narrative to be more representative of the sample. There was concern on my part around having the collective narrative describe faculty experiences through the eyes of a White man, especially since this project dealt so heavily around issues of race. Mostly, I did not want to perpetuate the silencing of minority voices with respect to race even though there was a higher percentage of White men in my sample. The auditor helped make the final decision around maintaining the White male
demographics for the collective narrative, thinking that retaining this could highlight the importance of having faculty with majority identities actively engaged in multicultural teaching.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

In this dissertation, I explored the teaching experiences of doctoral-level faculty in graduate counseling psychology programs. More specifically, I focused on the lived experiences of faculty teaching graduate courses in multiculturalism and diversity, so as to understand how race-related issues emerge alongside of sexual orientation-related issues within their classrooms. Faculty participants described numerous experiences how they felt students engaged multicultural issues; they provided additional feedback on how their students addressed multicultural variables in isolation, as well as how their students navigated the complexities of intersectionality.

I begin this chapter with a presentation of the overall essence of the study using a fictitious collective narrative. While thorough descriptions for each thematic element were provided in the previous chapter, the collective narrative collapses these findings into one narrative. Then, I discuss parts of the collective narrative, indicating their similarities and departures from previous scholarship and research. I finish the chapter with discussion around implications for teaching and practice, a critique of the study’s limitations, connections to future research endeavors, and finally, some departing thoughts from participants on their engagement with the study.
Collective Narrative (Matt’s Story)

In the following collective narrative, I present a fictional representation of the experiences across study participants. It is written in such a way to depict a White, gay, cis-gender faculty member, named Matt, giving a brief symposium talk on their personal story related to teaching multiculturalism, and race/sexual orientation issues, specifically. Rather than encompassing every single main theme and subtheme, this narrative captures a general sense of what it is like for graduate faculty to experience race and sexual orientation topics emerging together in their classrooms. Wertz, Nosek, McNiesh, and Marlow (2011) discuss how the collective narrative helps the researcher bring an overall thematic structure to life. These authors further state how collective narrative

is not a simple re-telling. It is interpretation by the researcher in several important ways: through her knowledge of the literature regarding the phenomenon under enquiry, through listening and hearing the stories told by the informants, and through her own reflexivity during the process (p. 2).

I have included parenthetical notations throughout the narrative alerting the reader when some element of the thematic structure is being referenced (see Chapter 3 above for full descriptions of main themes and subthemes).

Paper to be Presented at the American Psychological Association Annual Convention Symposium Entitled: Faculty Experiences Witnessing the Intersections of Race-related Issues with Sexual Orientation-related Issues in Their Graduate Multicultural Classrooms

I remember when I was first asked to offer a paper contribution to this year’s symposium on my experiences with race and sexual orientation issues emerging alongside one another in my multicultural classes. I had taught sections of the multicultural counseling course in our graduate department for a few years now, so surely, I would have a few things to share about race and
sexual orientations intersections. Surprisingly, though, when I began thinking about what I would include in the content of this essay, I hesitated, asking myself: how have I experienced this phenomenon, and what do I have to say about these experiences in the context of multicultural teaching and scholarship?

I wasn’t completely sure how to answer this question. But, I suddenly found myself thinking about my own multicultural training, and where it all began for me—that seemed like the best place to start, I guess. I trained in a counseling psychology program about ten years ago, back when multiculturalism seemed to be newly on the scene in our discipline. Nearly all of the diversity and multicultural courses were taught by one or two professors; usually, these courses were taught by women, people of color, or sexual minority faculty. Although I remember multiculturalism being discussed in some of our classes, a majority of these discussions took place within designated multicultural classes only. Indeed, there was little discussion of racial dynamics in our research and statistics sequences and little attention was given to how same-sex marriage impacted society. My courses mostly siloed multicultural topics, meaning they were discussed individually, with little attention to the layering of multiple identity variables. In fact, I don’t really remember very much overt conversation, or even readings for that matter, dealing with topics addressing intersectionality (Subtheme 3b).

Faculty within my own doctoral program encouraged multicultural dialogues, but there were one or two who mostly kept their thoughts and feelings about diversity issues relatively silent; there were also faculty that I perceived as being plainly “not safe” with respect to multicultural issues. Sometimes, I found myself frustrated with what I perceived to be roadblocks from individuals in the administrative ranks of the university—administrators who held quite a bit of power (in social location but also within the university) who simply didn’t
acknowledge multicultural issues loud enough for me. But, there was usually at least one faculty member who visibly celebrated minority issues and mentored students around social justice and the importance of multicultural competence. Students like me flocked to faculty like this (Subtheme 3a).

The doctoral faculty in my master’s and doctoral training programs did not have very much training in diversity and multiculturalism (Subtheme 3c). I feel like I needed to take an active role in my own multicultural learning while in my training program. I found myself being challenged around my own perceived biases as a White gay man. I also had to navigate the shifts in identity occurring in students around me (especially those who were White and heterosexual) who were just beginning to wake up to systemic obstacles fueling racism and heterosexism. I saw how important it was to wrestle with multicultural issues in classrooms—the difference of opinions, the stigma that emerged, and the disclosures from other students that made me reflect on my own positionalities. I also began to see how easy it was for faculty and students alike to focus generally on White, heterosexual perspectives in the classroom. So much attention was placed on educating students in the majority on privilege, power, and White supremacy, while students of color waited on the sidelines. If I’m being honest, I don’t think I really saw the above things while they were happening—I mean, at the time, I was an out gay man, but still wrapped up in my own minority challenges. During this time period, gay marriage wasn’t even considered an option, and there were still many legislative realities that targeted my sexual minority status. My “Whiteness” was pretty much lost on me, though, but I can point to these early graduate classes as the impetus for later conceptualizations of multicultural intersectionality. Looking back, I had a lot of blindspots with respect to race and sometimes cringe at some of the difficult interactions I had with other students due to sheer ignorance. I realized in graduate school how
transformative this work was for me, but I also experienced pain and confusion as I tried to wrap my head around my own contributions to the imbalance of power, and the unfairness of people hurting others who were less fortunate, or different from them.

Most of my professional experience working with sexual minority and racial minority issues took place during my graduate training, mostly while I was completing practicum experiences and my pre-doctoral internship. In fact, I think most of my minority stress work with clients occurred while I was on internship. I currently serve as an assistant professor in the Counseling Psychology graduate program at larger, public, southern university. Being in the middle of my first tenure-track faculty position, I attempt to strike a balance between multiple course preps, scholarship and research, and the overall service requirements for my academic department. I also regularly teach sections of multicultural counseling—usually, at least once per academic year.

Our academic department has historically had difficulty recruiting faculty of color; however, it has recently increased the number of faculty identifying along the LGBT spectrum. As a cis-gender, gay, White man, I have felt a great deal of responsibility within my department to champion multiculturalism and be a safe space for students to wrestle with and explore their own multicultural identities. I have generally found it to be important for academic departments to have visible minorities on faculty: professors who are queer, gender-nonconforming, or not White (Subtheme 4a). I sometimes worry about the notion of tokenism, though, but hope that academic departments are not actively engaging such to appear diverse.

I feel that students will often seek out minority faculty for encouragement and support—especially when they are struggling with how to navigate systemic issues of oppression (sometimes even within their own training programs). This is not to say, however, that faculty
who hold majority identity statuses should simply sit back and let minority faculty handle navigating these complex waters; White faculty and heterosexual faculty and male faculty shouldn’t just assume that the faculty of color, or the queer faculty will pick up the multicultural counseling courses, or the elective courses that the department typically offers on multicultural group counseling techniques (Subtheme 4b). I have even heard recently that some of my colleagues know several junior White, male, heterosexual, cis-gender faculty who are regularly teaching multicultural counseling courses at other universities! I think more of this would enhance the overall multicultural conversations occurring within graduate psychology training programs. Having White or straight faculty teach some of these courses could even be less activating for students who can sometimes become defensive when faculty of color discuss racism, or when a trans professor discusses the frustrating conflation of transgender and sexual minority issues.

Having a diverse student body can incredibly enhance the multicultural conversations taking place across an academic department (Subtheme 4c). Our program tends to recruit younger, White, cis-gender, heterosexual women, though we also have a smaller number of students who hold minority statuses. But, having a mostly White student body has sometimes limited classroom conversations around race while, similarly, a mostly cis-gender heterosexual student body sometimes limits a proper exploration of sexual minority issues.

I have definitely noticed developmental and programmatic differences between cohorts of students with respect to how inclusive they are to multicultural issues (Subtheme 4d). In general, our counseling psychology trainees (who comprise the majority of our student body) are more focused on social justice issues; these students tend to embrace multicultural frameworks more so than their clinical psychology counterparts, but I think a lot of that is simply due to differences
in training philosophy. I would say that in my experience, master’s students can be more open to having multicultural conversation in classes—I think that doctoral students sometimes get caught up in either impressing the class and instructor on what they already know, or swing in the other direction of being too timid, quiet, and unreflective on their personal contributions to oppression and advocacy. This is not across the board, I should note, just something I’ve noticed when working alongside students at different levels. I will say, that no matter the developmental level, or program that the student is coming from, conversations around intersectionality within the department are intentional, rather than commonplace. It makes me think that we are still teaching students in our classes how to handle diversity issues when they exist in isolation—kind of like how I remember learning in my graduate training (Subtheme 4e).

One thing that has really amped up over the last few years (especially during this past election cycle) with respect to how multiculturalism is covered in classes is an ever-present geographic and socio-political influence (Subtheme 3a). I feel like there were whole entire class periods during the time of our last election where I felt we spent a significant chunk of the class deconstructing things that were occurring in media news cycles and decisions that were being addressed in legislature, not to mention some of the very public promises made from both ends of the aisle in our last presidential election (Subtheme 5b). My students were struggling to wrap their brains around what was happening in our country with respect to racism, police brutality, same-sex marriage, sexual assault of women, reproductive rights, and the current refugee crisis, just to mention a few. I felt particularly sensitive to how the location of my graduate program—being housed in a university within what’s often referred to as “the Bible belt”—influenced students’ reactions to current events and course material. It really made me wonder what it was like for some of my colleagues teaching in other geographic locations, or religiously-based
institutions, and how some of these same conversations might emerge differently. I know colleagues at other institutions who have shared stories of their own personal multicultural battles with university administration or even local politicians. For example, I’ve heard stories of other faculty needing to convince a chair or dean that student evaluations complaining about too much emphasis on one particular area of diversity (that happens to be held openly by the faculty member teaching the class) could be explained by students conservative or moral viewpoints. I have also had colleagues discuss how confusing it can be in their own departments when other senior faculty or administrators display micro-aggressive behaviors, sometimes even publicly, with very little awareness themselves of how it might look or feel to others.

It is always difficult for me to succinctly summarize how I feel my instructional methods and overall pedagogy fit into a multicultural framework (Subtheme 6a). I would say that the most important thing, for me, has been maintaining a sense of flexibility in the classroom. I do my best to bracket my own personal experiences and biases and try to share those transparently when I feel they are appropriate. I always do my best to follow my syllabus, but am not afraid to trash entire lecture plans if the classroom conversations occurring between students seems particularly meaningful. I try to insert some degree of curiosity when discussion threads take the class in a direction I hadn’t originally intended. Still, I do my best to cover a majority of the topics that I set up in the course outline. Despite wanting to do more intersectional work early in my classes, I still find myself presenting topics in somewhat of a linear fashion. I think what I have tried to do more is insert intersectional questions and hypotheticals within lectures that appear seemingly isolated from other multicultural topics. For example, I might ask, “so how would this conversation, or particular treatment issues play out if this person were Black, or if this person identified as transgender?”
Because I feel that many different learners present themselves in graduate classrooms, I have tried to implement a variety of instructional methods to reach as many different types of learners as possible (Subtheme 6b). I use a lot of multimedia in my classes that include: documentary, news clips, YouTube videos, music, and poetry, to name just a few. I have been continually surprised at the clips and articles brought in by students that I would have never found myself. For example, I’ve had students bring in newspaper articles, or even social media articles that I would have never read myself. I try to vary the types of evaluative strategies to assess learning, but mostly rely on reflective writing assignments to gauge how material is landing on my students. I have used group assignments, multicultural portfolios, and have even had students take part in experiences outside of the classroom that might stretch their comfort zones (e.g. interviewing diverse individuals, attending multicultural events in the community). When I choose to include these types of activities in the course, I do my best not to set students up to coopt minority individuals’ experiences, or simply engage in voyeuristic behaviors to learn what “other” people and communities experience.

Much of what I feel I do when teaching multicultural courses is using some of the clinical skills I’ve learned throughout my training. For example, I’m continually gauging reactions (individual and collective) from students and trying to gently push when I feel students are stepping into privilege, not saying something, or who are becoming overly defensive about material (Subtheme 6c). I find that I use group facilitation skills, interpersonal process, and my own reactions to move conversations along—especially those that feel heated or difficult. It feels even more rewarding when I see other students taking on this role, using their own reactions and coaxing, to reach other students. I think that is also one of my goals in classes: helping other
students learn how to engage, or even provoke, conversations around multicultural issues without me needing to police the discussions.

This is not to say that I don’t put my foot in my mouth, or make my own mistakes; when I feel like I have overstepped, or spoken out of turn due to my own anger or defensiveness, I try to own these reactions and use them as teaching moments. Mostly, I want my students to see that I still wrestle with these topics and don’t always do or say the right things. No professor wants to find themselves standing in front of a room full of students, admitting fault or blind spots, but if I am expecting students to show vulnerability and risk in the classroom, sometimes, I have to model this and swallow a bit of pride (Subtheme 6d). I have even issued direct apologies to students I feel I have directly or indirectly offended—they of course were difficult but ultimately allowed me freedom to exercise some humility. The truth of the matter is that I am on my own journey with multiculturalism—just as they are—and finding common ground to “get messy” together has often led to fruitful dialogue and deeper insight. In fact, I think by teaching these courses, there has been a significant impact on my own personal identity management. For example, I have recently been thinking critically about my gender identity—the ways that I have been socialized to present masculinity, how I process feelings, how I communicate with others, etc. It is not that I have never thought about these issues before; however, I feel like teaching multicultural courses, where I ask for and expect others to examine their personal contributions and belief systems, has helped me turn that same lens on myself.

Most of the students in my multicultural courses have historically struggled with notions of intersectionality (Subtheme 1a). In fact, some individual students have struggled with diversity variables when they are introduced individually, let alone understand them layered on top of one another. I don’t think it helps knowing that intersectionality is not necessarily a
concept that is widely celebrated across our graduate department. Some of the challenge is the intrusion of different stigma as it relates to multicultural variables—how racism and heterosexism can rear their ugly heads in the classroom, despite better intentions (Subtheme 1b).

I have even had students offer explanations about how they believe that same-sex individuals should, indeed, have the right to marry, but at the same time admit they would feel upset and uncomfortable if their child came out to them. I see double standards play out in the classroom, with versions of “it’s okay as long as it doesn’t affect me.” Students seems to be better at focusing their learning outside of their lived experience, spending more time wanting to develop skills at working with diverse individuals without interrogating their own biases and actions. I really try to have students develop critical reflexivity and turn their focus inward (Subtheme 1c).

Sometimes, I feel like my job in a multicultural counseling class is much less about teaching them multicultural skills but rather encouraging greater awareness and multicultural sensitivity—the actual skills can be honed later in training with practice and supervision.

When dealing specifically with race- and sexual orientation-related issues/intersections, I regularly notice certain things getting in the way of respectful classroom discourse. White students especially can shut down, or become overly defensive, during discussions involving racism and privilege (Subtheme 1d). Rather than approaching the discussion through a scholarly lens, personal feelings can bubble up, which can then lead to fruitful exchanges, as well as ones that end badly where students feel victimized or unheard. I also tend to see quite a bit of challenge when issues involving religion, faith, and spirituality come into play—specifically around sexual orientation issues. Students coming from conservative, Christian backgrounds often struggle to understand how their familial and religious viewpoints impact how they conceptualize (and ultimately treat) individuals from different religious backgrounds.
Intersecting race and sexual orientation directly in my classroom discussions is usually intentional on my part, and rarely emerges spontaneously (Subtheme 1e).

Although I welcome these emotionally rich conversations in all my classes, it’s the multicultural ones, in particular, that usually feel harder to me as a faculty member. They are just, well, difficult. I feel it and I know my students feel it. But I also know that the intensity that students experience in regard to these courses don’t just end once the course is finished. There have been many occasions where I have had students share with me (even while the course is still running) that they are not able to look at things the same way, or even watch their favorite television show without seeing how sexism, or racism plays out. Students often share with me the conversations they are inviting with their families and friends, or how they have gotten into arguments with coworkers over topics discussed in class. Some students begin engaging outside resources and activities that continue broadening their viewpoints and challenging their biases. There is nothing better than having a student who has long completed my multicultural course swing by my office to share excitement and details about an event they recently attended that connected in some way to our class experiences.

These latter points are what I feel is the most rewarding when doing this difficult work: seeing how my course begins planting seeds for future development (Subtheme 2a). As I mentioned before, students will have many opportunities to work with supervisors and diverse clientele that will add to their developing multicultural competence (Subtheme 2b). I know I don’t have to teach them everything, even though I sometimes take on that responsibility. I try to remind myself that my colleagues also have responsibility and that students, themselves, need to continue seeking out experiences that challenge them, and help them grow. And I also know that my journey also continues with each and every multicultural class that I teach; that I have my
worldview and biases challenged every time I meet and work with a student who is different from me. I appreciate the invitation and opportunity to share some of my thoughts and experiences around teaching about race and sexual orientation, along with other diversity variables. I look forward to hearing some of the other presenter’s thoughts and also look forward to any questions that member of the audience may have. Thank you.”

Discussion of Themes in Relation to Current Scholarship and Research

In this dissertation, I provide some of the first data depicting faculty participant’s experiences having race and sexual orientation emerging together in their graduate classrooms. Not only do these findings connect to the general training literature, but they also provide first-person perspective on the challenges faculty face handling multiple identity variables within their classrooms. I provided detailed discussion in the previous chapter highlighting the main themes and corresponding subthemes that emerged, followed by a collective narrative in this chapter that integrates these findings into one story. I will now continue discussing some of the salient findings utilizing Matt’s story as a backdrop (as well as additional participant examples), but will do so in lieu of published scholarship and research.

Because this research focuses on perceived experiences around teaching, it seems fitting, then, that Matt’s story begins with reflections on his own training background. He shares in his account various memories from his doctoral training experiences, including how he saw multicultural issues presented throughout his coursework. One of his salient memories was that some of the faculty teaching him had limited knowledge surrounding multiculturalism and therefore brought limited innovation in the classroom around ways to highlight diversity issues. Much of this might be explained simply due to there being less emphasis on multicultural training in previous generations. Kilgore and colleagues (2005) drew similar attention to how
generational cohort effects negatively influenced trainee development around providing affirmative therapy to sexual minority individuals. These authors found significant decreases in training exposure and preparation the further back they were trained. This is not to say, however, that faculty members from older training generations are assumed to be less equipped to work with multicultural issues; it does, however, suggest that faculty coming from training programs with less emphasis on diversity issues should find additional ways to fill those knowledge gaps.

Not all of Matt’s training faculty were limited around multicultural awareness: there were some faculty members he and other students looked up to for guidance and mentorship. In fact, he discussed seeing these faculty members as beacons of refuge and safety, a similar anecdote expressed by many participants in this study. There have been a number of previous scholars and researchers who have highlighted the importance of needing faculty who were aspirational, individuals within the department one could look up to (e.g., Buhrke & Douce, 1991; Israel & Selvidge, 2003). Any minority graduate student can attest to the importance of having mentors who value social justice, especially when there might be other individuals within the department who do not feel safe. Not only do these individuals protect students from other individuals (or policies) that are oppressive, but they also serve as social justice role models by providing active research agendas, which Bieschke and colleagues (1998) felt it was instrumental for student multicultural development.

It is important to note that faculty members holding the qualities discussed above should not simply be those faculty members with minority identity statuses. So often it is assumed that faculty creating these safe havens within programs do so because of their own marginalized statuses. Despite this being possible, it is imperative that faculty with majority identity statuses foster the same protective environments for students. Matt discusses what it is like having to
navigate majority and minority statues within his classrooms. Being White and male afford him
certain privileges within the academy and society; however, being gay does not. Keeping track of
these differences likely has influenced his location and teaching within his respective
department. Surprisingly, nearly half of the participant pool for this study were White men.
Normally, this would be viewed as a criticism in line with Bell’s (2002) assertion that having
predominantly White faculty teaching in graduate psychology programs served as a crisis for
multicultural education. This author believed having all White faculty limited multicultural
conversations (especially regarding race) and often silenced minority faculty from speaking up
within the department to challenge the status quo. As we see in participants’ stories, actually
having faculty use their majority status to elevate conversations around diversity lessens some of
the crisis alluded to in Bell’s writing.

Following Matt’s reflections on his previous training experiences were ones focused on
his current teaching appointment as an assistant-level professor of counseling psychology at a
university situated in the deep South. He discussed there being salience around some of the
geographic and socio-political influences impacting his university, as well as how he taught his
courses. He goes on to discuss how conservative (and sometimes religious ideology) interfered
with multicultural dialogue within his department and classrooms. Some would argue that the
southern parts of our country have historically struggled around racial and sexual inequality and
that these struggles are still prevalent today, despite warnings issued by previous writers such as
Casas (2005) around the rapidly changing multicultural climate in this country. For example, the
southern parts of this country have an extensive past with slavery, racism, and even
contemporary shows of White supremacy. Similarly, Ramsay (2014) proffered that
conceptualizing individual differences (and their subsequent intersections) varied across space and time with significant historical and geographic context.

Half of the participants from this study were appointed to teaching positions in the southern parts of the country, where they discussed noticing a greater social rigidity around minority issues. This finding was articulated in Matt’s story in his recollection of teaching within “the Bible belt,” as well as what it was like for him to witness other colleagues or administrators struggle with environmental and political factors related to multiculturalism. There were also numerous references made by participants related to the recent presidential election, and the state of affairs surrounding the new administration’s changes to policy and legislature. These current events served as a backdrop to classroom discussions, whether it be about the Black Lives Matter movement, the events at Standing Rock, or changes in legislation around transgender protections. A few participants even suggested that a real-time processing of current events, both domestic and international, could simply replace all of the required readings and classroom activities typically required to teach multicultural courses. There is no doubt that what is happening in America and abroad are directly impacting the ways in which minority populations are treated, as well as how faculty are preparing new generations of psychologists to work with these individuals.

Through Matt’s accounts of his teaching experiences, we are introduced to the various pedagogical decisions graduate faculty make when creating inclusive classrooms. He describes in his presentation how he approaches teaching diversity topics, the diversity in classroom activities that he uses, as well as how he evaluates learning. Scholars and researchers in the literature have taken great strides to share suggestions and challenges related to student involvement within the classroom. For example, Sammons and Speight (2008) discuss their
views that the course structure and how topics are laid out directly correlates with student buy-in
and engagement. These authors highlight the importance of multimedia use, so that topics are
presented in varied formats, which helps faculty reach different types of learners while keeping
course material current. Matt discussed his use of technology, multimedia, and other creative
mechanisms they used to promote connection with students.

Pope-Davis and Liu (1998) discussed the notion of responsibility on the part of students,
noting the importance of personally connecting their own multicultural identities to what is being
presented in class. Successfully comparing one’s privileged identities alongside of their
marginalized statuses can lead to deeper insight and consolidated learning. Godfrey and
colleagues (2006) have noted that increasing personal insight and awareness for students
increased the likelihood of connecting them to course material and classroom activities. As we
see in Matt’s story, there was an inherent challenge in having students “go deeper” in their
multicultural courses, having them really interrogate their own reactions and biases.

Results from this dissertation study illustrate numerous examples faculty have used to
deeen students’ experiences with material. Matt shared how classroom activities and take-home
assignments that were most successful tended to be those that were experiential, requiring
students to emotionally engage. This is consistent with findings from Sheets and colleagues
(2012) in their qualitative exploration around students’ experiences in an elective course
focusing on counseling LGBT individuals. One of the assignments students discussed being most
influential across their course experience was an experiential journey exercise allowing students
to utilize whatever multimedia platform necessary to communicate their story to the rest of the
class. Not only did these journey exercises connect students to multicultural course content, but
they did so on an extremely personal, affective level. This experience is consistent with many of
the examples described by my study participants. In fact, many participants shared that the assignments requiring the most freedom and flexibility—as long as it provoked students to use themselves in some fashion—were the highlights of the course.

Another interesting finding in my study was the importance of faculty engaging interpersonal process and using themselves in the classroom. Similar to the above analysis suggesting that students learn better and are more engaged when they feel truly connected to the material being presented, similar outcomes can be found when faculty reflect on their positionalities and what they are bringing to the classroom experience. Betz (2010) strongly emphasized that faculty teaching diversity courses engage in their own self-reflection so that they are able to recognize preconceived biases that could influence their teaching. In Matt’s story, we find the ways that he processes his personal locations and how his various identities impact his approach to students. We are given examples of how he tries to take responsibility when he oversteps, or when he uses his own mistakes as exemplars, highlighting that he, too, is on his own multicultural journey along with students.

Many participants shared how teaching multicultural courses has led to shifts in personal identity development. Consistent with findings from Sanchez-Hucles and Jones (2005), participants greatly benefitted from regularly assessing any personal or institutional barriers that were getting in the way of their approach to student learning. Some participants mentioned shifts in their personal gender and racial identities, while others found themselves paying more attention to departmental policies and the recruitment and mentorship of minority faculty. In Matt’s case, he found himself reflecting on how he expressed emotion and the overall relevance of gender norms in our society. Faculty are often encouraged to hold themselves to similar evaluative standards as their students so they can stay current with where things are moving with
respect to multicultural training—this level of introspection may contribute to some of the shifts in identity some participants described.

Findings from this study can also be viewed alongside those described by Sue and colleagues (2009) in their qualitative study with White faculty teaching on issues involving race. These authors highlighted some of the obstacles faculty erect in their classroom such as not calling out problematic behavior from students, feeling unprepared to control discussion that becomes heated, and not using personal reactions and disclosure when disagreeing with students. Participants from this study discussed worries and anxieties surrounding the above activities but also shared how maintaining confidence and genuine authenticity could buffer such states. One participant said it best when they described how unfair it was to require students to be uncomfortable and challenge one another if they were not willing to do the same thing.

Finally, it feels important to comment further on the findings from this study as they relate to intersectionality. In Matt’s story, we are introduced to some of the challenges he experienced engaging his students around multicultural intersections, and more specifically, race and sexual orientation intersections. His experiences, like many study participants, depicted challenges with having students recognize that layered identities could complicate multicultural conversations. In fact, several participants inherently discussed in their responses some of the very challenges Burman (2003) outlined in their scholarly discussion of why intersectionality is so difficult to grasp. Mainly, students in her study tended to struggle with acknowledging how multiple identity statuses could layer and create added challenges when working with multicultural issues. When multiple identity statuses were addressed, some participants felt like students fell into the trajectory of comparing the hardships of one identity to the hardships of another. This seemed consistent with Ferguson and colleagues’ (2014) cautions around pitting
one form of oppression against another, thereby completely missing the point of how multiple identities (minority and majority) can layer. With respect to the two diversity variables central to this study, students were able to discuss race issues more easily when they were in isolation, but had a harder time when faculty members introduced how things might shift if a variable like sexual orientation was folded in. Previous research conducted by Sheets and colleagues (2012) have found intersections between race and sexual orientation, in particular, to be challenging for students to manage. But it seems difficult, though, to parcel out whether students’ struggles with intersectionality were more generally based, or specific to race and sexual orientation only.

**Implications for Training and Practice**

With this study, I offer glimpses into how faculty teaching in counseling psychology programs experience diversity variables intersecting within their graduate classrooms. More specifically, I address how participants perceived race and sexual orientation emerging alongside one another in the classroom. This research not only offers contributions to the field in terms of training and pedagogy, but it also has implications for practice. Indeed, results can impact how future faculty and program administrators view intersectionality in multicultural training, but results also have potential ties to the practice side of the profession, since the students enrolled in graduate multicultural courses are just steps away from providing clinical services to minority populations.

There are a number of implications from this study that influence how counseling psychology graduate programs train their students around multiculturalism. All programs accredited by the APA must maintain strict adherence to multicultural standards, which generally translates into having at least one required multicultural course. Students in doctoral programs generally have additional elective requirements for their degree, giving them more flexibility to
seek out additional coursework along the diversity spectrum. In any case, faculty are generally limited with the amount of focus they can place on multicultural issues. Participants shared the difficulty in providing students with the knowledge and awareness required to provide multiculturally affirming services when they have such limited opportunity to do so. This, in turn, puts added pressure on those faculty members teaching multicultural courses, a responsibility that should not be placed on one or two faculty members alone. Rather, faculty should be working together, across the curriculum, so that students are having continuous dialogue pertaining to diversity issues.

Graduate psychology programs would benefit from regular internal reviews, so that faculty can hold each other accountable in providing ample multicultural opportunities to students. It is important to have a faculty body that is visibly diverse. Not only will minority faculty help recruit and mentor minority students, but it also provides face validity that the department celebrates and respects multicultural issues. Numerous participants shared how challenging it was to not have minority faculty represented in their respective departments. Generally, it seemed easier for departments to increase the number of sexual minority faculty over that of racial minority faculty. Having both of these identities represented on faculty seems particularly salient for training programs situated in the southern states, where conservative and religious ideologies sometimes interfered with students (and faculty) affirming minority issues. Moreover, some participants shared how the optics and day-to-day navigation of multicultural inclusivity was stunted when nearly every faculty individual in a position of power were in the majority. For example, several participants in this study discussed wariness when needing to deal with sensitive multicultural issues when the dean, department chair, and most full professors within the department all held majority identities. It would behoove administrators and
departments to evaluate the ways they recruit, foster, and retain minority faculty—especially those at the assistant levels who have to worry more about evaluations and the risks associated with the tenure process.

Another finding from my study that has training implications relates to the need for faculty to engage the same principles of multicultural affirmation with each other as they expect for their students. Several participants shared anecdotes related to microaggressions they experienced from other faculty members and administrators. Many of these microaggressions were reportedly minor, though there were a few that seemed surprising (e.g., being asked to not use the term “white privilege” because it was too activating, being told to limit the amount of transgender content to not overwhelm students). Although seemingly harmless, micro-aggressive behavior occurring within faculty meetings silences minority faculty and makes them less willing to seek support in times of need; it also does not encourage minority faculty to challenge their colleagues when they do and say things that could be perceived as oppressive.

There were also implications emerging from this study related to multicultural pedagogy. What was consistent across participants was the need for flexibility within their planned syllabus. Some participants noted the realities that graduate faculty receive little mentorship and training in the art of actual teaching. Indeed, graduate faculty in psychology generally do not take courses in their training programs on developing sound pedagogy that offers content and experiential learning opportunities for students. In fact, several participants indicated their belief that multicultural and diversity-related electives are some of the hardest to teach, so not having training explicitly in teaching, or adult education, seems limiting. Thus, faculty emphasized the need for flexibility, so that when a specific course topic really takes off, or the opposite occurs
where classroom interactions rupture or become stunted, faculty can absorb the change in their syllabus and overall course expectations.

There was a breadth of pedagogical techniques and evaluative mechanisms utilized by faculty participants. In fact, much of our conversations around their experiences of race and sexual orientation emerging in their classes surrounded the ways they were able to invite conversation and disagreement. Multicultural course experiences seemed the most profitable when faculty engaged multiple ways of attending to material and evaluation. Although peer-reviewed readings and textbook chapters were consistently used, some faculty shared how they found first-person narratives better suited for multicultural classroom discussions. Faculty saw students engage multicultural material differently when they were given freedom to explore topics creatively. Rather than spend time simply reading journal articles that students can interrogate external to their lived experiences, classroom activities designed for students to go inward, proved useful. Classroom activities and assignments requiring creative or artistic elements and multimedia influences seemed to touch students more emotionally than theoretical articles with little real-world application. Experiential exercises seemed to capture students’ attention more and facilitated students being able to feel connected to course topics.

Permeating many participant accounts of how students responded to multicultural topics was the lack of personal responsibility displayed by students. Numerous examples highlighted students’ reticence to “get messy” in the classroom, which many participants felt got in the way of interpersonal process, as well as a deepening of conversation. Students are often managing impression management, and the fear of appearing racist, sexist, or homophobic, so much that it silences them from authentic engagement. As such, faculty members should find every opportunity to remind students they have responsibility for their learning, are expected to make
mistakes, and also have responsibility to other classmates, as well. When students grappled openly with their own identity management and perceived biases—especially around any intersections they had—faculty believed greater learning took place. This does not, however, preclude students from exhibiting difficult emotions or feeling personally unsafe when they challenge one another, so faculty must use their clinical skill to best facilitate these moments when they arise.

Not only do findings in my study explore the experiences of faculty teaching multiculturalism, but it also highlights the complexities of intersectionality and its place within multicultural courses. Many participants remembered how multicultural topics in their training programs were siloed, presented linearly, week-to-week. It was rare for participants in this study to present the notion of intersectionality early, or have it infused throughout each and every one of their courses. Instead, participants noted (some even sounding surprised during their interviews) that they, too, taught multicultural topics in a similar, siloed fashion. A few even noted the paucity of good intersectional writings that they could offer to students to encourage them to think critically about individuals’ multiple identities (one participant encouraged me to write a more applied book manuscript on the topic!). In order for students to understand and wrestle with the concept of intersectionality, faculty should offer whatever readings and opportunities they have early, so that students practice being comfortable attending to multiple identity variables at one time. For example, some participants shared how they would spend time during classroom discussions on how they might work with one diversity variable (e.g., race), but then change directions of the conversation by adding on an additional variable (e.g., transgender). It was during these instances where students tended to struggle the most—but
arguably for good reason, since students’ own insecurities and discriminatory biases can negatively influence how they work with other students, or clients having layered identities.

There are implications from this research for clinical practice in addition to the training ones proffered above. Students who are enrolled in graduate multicultural classes are seeking a credential that will in some way let them practice in the field of psychology. Many students plan to practice, whether that be in a university counseling center, veterans affairs clinic, hospital, or private practice. No matter the venue, they will surely come into contact with minority populations and will subsequently need awareness, knowledge, and skill to work with these individuals. Being able to understand the dynamic interplay between privilege, oppression, and power is simply not enough; clinicians must understand identity variables in isolation, as well as when they intersect in their clients’ various personal and professional environments. As such, emerging practitioners should be looking for ways these intersections can positively and negatively impact their clients.

**Study Critique**

The psychological literature has many published studies diagramming the importance of multiculturalism as it relates to training; however, this is the first known empirical investigation surrounding how faculty experience race and sexual orientation related issues emerging together in their graduate classrooms. As such, I would like to highlight some of the strengths of the study while also giving attention to its potential limitations. To begin, I utilized a qualitative methodology, which allows researchers to address areas of interest that have often gone unexplored within the literature. As previously discussed, very little is known about how faculty experience intersecting diversity variables within their graduate level classrooms. Being able to employ a semi-structured interview format provided me with rich detail and context that would
have been more difficult to access using quantitative and statistical techniques. Having the benefit of vivid, personal narratives, viewed through the subjective lens of a qualitative researcher (myself), draws conclusions that are difficult to generalize to the greater population. Indeed, the small participant number for this study translated into hundreds of pages of data and over 1000 individually coded data segments, but it cannot be assumed that every faculty member teaching in counseling psychology programs experiences things in the same way my participants discussed their reflections on the research question. Similarly, this study focused only on faculty teaching in counseling psychology programs, rather than other professional psychology programs such as clinical or school psychology. This choice was intentional, since the research question for this study focused entirely on diversity and multiculturalism, topics that are strongly situated within the counseling psychology discipline and consistent with my own doctoral training experiences. Therefore, faculty members teaching within other departments, having different philosophical approaches to psychology, may experience differently the phenomenon in question.

Another distinguishing characteristic of this study was its diversity in participant pool. Historically, researchers struggle to recruit a representative subject pool that does not continually reinforce majority culture. It is common to see studies highlighting the lack of racial diversity, or sexual orientation diversity across participants, which is why I employed specific sampling strategies outlined in the methodology chapter targeting minority faculty. The final participant pool had more gender diversity than typically seen, with several participants identifying as gender non-conforming, whether that be with a transgender identification or gender-queer. Unless the research question specifically targets gender non-conforming individuals, having them emerge organically within a participant pool is rare. There were numerous participants who
identified as sexual minorities, with several utilizing “queer” as their sexual orientation and a few others labeling themselves as gay. Unfortunately, there were no bisexual participants, however that is not to say that those participants who identified as queer did not share attractions to other genders.

With respect to racial diversity, the participant pool was surprisingly more White than expected. It was originally thought that there would be greater racial diversity, since many times racial minority faculty are the ones at the forefront of multicultural courses. In fact, I was shocked to discover how many White, heterosexual, men comprised the participant pool, since much of the literature indicates these individuals not regularly taking part in teaching multicultural courses. Perhaps faculty fitting these demographic characteristics feel strongly about using their voice and for even responding to a research call such as this, knowing that the responsibility of multicultural issues more often falls on the shoulders of minority faculty. It seems as though, at least in this study, White faculty members responded to calls that have been issued generally by minority faculty (and consistent with one of the subthemes that emerged in this study) that their White, majority counterparts need to be more involved in teaching multicultural courses.

Unfortunately, there were no African American participants within the sample, which I believe weakens the study’s findings. With the exception of one elective multicultural course throughout both my master’s and doctoral training programs, all of my diversity classes were taught by Black faculty. And I am aware that there are many African American faculty who have interests in multicultural issues and who are teaching in graduate psychology programs. Still, only two potential African American faculty members expressed interest in taking part in the study but did not end up completing the initial interviews due to scheduling difficulties. It is
possible that the research call itself might have caused some reticence from African American faculty due to the intersectional focus on race and sexual orientation issues. Some critical race scholars have articulated the need for race to be positioned as a superordinate multicultural variable, which in this study sets it up to be comparable (or on the same plane) as sexual orientation. Black faculty members holding this view that race should be addressed primarily as a superordinate variable may pass on scholarship and research opportunities that do not hold race central in this way.

The participant pool was also restricted with respect to religious and spiritual identity. With the exception of one participant, all others described not being connected to any religious tradition. This finding seems noteworthy since one of the subthemes that emerged in the results suggested that religious, conservative identification served as a potential barrier to addressing race and sexual orientation issues within the classroom. In fact, religion and spirituality was not originally sampled from participants during their initial interviews. Following the first round of data analysis, my independent auditor suggested that religious upbringing and the practicing of certain organized religions could impede some multicultural situations—especially as it relates to sexual orientation. So, not having participants with religious diversity leads me to speculate how common the religiosity theme may be for other faculty who do practice certain faith traditions. The notion of religiosity may also have connections to the previous discussion surrounding lack of African American participants. Religious identification and faith-based fellowship are often considered to have important cultural and familial ties to African American communities. It is possible, then, that some of the internal (and external) pressures experienced around sexual orientation stigma could have precluded some African American faculty from taking part in this study.
A majority of participants from this sample were on the tenure-track (assistant level) at their respective institutions, with many of them being younger in terms of age. There were indications from a few participants that the restrictions, and possible retributions, of being junior faculty with less employment stability, sometimes made them hesitate to challenge students and colleagues around problematic diversity issues. Indeed, when your position at the university is annually called into question via academic review, it makes sense why some newer faculty might want to limit any disruptions that bring unwanted attention. With respect to chronological age, younger faculty in the academy have been recently trained, during a time in professional psychology where diversity and multicultural issues are at the forefront. This is likely connected to how many of the participants discussed their previous and current training philosophies being more inclusive toward multicultural sensitivities. It is difficult to say how the findings from the current research study might differ if there were more participants tenured, or later in their professional careers.

Another aspect of this study worth noting (and possibly one of the most salient) is the degree to which participants struggled to specifically discuss race and sexual orientation intersections emerging in their classrooms. Indeed, much of what participants spent time discussing in their interviews focused more on general reflections/strategies/ideas surrounding the teaching of multicultural counseling. Even when participants were asked to discuss how they saw these two variables (i.e., race and sexual orientation) emerge alongside one another, they required additional clarification, or seemed to stumble in offering a response. Some of this may connect with participants own acknowledgement at giving less attention to intersectionality in their classes. A majority of faculty participants discussed how they experienced their own multicultural training being delivered in a siloed fashion and how this approach did not
adequately prepare them to teach newer generations of students in a non-siloed way. Moreover,
participants discussed how their current students seemed more comfortable attending to diversity
issues in the classroom when they were presented one at a time rather than together. Because
participants openly struggled with holding race and sexual orientation issues together in their
interview responses (some of which not really answering the research question at all) suggests
their continued over-reliance on siloed approaches to teaching about multicultural issues. This
finding seems noteworthy since many participants openly criticized siloed teaching from their
doctoral training programs.

Participants having difficulty attending to how race and sexual orientation emerges
together in graduate classrooms might also be due to how the interview protocol was organized.
For example, the word “intersectionality” was not used in the initial interview questions. Instead,
phrases such as “emerging together” or “comingling” were used when participants were
prompted to discuss their experiences within their respective classrooms. Perhaps being more
intentional with phrasing, or extending my operational definitions within the interview questions
could have provided additional clarity for participants. For example, it might have been useful to
offer participants brief examples in the form of clinical vignettes or analogues of race/sexual
orientation intersections between students. Another example might have asked participants to
diagram a critical incident within one of their classes where they felt race and sexual orientation
issues intersected, so that they could use this incident as a backdrop to discuss general reflections
around this particular intersection.

One final aspect of this critique worth noting is my involvement and overall role in the
analytic procedures. Phenomenological investigations tap into the lived experience of individuals
experiencing a particular phenomenon of interest. In order to view participants’ experiences in
isolation, I needed to bracket off my personal identities and experiences that link me to the study’s phenomenon of interest. For a review of my individual connections to this study, please review the methodology chapter above. Because of my positionality with respect to this research topic, I approached the data analysis cautiously, so as not to infuse my own ideas in participant’s stories; I also worked closely with my independent data auditor and dissertation advisor to check out any worries I had with respect to analysis. Finally, I was fortunate enough to have individual follow-up interviews with 10 of the original 12 study participants, where I verified the study findings to ensure that my interpretations were objective.

**Future Directions for Scholarship and Research**

The findings from this dissertation study contribute to the greater multicultural and psychological literatures. It provides a unique perspective on faculty and student experiences within graduate level multicultural classes. It also provides some of the first data around how faculty specifically experience race and sexual orientation comingling within multicultural classrooms. Although the findings are compelling, and useful with respect to pedagogy, training, and practice, they also lead to additional research questions that could be carried out in future projects.

Perhaps the most significant suggestion for future projects would be to continue addressing topics of multicultural intersectionality. Although each and every participant in this study endorsed the importance of intersectionality in their respective courses, many of them described challenges with properly introducing it to students. Rather than talk about race and sexual orientation intersections, faculty seemed to be more comfortable talking generally about their experiences teaching multiculturalism and being social justice advocates within their departments. It was common for me to use probing statements throughout the semi-structured
interviews to refocus some of the discussion around interview prompts to include more emphasis on race and sexual orientation intersections, specifically. Indeed, several participants indicated that intersectionality was a complex process that the field is just now becoming comfortable addressing. They shared how common it was to learn and then teach multicultural variables in a siloed fashion, paying attention to one layer of identity at a time. This style of teaching does little to prepare new generations of psychologists to navigate layered identities in their students and clients.

In addition to continued research on multicultural intersections, it would be helpful for future studies to incorporate additional identity variables into analysis. For example, one of the subthemes that emerged in this study suggested that having a religious identity—in this case, Christianity—could introduce challenges around accepting differences that are not fully supported by doctrine. At one point during the data analysis, there was discussion between myself, the data auditor, and my doctoral advisor on whether new interview questions should be introduced in participant follow-up interviews to gain clarification around religiosity intersections. It was decided that introducing targeted questions around religion at that point in the study would introduce a new, significant multicultural variable, when the original question focused on race and sexual orientation only. That being said, religious identity is one that is common among many individuals, having positive and sometimes negative connections to building community and accepting human difference. As such, inserting a variable like religion into future studies would contribute to the greater multicultural conversations happening in our field.

Several participants shared the power behind using first-person narrative in their multicultural courses. Some of these narratives come from personal stories disclosed by students
and faculty during classroom discussion. Other narratives are presented by faculty in the form of scholarly book chapters and articles or through film. In either case, personal narratives provide students with experience-near contact with multicultural concepts in real-time. There is less chance that students will distance themselves from uncomfortable topics when there are faces and stories illustrating these issues that are lifted straight out of real life. Having an emotional connection to a topic promotes connection, so faculty should consider exploring scholarship and research endeavors that tap into narrative storytelling.

It would also be useful to incorporate other research designs to address similar multicultural research questions. For example, Participatory Action Research (PAR) is one way that allows the researcher to begin moving away from theoretical or conceptual analyses of social problems toward ones that are more action-oriented (Arthur, 1972). With PAR, there is an attempt to level the constructed hierarchies that typically exists between researcher and participant, whereby the participant—in many ways—begins to serve as a co-researcher of sorts (Brydon-Miller, 1997; Kidd & Kral, 2005). It is within this dynamic process that the researcher and participant begin to move beyond simply addressing the theoretical underpinnings of existing problems, but instead move toward the implementation of potential solutions. Not only has previous PAR addressed issues pertaining to race (e.g., Torre, 2009), as well as with issues pertaining to sexual orientation (e.g., Fenge, 2010), but it has more recently been hailed as a lucrative approach for psychological research projects holding issues of social justice, social equity, and oppression as center stage (Brydon-Miller; Kidd & Kral; Smith, Rosenzweig, & Schmidt, 2010).
Conclusion and Final Participant Reflections

This dissertation project evolved over a period of several years. I have always been interested in exploring topics of race and sexual orientation in my work, but I was unprepared for the impact such a project like this would have on my development as a psychologist, social justice advocate, and person. It was incredibly moving to converse with other counseling psychologists, some of which I knew by reputation alone, about the complexities surrounding multicultural education.

So often, empirical research on multicultural training focuses primarily on students’ experiences and I believe this same emphasis should be placed on faculty experiences, especially when they are the ones providing the foundation for psychologists’ emerging professional identity. This study highlights how challenging and rewarding it can be for graduate faculty to prepare new students to work in diverse communities. It provides some context for how faculty use their own narratives and training histories to inform how they present themselves in their personal classrooms. The reader is able to see how environmental influences with respect to geography, socio-political influence, and university department can foster or hinder multicultural teaching. Additionally, faculty participants discussed the need for pedagogical flexibility and how creativity in the classroom encouraged students to access material on an affective level. We are also presented with the numerous challenges faculty face in their multicultural classes, getting students to buy-in while still going deep, or curbing defensiveness when it arises. Perhaps some of the most important findings, however, relate to the final main theme, suggesting that students (and even faculty) are on a continuous multicultural journey that does not end at the completion of a multicultural course.
One of my favorite parts of this project was being able to share elements of my personal journey with these faculty participants, and having them open themselves so fully in return. Qualitative methodologies really allow for researcher and participant to impact one another and I feel that hearing these faculty stories has had an enormous impact on my doctoral journey. It also felt inspiring to have several of participants offer comments throughout the interview process leading me to feel this project impacted them, as well. I would like to conclude this dissertation by sharing a few of these comments (in their voices) regarding the meaning they struck while engaging with this project.

Yvette commented in her follow-up interview about the power of qualitative research and how engaging with me on this topic really helped her wrestle with the ways she engages students in her multicultural classes but also how it sheds light on the relevance of these issues in today’s society:

You know on the one hand, being able to teach this course gives the professors like me the opportunity to even speak about [multicultural issues]. It gives a platform to be able to talk about and be able to share the kinds of things that all of us are experiencing whereas maybe, you know I know actually that it’s more difficult for other faculty, particularly faculty who are not of color to bring up these issues, so yeah, it’s just a tough time and you have landed on two kind of identity modules that are particularly of focus and under attack these years. So, I’m sure you’ve gotten a lot of people to be thinking about everything going on within our career, within our life, within our, you know, environments.

Similarly, Marissa shared some insight into how qualitative projects like this connect her to others who are thinking critically about how to engage students in multicultural learning:
This is the thing with, like interviews in qualitative research can be like consultations, it’s great…you can interview me anytime!

After reviewing the study’s finding, and at the end of his follow-up interview, Roger encouraged me to present these findings at an upcoming APA convention and consider publishing in a peer-reviewed journal:

Yeah, this is great, this is a really great study and this is such a needed study, too. It’s so important and I’m really glad that you’re doing this.

One of my favorite reactions, though, was when Pete shared his excitement around some of the newer multicultural developments that had occurred since first being interviewed for this study. He shared how taking part in this study, as well as one other recent professional activity he had been involved in, had given him the encouragement to remind his colleagues to elevate multicultural issues in their respective courses:

I’ve had several professors reach out to me saying “I’d like to update my course to make it more culturally relevant and what references can you give to me.” So, I’ve gone back to the Division 17 listserv to make sure I’m getting the most up-to-date kind of stuff. But, I had several professors now update their syllabi with the readings that address the multicultural aspect of what they’re doing and that’s a first for our program.
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Appendix A

HSIRB Approval
Date: January 31, 2017
To: Eric Sauer, Principal Investigator
    Raymond Sheets, Student Investigator for dissertation
From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair
Re: HSIRB Project Number 17-01-26

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled “How Counseling Psychology Faculty Experience the Commingling of Race and Sexual Orientation Issues in Their Graduate Courses” has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may only be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project (e.g., you must request a post approval change to enroll subjects beyond the number stated in your application under “Number of subjects you want to complete the study”). Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation. In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

Reapproval of the project is required if it extends beyond the termination date stated below.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: January 30, 2018
Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology

Principal Investigator: Eric M. Sauer, Ph.D.
Student Investigator: Raymond L. Sheets Jr., M.A.
Title of Study: How Counseling Psychology Faculty Experience the Comingling of Race and Sexual Orientation Issues in Their Graduate Courses.

You have been invited to participate in a doctoral dissertation research project titled “How Counseling Psychology Faculty Experience the Comingling of Race and Sexual Orientation Issues in Their Graduate Courses.” In this consent document, you will be offered an explanation surrounding the purpose of this research project, the time commitments required, the procedures that will be used to complete the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project.

What are we trying to find out in this study?
The overall purpose of this study will be to explore the various experiences that graduate-level faculty have within their classrooms when issues of race, racism, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and heterosexism emerge alongside of one another.

Who can participate in this study?
Faculty members who have experience teaching a graduate course that focuses on multicultural counseling, or courses focusing predominantly on either race or sexual orientation, will be eligible for study inclusion. Faculty members must either be currently teaching, or have taught within the past two years, in a master’s program in Counseling Psychology or an APA-accredited doctoral program in Counseling Psychology; these courses must have been taught “on-ground” instead of “on-line.”

Where will this study take place?
The data collection for this study can take place in one of three ways: in-person, via the telephone, or via Internet-based technology (i.e., Skype); the exact mode of data collection will be determined by the participant and doctoral student investigator. When possible, the doctoral student investigator will make every attempt to travel to meet with participants, face-to-face, at a private location of their convenience.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?
To participate in this study, you will be invited to participate in an initial interview around your experiences teaching graduate courses in multiculturalism and diversity—this initial interview will include demographic questions, as well as interview questions about your classroom experiences; the experience is designed to last 1-1.5 hours.
A few months later, after initial data has been collected and analyzed, you will be contacted again to participate in a final interview that will last an additional 1-1.5 hours. Before this interview, you will receive (via email) copies of your individual interview transcript, as well as thematic and narrative descriptions of study findings so that you can review these documents before the final interview. During the final interview, you can offer any additional information related to your experiences, and provide any feedback regarding the initial data analysis. In sum, you will be offering approximately 2-3 hours of your time over a span of several months.

**What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?**
During the initial in-person meeting—the doctoral student investigator will verbally review the informed consent and offer you the opportunity to ask any clarifying questions. If you offer verbal and written consent to participate, the doctoral investigator will begin the semi-structured interview that addresses several dimensions of your graduate classroom experiences. These interviews will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. Information about participants will be de-identified and stored in a secure, confidential location; all transcribed data will be thoroughly encrypted and stored on my personal computer. It is estimated that the entire interview will last 1-1.5 hours in duration.

Following data analysis of first interviews, you will then be invited to participate in a final 1-1.5-hour interview where you will have access to your individual interview transcript, a description of collective theme/subtheme clusters, and a collective narrative that speaks to the essence of the phenomenon in question. You will be given the opportunity to provide additional clarification regarding these themes and narrative, or provide completely new information that might have surfaced since the individual interviews or from hearing the presentation on the first round of data collection.

**What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?**
There are minimal risks associated with participation in this study. There is always the possibility that you may experience some discomfort when reflecting upon your teaching experiences. This may be particularly salient if you experienced emotionally charged events in your involvement with classes where race and sexual orientation issues were discussed. If discomfort does arise, the doctoral student investigator will take the time necessary to process these feelings before moving on with the remainder of the interview.

The doctoral student investigator will ensure that your data will be kept in a confidential manner. Once you officially enter into the study, you will be assigned a general identifying marker (e.g., Participant 1) that will be associated with your interview transcripts.
Identifying information (i.e., informed consent documents, demographic data) will be kept separate from interview transcriptions and will only be used in the initial phases of data coding for contextual purposes (e.g., needing to reference demographic information to connect a particular response to a participant, constructing an overall sample description). Kept with this identifying information will be a one-page legend that will link the general identifying markers with participants’ known identity. All identifying information described above will be stored in my personal home office until the completion of the study, which is securely locked when I am not present. All digital and video transcriptions will be encrypted throughout the entire research process to ensure the safety of your data and will be erased following successful transcription. Additionally, the doctoral student investigator will take great care with each transcription to de-identify participant information by attending to contextual variables that could serve to identify participants. For example, information related to specific universities, programs, practicum sites, internship sites, etc., that could identify you will be altered in such a way as to make them more generic. At the completion of this study, all transcription documents originally stored and encrypted on my computer will be transferred to an encrypted flash drive; this flash drive will be stored along with the informed consent documents in the university office of Dr. Eric Sauer.

Participating in this study will require a small time commitment to complete the two individual interviews, which could be seen as an inconvenience. The doctoral student investigator, however, will do his best to meet with you during times and days that are most convenient for your schedule.

There will likely be instances during the interview process where participants provide anecdotal examples about their classroom experiences. Embedded within these examples will be interactions that participants have had with students or other individuals connected to their respective courses. Participants will not be asked any identifying information about their students or colleagues (to protect their respective anonymity) and will be reminded during the interview process to protect the identities of others.

Finally, it is intended that this research will contribute to the greater body of sexual orientation, race, and counseling literatures. Any presentations and/or publications resulting from this research will include elements from individual participant responses. Though unlikely, there is a relatively small chance that a previous student or colleague may recognize elements of a particular response. For example, a student might read a quote in a manuscript and recognize the content or way in which it was stated. As stated previously, the doctoral student investigator will de-identify responses to reflect more general content rather than direct connections to names and places.

If at any time during the data collection process you become uncomfortable with particular questions, you may choose to not answer questions at your discretion.
Furthermore, if you decide that you no longer wish to participate in the study, you are entitled to discontinue participation, without penalty, at any time.

**What are the benefits of participating in this study?**

It is possible that you may benefit from participating in this research study because it might help you consolidate your learning about yourself and your experiences working around issues of race and sexual orientation in your teaching. In addition, the amount of reflection called for in this study may lead to further appreciation or a deeper understanding for the overall experiences of students who enroll and participate in multicultural and diversity courses. Having said this, it is possible that you may not reap these potential benefits. The primary benefit of participation, however, will be to help the doctoral student researcher learn more about the overall experience, including benefits and challenges, of having race-related issues emerge alongside of sexual orientation issues in graduate classrooms. It is believed that results from this study may have a number of professional implications for training directors, educators, and supervisors who work with students in professional psychology, and may even be helpful on a more personal level to future students themselves. For example, it would be beneficial to learn more about how holding sexual orientation and race-related issues in tandem can impact one’s professional development. Moreover, students could benefit from understanding how others navigate the complexities of obtaining additional knowledge, awareness, and skill in working within the intersections of sexual orientation and race.

**Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?**

There are no foreseen financial costs to participants incurred as a result of participation in this study. The doctoral student investigator will initiate calls in the event that interviews take place via telephone. It is assumed that all participants will have access to Internet connections given their teaching requirements and affiliation with a college or university.

**Is there any compensation for participating in this study?**

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

**Who will have access to the information collected during this study?**

The following individuals will have access to the information collected in this study: the doctoral student investigator, the doctoral dissertation committee members, the research assistants, and the data analysis auditor. All of these individuals will follow the steps outlined above to ensure participant confidentiality.
As mentioned previously, it is likely that I will present my findings from this study in manuscript and/or poster presentation form; however, all efforts will be taken to protect the identity of study participant. In accordance with federal laws, the Code of Ethics for counselors (American Counseling Association, 2005), and the Code of Ethics for Psychologists (American Psychological Association, 2002) data will be retained for at least 3 years after the study has been completed. The privacy of all participants will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. As with many research protocols, one significant limit to confidentiality is if any of the participants report being a danger to him/herself or others. If this information is disclosed, the proper individuals will be notified as specified by ethical and legal codes.

**What if you want to stop participating in this study?**

Participation in this research is strictly voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate. If you decide to participate, you will always have the right to drop out of this study at any point in time without prejudice or penalty.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact me at any time at the following email address: raymond.l.sheets@wmich.edu or via telephone at 443-604-5533. You may also contact the principal faculty investigator, who is my doctoral advisor (Eric M. Sauer) at the following email address: eric.sauer@wmich.edu or via telephone at 616-742-5070. Finally, you may also contact the WMU Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

**I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. By offering my “digital signature” below (i.e., typed name and date), I am agreeing to take part in this study.**

Please Type Your Name:

Participant’s signature ______________________ Date ____________________
Appendix B

Recommendation Email Script
Recommendation Email Script

Email Subject Line: Help with Dissertation Participant Recruitment

Dear (Name of Faculty or Dissertation Committee Member):

I hope that this email correspondence finds you doing well. I am a counseling psychology PhD candidate at Western Michigan University and am working under the supervision of Dr. Eric Sauer. I am currently in the data collection phase of my dissertation research at Western Michigan University’s Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology Department and would like to ask for your assistance in recruiting potential participants. The title of my dissertation is “How Counseling Psychology Faculty Experience the Comingling of Race and Sexual Orientation Issues in Their Graduate Courses.”

I am utilizing a snowball sampling strategy to identify potential participants; given your teaching and research interests and your commitment to diversity and multiculturalism, I thought you might be able to provide a few recommendations for graduate faculty in professional psychology who might fit the following 2 criteria:

1. Potential participants must be doctoral-level faculty who are employed either full- or part-time at a college or university housing a master’s program in Counseling Psychology or an APA-accredited doctoral program in Counseling Psychology. Potential faculty participants must also be either currently teaching—or have recently taught within the past 2 years—any of the following graduate-level courses: multicultural counseling, any course that predominantly focuses on race, or any course that predominantly focuses on sexual orientation.

2. Potential participants must be teaching their diversity and multicultural courses “on-ground,” rather than online, to ensure that they can speak directly to how race and sexual orientation mix within an actual (not virtual) classroom. Moreover, potential participants must be identified and catalogued within faculty members’ respective departmental systems as graduate-level courses in psychology or counseling.

I am interested in seeking a geographically diverse sample and am specifically interested in recruiting faculty of color and sexual minority faculty. I would really appreciate if you could provide me names and any other contact information (e.g., email, phone, academic institution, etc.) that could help me with recruitment.

Thanks very much for your consideration.

Raymond L. Sheets Jr., M.A.
Doctoral Student Investigator
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University, Sangren Hall
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
Appendix C

Participant Recruitment Table
### Appendix C: Participant Recruitment Table

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<th>Publications</th>
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Appendix D

Initial Correspondence Email Script
Initial Correspondence Email Script

Email Subject Line: Dr. [insert faculty name] suggested I contact you regarding my dissertation research

Dear (Insert Faculty Name),

I hope that this email correspondence finds you doing well. I am a counseling psychology PhD candidate at Western Michigan University and am working under the supervision of Dr. Eric Sauer. I was given your name and contact information by (insert name of recommender); she/he thought you might be interested in participating in my dissertation research. The title of my dissertation project, which has been approved by my university HSIRB is “How Counseling Psychology Faculty Experience the Comingling of Race and Sexual Orientation Issues in Their Graduate Courses.”

I am interested in sampling doctoral faculty members who either teach courses in multicultural counseling, or courses that focus specifically on race and/or sexual orientation. I would like to understand what it is like for these faculty members to experience issues of race, racism, and ethnicity comingling with issues related to sexual orientation and heterosexism in their classrooms. To that end, I am seeking the input and expertise from those faculty members who find themselves tasked to address such issues in the classroom environment.

Participation in my research would require you to have two conversations with me across a time span of a few months. The data collection plan is designed for conversations lasting anywhere from 1-1.5 hours each and would take place at your convenience.

If you are interested in learning more about participating in my dissertation research, please review the informed consent document that I have attached to this email. If you have any questions about the informed consent or any aspect of the study, please email me at raymond.l.sheets@wmich.edu or call me at (443) 604-5533. You can also contact my dissertation advisor via email (eric.sauer@wmich.edu) or phone (616-742-5070).

If you are still interested in participating, after reviewing this document, please be in touch via email. I will send you further information regarding my data collection process, as well as schedule a time for us to meet in-person or via technology.

Thanks very much for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Raymond L. Sheets Jr., M.A.
Doctoral Student Investigator
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University, Sangren Hall
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
Appendix E

Informed Consent Document
Informed Consent Document

Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology

Principal Investigator: Eric M. Sauer, Ph.D.

Doctoral Student Investigator: Raymond L. Sheets Jr., M.A.

Title of Study: “How Counseling Psychology Faculty Experience the Comingling of Race and Sexual Orientation Issues in Their Graduate Courses.”

You have been invited to participate in a doctoral dissertation research project titled “How Counseling Psychology Faculty Experience the Comingling of Race and Sexual Orientation Issues in Their Graduate Courses.” In this consent document, you will be offered an explanation surrounding the purpose of this research project, the time commitments required, the procedures that will be used to complete the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project.

What are we trying to find out in this study?
The overall purpose of this study will be to explore the various experiences that graduate-level faculty have within their classrooms when issues of race, racism, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and heterosexism emerge alongside of one another.

Who can participate in this study?
Faculty members who have experience teaching a graduate course that focuses on multicultural counseling, or courses focusing predominantly on either race or sexual orientation, will be eligible for study inclusion. Faculty members must either be currently teaching, or have taught within the past two years, in a master’s program in Counseling Psychology or an APA-accredited doctoral program in Counseling Psychology; these courses must have been taught “on-ground” instead of “on-line.”

Where will this study take place?
The data collection for this study can take place in one of three ways: in-person, via the telephone, or via Internet-based technology (i.e., Skype); the exact mode of data collection will be determined by the participant and doctoral student investigator. When possible, the doctoral student investigator will make every attempt to travel to meet with participants, face-to-face, at a private location of their convenience.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?
To participate in this study, you will be invited to participate in an initial interview around your experiences teaching graduate courses in multiculturalism and diversity—this initial interview will include demographic questions, as well as interview questions about your classroom experiences; the experience is designed to last 1-1.5 hours. A few months later, after initial data
has been collected and analyzed, you will be contacted again to participate in a final interview that will last an additional 1-1.5 hours. Before this interview, you will receive (via email) copies of your individual interview transcript, as well as thematic and narrative descriptions of study findings so that you can review these documents before the final interview. During the final interview, you can offer any additional information related to your experiences, and provide any feedback regarding the initial data analysis. In sum, you will be offering approximately 2-3 hours of your time over a span of several months.

**What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?**
During the initial in-person meeting—the doctoral student investigator will verbally review the informed consent and offer you the opportunity to ask any clarifying questions. If you offer verbal and written consent to participate, the doctoral investigator will begin the semi-structured interview that addresses several dimensions of your graduate classroom experiences. These interviews will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. Information about participants will be de-identified and stored in a secure, confidential location; all transcribed data will be thoroughly encrypted and stored on my personal computer. It is estimated that the entire interview will last 1-1.5 hours in duration.

Following data analysis of first interviews, you will then be invited to participate in a final 1-1.5-hour interview where you will have access to your individual interview transcript, a description of collective theme/subtheme clusters, and a collective narrative that speaks to the essence of the phenomenon in question. You will be given the opportunity to provide additional clarification regarding these themes and narrative, or provide completely new information that might have surfaced since the individual interviews or from hearing the presentation on the first round of data collection.

**What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?**
There are minimal risks associated with participation in this study. There is always the possibility that you may experience some discomfort when reflecting upon your teaching experiences. This may be particularly salient if you experienced emotionally charged events in your involvement with classes where race and sexual orientation issues were discussed. If discomfort does arise, the doctoral student investigator will take the time necessary to process these feelings before moving on with the remainder of the interview.

The doctoral student investigator will ensure that your data will be kept in a confidential manner. Once you officially enter into the study, you will be assigned a general identifying marker (e.g., Participant 1) that will be associated with your interview transcripts. Identifying information (i.e., informed consent documents, demographic data) will be kept separate from interview transcriptions and will only be used in the initial phases of data coding for contextual purposes (e.g., needing to reference demographic information to connect a particular response to a participant, constructing an overall sample description). Kept with this identifying information will be a one-page legend that will link the general identifying markers with participants’ known identity. All identifying information described above will be stored in my personal home office until the completion of the study, which is securely locked when I am not present. All digital and video transcriptions will be encrypted throughout the entire research process to ensure the safety of your data and will be erased following successful transcription. Additionally, the doctoral investigator will take the time necessary to process these feelings before moving on with the remainder of the interview.
student investigator will take great care with each transcription to de-identify participant information by attending to contextual variables that could serve to identify participants. For example, information related to specific universities, programs, practicum sites, internship sites, etc., that could identify you will be altered in such a way as to make them more generic. At the completion of this study, all transcription documents originally stored and encrypted on my computer will be transferred to an encrypted flash drive; this flash drive will be stored along with the informed consent documents in the university office of Dr. Eric Sauer.

Participating in this study will require a small time commitment to complete the two individual interviews, which could be seen as an inconvenience. The doctoral student investigator, however, will do his best to meet with you during times and days that are most convenient for your schedule.

There will likely be instances during the interview process where participants provide anecdotal examples about their classroom experiences. Embedded within these examples will be interactions that participants have had with students or other individuals connected to their respective courses. Participants will not be asked any identifying information about their students or colleagues (to protect their respective anonymity) and will be reminded during the interview process to protect the identities of others.

Finally, it is intended that this research will contribute to the greater body of sexual orientation, race, and counseling literatures. Any presentations and/or publications resulting from this research will include elements from individual participant responses. Though unlikely, there is a relatively small chance that a previous student or colleague may recognize elements of a particular response. For example, a student might read a quote in a manuscript and recognize the content or way in which it was stated. As stated previously, the doctoral student investigator will de-identify responses to reflect more general content rather than direct connections to names and places.

If at any time during the data collection process you become uncomfortable with particular questions, you may choose to not answer questions at your discretion. Furthermore, if you decide that you no longer wish to participate in the study, you are entitled to discontinue participation, without penalty, at any time.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?
It is possible that you may benefit from participating in this research study because it might help you consolidate your learning about yourself and your experiences working around issues of race and sexual orientation in your teaching. In addition, the amount of reflection called for in this study may lead to further appreciation or a deeper understanding for the overall experiences of students who enroll and participate in multicultural and diversity courses. Having said this, it is possible that you may not reap these potential benefits. The primary benefit of participation, however, will be to help the doctoral student researcher learn more about the overall experience, including benefits and challenges, of having race-related issues emerge alongside of sexual orientation issues in graduate classrooms. It is believed that results from this study may have a number of professional implications for training directors, educators, and supervisors who work with students in professional psychology, and may even be helpful on a more personal level to
future students themselves. For example, it would be beneficial to learn more about how holding sexual orientation and race-related issues in tandem can impact one’s professional development. Moreover, students could benefit from understanding how others navigate the complexities of obtaining additional knowledge, awareness, and skill in working within the intersections of sexual orientation and race.

**Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?**

There are no foreseen financial costs to participants incurred as a result of participation in this study. The doctoral student investigator will initiate calls in the event that interviews take place via telephone. It is assumed that all participants will have access to Internet connections given their teaching requirements and affiliation with a college or university.

**Is there any compensation for participating in this study?**

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

**Who will have access to the information collected during this study?**

The following individuals will have access to the information collected in this study: the doctoral student investigator, the doctoral dissertation committee members, the research assistants, and the data analysis auditor. All of these individuals will follow the steps outlined above to ensure participant confidentiality.

As mentioned previously, it is likely that I will present my findings from this study in manuscript and/or poster presentation form; however, all efforts will be taken to protect the identity of study participant. In accordance with federal laws, the Code of Ethics for counselors (American Counseling Association, 2005), and the Code of Ethics for Psychologists (American Psychological Association, 2002) data will be retained for at least 3 years after the study has been completed. The privacy of all participants will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. As with many research protocols, one significant limit to confidentiality is if any of the participants report being a danger to him/herself or others. If this information is disclosed, the proper individuals will be notified as specified by ethical and legal codes.

**What if you want to stop participating in this study?**

Participation in this research is strictly voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate. If you decide to participate, you will always have the right to drop out of this study at any point in time without prejudice or penalty.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact me at any time at the following email address: raymond.l.sheets@wmich.edu or via telephone at 443-604-5533. You may also contact the principal faculty investigator, who is my doctoral advisor (Eric M. Sauer) at the following email address: eric.sauer@wmich.edu or via telephone at 616-742-5070. Finally, you may also contact the WMU Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board.
chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. By offering my “digital signature” below (i.e., typed name and date), I am agreeing to take part in this study.

Please Type Your Name:

___________________________________
Participant’s signature

______________________________
Date
Appendix F

Initial Correspondence Email Script—Follow Up
Email Subject Line: Dr. [insert faculty name] suggested I contact you regarding my dissertation research

Dear (Insert Faculty Name),

This email is just a follow-up to the email that I sent to you two-weeks ago regarding your potential interest in my dissertation research. I have not yet heard from you as to whether you would be interested in being involved with this particular research project, so I thought I would reach out to you once more.

I was given your name and contact information by (insert name of recommender); she/he thought you might be interested in participating in my dissertation research. The title of my dissertation project, which has been approved by my university HSIRB is “How Counseling Psychology Faculty Experience the Commingling of Race and Sexual Orientation Issues in Their Graduate Courses.” I am a counseling psychology doctoral candidate at Western Michigan University and am working under the supervision of Dr. Eric Sauer.

I am interested in sampling doctoral faculty members who either teach courses in multicultural counseling, or courses that focus specifically on race and/or sexual orientation. I would like to understand what it is like for these faculty members to experience issues of race, racism, and ethnicity comingling with issues related to sexual orientation and heterosexism in their classrooms. To that end, I am seeking the input and expertise from those faculty members who find themselves tasked to address such issues in the classroom environment.

Participation in my research would require you to have two conversations with me across a time span of a few months. The data collection plan has been designed for conversations lasting anywhere from 1-1.5 hours each and would take place at your convenience.

If you are interested in learning more about participating in my dissertation research, please review the informed consent document that I have attached to this email. If you have any questions about the informed consent or any aspect of the study, please email me at raymond.l.sheets@wmich.edu or call me at (443) 604-5533. You can also contact my dissertation advisor via email (eric.sauer@wmich.edu) or phone (616-742-5070).

If you are still interested in participating, after reviewing this document, please be in touch via email. I will send you further information regarding my data collection process, as well as schedule a time for us to meet in-person or via technology.

Thanks very much for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Raymond L. Sheets Jr., M.A.
Doctoral Student Investigator
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University, Sangren Hall
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
Appendix G

Further Study Information and Scheduling Script
Email Subject Line: Further Information for Dissertation Study

Dear [Insert Faculty Email],

I want to thank you for your interest in participating in my dissertation research titled “How Counseling Psychology Faculty Experience the Comingling of Race and Sexual Orientation Issues in Their Graduate Courses.” I am conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Eric Sauer. I would now like to offer more detailed information regarding study participation.

First, there will be an initial interview where I will explore with you what it is like when race, racism, ethnicity, and sexual orientation issues emerge together within graduate classrooms. This interview will be semi-structured and can take place via in-person, via Skype Internet technology, or via telephone—whatever is most convenient for you. If possible, I would love to meet with you in-person; I will travel to you if the distance is manageable.

It is my intention to collect all of the data from these initial interviews across a time span of approximately 2 months. Over the next 2-3 months, following data collection, I plan to analyze the data from these interviews and would then like to contact you one additional time to conduct a final interview. Before this final interview, I will provide documents to you (via email) that include your individual interview transcript, a description of collective theme/subtheme clusters, and a collective narrative that speaks to the essence of the phenomenon in question. I will then present these findings to you during the final interview and ask you to provide feedback as to whether my analysis fits your individual experience.

I would like to schedule a 1 to 1.5-hour interview with you at your convenience. The interview may be conducted in-person or via Skype. Please respond to this email with times that you would be available for a block of 1-1.5 hours and by what method you prefer to be interviewed. If you prefer to be interviewed in-person, we can discuss the possibility of me coming to a convenient destination of your choice (if travel for me is reasonable). If you select Skype as your preferred method, I will send you a helpful tutorial of how to install and use this free software program for the interview (if you do not already have Skype installed on your computer). All interviews will utilize audio equipment or software for the purposes of recording. The transcripts created from these recordings will be used to analyze data.

Thank you again for your expressed interest in participating. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me via email at raymond.l.sheets@wmich.edu or call me at (443) 604-5533.

Raymond L. Sheets, Jr., M.A.
Doctoral Student Investigator
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University, Sangren Hall
Kalamazoo, MI 49008; 443-604-5533
Appendix H

Skype Installation and Use
Skype is an online audio and visual conferencing software program. Please use the following link to download the program for Windows, Mac, or Linux:


Alternatively, participants using tablets may download Skype applications where available for use in this interview.

Follow the directions for installation. You will be required to create a Skype account in order to use this program.

For further information about using Skype, please review the following information at this website address: https://support.skype.com/en/faq/FA11098/getting-started-with-skype-windows-desktop

After the software is installed, please email me with your Skype ID.
Appendix I

Initial Interview Reminder Email Script
Hello (participant’s name),

I just wanted to confirm your upcoming interview on (date/time).

[For telephone interviews:]

The interview will take place via telephone using (phone number).

[For Skype interviews:]

I will be contacting you via Skype at the designated time. If you have not sent me your Skype ID, please do so as soon as possible.

In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at raymond.l.sheets@wmich.edu or (443) 604-5533 with any questions.

Raymond L. Sheets Jr., M.A.
Doctoral Student Investigator
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University, Sangren Hall
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
Appendix J

Initial Interview Reminder Phone Script
Hello (participant’s name), I just wanted to confirm your interview on (date/time).

[For telephone interviews:]
The interview will take place via telephone at (phone number).

[For Skype interviews:]
I will be contacting you via Skype at the designated time. If you have not sent me your Skype ID, please do so as soon as possible.

In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at raymond.l.sheets@wmich.edu or (443) 604-5533 with any questions. Thank you.
Appendix K

Initial Interview Protocol
Interviewer’s Note: All text that is [bolded] will be interviewer notes that provide context to help frame the initial interview experience. All text that is not bolded will be the verbatim script used when speaking directly with participants.

[This protocol was utilized at the outset of whatever connection was made with participant, be it telephone, or via computer technology (i.e., Skype). First, the participants were greeted and thanked for their interest in participating; they were offered a verbal description of the informed consent procedures. Finally, participants were asked to offer their verbal consent and forward an electronically signed consent document to me via email.]

Hi (Insert Participant Name). I would like to first thank you for your interest in agreeing to meet with me to discuss your potential participation in my dissertation research titled “How Counseling Psychology Faculty Experience the Comingling of Race and Sexual Orientation Issues in Their Graduate Courses.”

[Waited for and addressed any comments accordingly].

I would like to begin by addressing with you the informed consent information for the study.

For those potential participants who were met via computer technology, I informed them that they had a copy of the informed consent attached to an earlier email from me. I then reviewed all elements of the informed consent, stopping periodically to ask the potential participants if they had any questions.

Now that we have discussed the informed consent, do you verbally consent to participate in this dissertation study?

[All participants verbally consented to take part in the research]

Now that you have consented to participate, please digitally sign the consent document and forward it back to me via email. I will now turn on my recording equipment. If at any time you become uncomfortable, or otherwise wish that I cease recording, please tell me and I will do so immediately.

[Turned on audio recording equipment.]
[Participants then began discussing their responses to interview questions. Specific probes were used to clarify participant responses throughout the interview. Additionally, some participants offered examples from their experiences that appeared more abstract.]

The following were examples of potential probes that were used to help participants strengthen their responses: “Can you say more about that?” and “I’m not sure that I understand what you mean when you say [insert specific example], could you clarify?” or “Could you give me an example of how that looked in the classroom?”
Great. Now, I would like to take a moment to share with you how the interview will be structured. I will first ask you a few demographic questions and then ask you several questions regarding your experiences within the classroom around race and sexual orientation. There is a high probability that you will discuss interactions with current and past students/colleagues throughout the interview. To protect their anonymity, I would encourage you to not use any names or other identifying information to preserve their confidentiality. Otherwise, please feel free to answer the interview questions as comprehensively as you can. If you need time to consider your responses, feel free to take it. Also, if for any reason you do not want to respond to a particular question, you are free to do so. If at any time during the course of the interview you decide that you no longer wish to participate in the study, you are entitled to discontinue participation.

During the interview process, I might ask you any number of follow-up questions or questions that clarify more about something you have said. Feel free to respond to my questions however you feel comfortable and based on what you feel is most meaningful.

I would like to start by asking you some demographic questions, as well as general questions surrounding your teaching experiences.

What is your age?

What is your sexual orientation?

What is your gender identity?

What is your racial identity?

What is your highest academic degree obtained?

Approximately how many peer-reviewed regional/national presentations in diversity/multiculturalism have you given?

Approximately how many peer-reviewed journal articles in diversity/multiculturalism have you published?

Briefly describe your current and/or past clinical experiences working with sexual minority and racial minority individuals.

I would now like for you to share with me a brief summary of your graduate teaching experiences. I would be interested in hearing how long you have taught courses, what types of courses you have worked with, and what courses you are currently teaching. I am specifically interested in your graduate courses in diversity/multiculturalism, as well as any that specifically include issues pertaining to race and/or sexual orientation?

When you think back to your graduate training program, how were issues of race and sexual orientation typically handled within classrooms? I will note that race and sexual orientation can
be discussed broadly, here, and may include connections to racism, ethnicity, and/or heterosexism. Were race and sexual orientation discussed independently from one another, or were they discussed in tandem?

Now, I would like to bring our attention to your current teaching and classroom experiences. When you think about the courses you have taught (both past and present), how have you experienced race-related issues emerging alongside of sexual orientation issues in your graduate-level courses?

How do you manage classroom discussions when issues of race and sexual orientation are held together?

Are there specific pedagogical tools you use (e.g., assignments, multimedia) that encourage students to address issues of race and sexual orientation in your classes? If so, what are they?

Do you feel that conversations where race and sexual orientation are intertwined together in the classroom occur similarly for students as they do for other individuals outside of academia (e.g., at work, at church)? In other words, do similar conversations involving race and sexual orientation occur in the same way in outside environments?

Has the comingling of race and sexual orientation issues in your classrooms presented any challenges for you? Your students? Your academic department as a whole? If so, how were you able to navigate the challenges that you experienced?

How do the personal explorations on the part of your students (both in class and via course requirements/assessments) around racial and sexual identity influence their overall learning?

Has teaching your graduate courses on multiculturalism (or courses in race and/or sexual orientation) impacted your own personal racial and/or sexual identity development, and if so, how?

[To close out the interviewer process, I then asked participants to offer any additional comments that they wanted to cover that were not fully addressed during the interview. I also asked participants to articulate the most important “take-home” message from their teaching experiences around multiculturalism, as well as race and sexual orientation, specifically.]

Is there anything else you would like to share with me that we have not talked about? Out of everything that we have covered today, what do you feel is the most important thing about our discussion that would help me understand your experience of having race and sexual orientation topics comingle together within your classroom?

Thank you for your participation today. Just to remind you, I will contact you again once I complete my initial data analysis. At that time, and if you agree to continue participating, we can schedule a final interview where I can discuss the initial results and seek further clarification. Take care.
Appendix L

Second Interview Scheduling Email Script
Hi (Insert Participant Name),

I am contacting you regarding your continued interest in participation in my dissertation research titled “How Counseling Psychology Faculty Experience the Comingling of Race and Sexual Orientation Issues in Their Graduate Courses.”

If you remember, I mentioned at the closing of our initial interview a few months ago that my research involves one final interview. This interview will give me the opportunity to present the collective theme/subtheme clusters, as well as a collective narrative of what it is like for graduate faculty to experience the comingling of race and sexual orientation issues within their classrooms. My hope is that you will be able to comment on whether the data fit your individual experience and offer any additional clarifications or reflections since we last spoke.

Would you still be interested in participating with this final interview?

If so, could you please forward me a few 1-1.5-hour time blocks (including days/times) that would be convenient for you to meet? I will assume that we will meet in the same way (insert information about meeting in-person, by phone, or via Skype). If you would like to meet in a different way, please do not hesitate to let me know.

If you are unable to meet with me for this final interview, please let me know that as well.

I want to thank you for your consideration, as well as all of the assistance you have provided me up to this point in my dissertation process.

Raymond L. Sheets Jr., M.A.
Doctoral Student Investigator
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University, Sangren Hall
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
Appendix M

Second Interview Scheduling Email Script—Follow Up
Hi (Insert Participant Name),

I am following up on the email communication that I left for you approximately one week ago regarding your continued participation in my dissertation research entitled “How Counseling Psychology Faculty Experience the Commingling of Race and Sexual Orientation Issues in Their Graduate Courses.”

If you remember, I mentioned at the closing of our initial interview a few months ago that my research involves one final interview. This interview will give me the opportunity to present the collective theme/subtheme clusters, as well as a collective narrative of what it is like for graduate faculty to experience the comingling of race and sexual orientation issues within their classrooms. My hope is that you will be able to comment on whether the data fit your individual experience and offer any additional clarifications or reflections since we last spoke.

Would you still be interested in participating with this final interview?

If so, could you please forward me a few 1-1.5-hour time blocks (including days/times) that would be convenient for you to meet? I will assume that we will meet in the same way (insert information about meeting in-person, by phone, or via Skype). If you would like to meet in a different way, please do not hesitate to let me know.

If you are unable to meet with me for this final interview, please let me know that as well.

I want to thank you for your consideration, as well as all of the assistance you have provided me up to this point in my dissertation process.

Raymond L. Sheets Jr., M.A.
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Kalamazoo, MI 49008
Appendix N

Second Interview Reminder Email Script
Dear (Insert Participant Name)

This is just a quick reminder that we are scheduled to meet on (Insert date and time of appointment) to complete the final interview for my dissertation study entitled “How Counseling Psychology Faculty Experience the Comingling of Race and Sexual Orientation Issues in Their Graduate Courses.”

(For telephone meetings): I plan to meet you via telephone (Insert phone number) at the agreed upon time.

(For Skype meetings): I plan to Skype you at (Insert Skype username) at the agreed upon time.

I have attached a word document that includes a copy of your individual interview transcript to remind you of what we discussed during our first interview. An additional document includes a description of collective theme/subtheme clusters, and a collective narrative that speaks to the essence of the phenomenon in question. Please take a few minutes to review this information prior to our interview, though I will walk us through all of it during our upcoming meeting, as well.

I am really looking forward to talking with you then.

Raymond L. Sheets Jr., M.A.  
Doctoral Student Investigator  
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology  
Western Michigan University, Sangren Hall  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
Appendix O

Initial Data Analysis Findings
[This appendix included the collective analysis from initial interviews with participants. The document included a copy of their individual interview transcript, a thematic breakdown across participants, and a collective narrative.]

I would like to share with you the preliminary analysis from the initial interviews. My goal is to discuss these results with you in our upcoming final interview to see if I was successful in capturing your individual experience of having race and sexual orientation issues emerge alongside of each other in your graduate classrooms.

The first set of preliminary data represents how I made sense of your experience in the classroom. I have included a copy of our interview transcript so that you can review it for accuracy and so that you can recall what we originally discussed. I have also provided a collective thematic structure that includes the dominant themes and subthemes that emerged across all participants, as well as a collective narrative that captures the overall essence of how faculty experienced race and sexual orientation issues emerging alongside of one another in their classrooms. Ultimately, I would like to verify this information with you, as well as make changes that better reflect your experience.

I look forward to speaking with you at our final interview.

Raymond L. Sheets Jr., M.A.
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Western Michigan University, Sangren Hall
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Individual Interview Transcript
[Verbatim transcript was reported here]

Collective Themes and Subthemes
[Collective thematic structure (across all participants) was reported here.]

Collective Narrative
[Collective narrative that captured all participants’ experiences was reported here.]
Appendix P

Second Interview Protocol
Interviewer’s Note: All text that is [bolded] will be interviewer’s notes that provide context to help frame the second interview experience. All text that is not bolded will be the verbatim script used when speaking directly with participants.

[This protocol was utilized at the outset of whatever connection was made with study participants, be it telephone or via computer technology (i.e., Skype), for the second and final interview. First, participants were greeted and thanked for their continued interest in participating.]

Hi (Insert Participant Name). I would like to first thank you for your continued interest in my dissertation research titled “How Counseling Psychology Faculty Experience the Comingling of Race and Sexual Orientation Issues in Their Graduate Courses.”

[Waited for and addressed any comments accordingly].

I would like to begin by asking if you have any outstanding questions that have come up since the last time that we spoke?

[Waited for and addressed any comments accordingly].

Okay then. It will only take me one moment to turn on my recording equipment. As during our first interview, if at any time you become uncomfortable, or otherwise wish that I cease recording, please tell me and I will do so immediately. Also, if at any time you decide that you would like to discontinue your participation with this research project, you can do so. Finally, I would like to remind you to preserve the anonymity of any current or past students/colleagues you may discuss in the context of your responses.

[Turned on audio recording equipment.]

Now, I would like to discuss with you a summary of the information gathered from your initial interview, as well as a collective summary across study participants.

Participants were encouraged to pull up the document emailed to them in their reminder email that was sent prior to the interview. This document included an individual transcript of their initial interview, as well as collective theme/subtheme structures and collective narrative.

I would like to share with you my overall findings that are collapsed across all of the interviews that I completed with participants. The goal of this information is to see if I adequately capture the experience of faculty members—as a whole—in how they experience issues of race and sexual orientation emerging alongside of each other in graduate classrooms.

[I verbally described the findings that emerged across participants’ collective interviews. There was unscripted dialogue during this short presentation to offer any clarification or to answer any questions that arose on the part of the participant.]
There were a number of salient themes that emerged across participants’ experiences surrounding how they experienced race and sexual orientation comingling within their classrooms. The first salient collective theme that emerged across participants was [Inserted name of theme]; my interpretation of this collective theme was [Inserted verbal description of interpretation and overall meaning]. There were a number of statements that were offered across interviews that directly connected to this interpretation. A few examples of these statements are: [Inserted a few quotations—from more than one participant—that connect to the theme interpretation]. Do you have any reactions or concerns surrounding this particular collective theme, and if so, could you provide any further clarification that would offer more precision or understanding? [Waited for and addressed any comments accordingly].

[The previous exchange in which I presented the emerging themes to participants, and subsequently requested their feedback, was repeated for each collective theme].

Waited for and addressed any comments accordingly. Prompts were utilized during the participant’s feedback to me for the purposes of clarification, elaboration, and/or obtaining more in-depth information. For example, I asked: “Can you explain what you mean by that?” or “Tell me another way that I might describe this?” or “Could you give me another example of what you mean?

I would now like to have you read over the collective narrative that attempts to capture the experiences of graduate faculty when taken together. You may have read through this already, but could you take a minute and read through it once more?

[Allowed participants to read the collective narrative.]

It was my goal to capture the emerging collective essence of participants’ experiences. I am wondering if you could share with me any reactions to this collective narrative? Are there any changes, or additions that need to be made? Could you provide any further clarification for the collective narrative?

At this point, I have completed all that I wanted to accomplish with this final interview. Is there anything further that you feel would be helpful, or necessary, to note; or, is there anything that we have not discussed in either of our interviews that you feel important to bring up?

[Waited for and addressed any comments accordingly.]

Well, that concludes your participation in my dissertation study. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your willingness to shed light on this very important topic; your overall time commitment and discussions with me have been incredibly meaningful. If there is anything further that you would like to add, at any time, please do not hesitate to contact me. Again, thank you for your time and have a great rest of your day. Goodbye.