“Let's try and grapple all of this”: A snapshot of racial identity development and racial pedagogical decision making in an elective social studies course

Andrea M. Hawkman

School of Teacher Education and Leadership, Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services, Utah State University, 2805 Old Main Hill, Logan, UT 84322, United States

A R T I C L E   I N   P R E S S

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

The Journal of Social Studies Research

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jssr

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Accepted 27 February 2018

Keywords:
Race and racism
Racial identity development
White social studies
Racial pedagogical decision making

ABSTRACT

This case study chronicles the pedagogical decision making of one high school teacher, Mr. Diego de la Vega, a pseudonym, as he teaches about race and racism in his elective social studies class, Race, Gender, and Ethnicity. De la Vega draws upon his own racial biography and experiences with race/ism to engage with high school students around racialized content. A conceptual framework grounded in racial identity development theory is used. This snapshot of racial pedagogical decision making, or RPDM, features a discussion of implications for social studies pedagogy to promote racial identity development in the classroom.


Introduction

The public responses, or lack thereof, to the killings of Philando Castile, Richard Collins, John Crawford, Terence Crutcher, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Mya Hall, Walter Scott, Eric Gardner, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, Freddie Grey and countless others serve painful reminders we cannot collectively engage in a constructive conversation about the persistence of racism. White Americans have struggled to acknowledge that #BlackLivesMatter and, in some cases, evoked calls of reverse racism when insisting that #WhiteLivesMatter too. Despite the rise in publicity surrounding the deaths of these people of color, the steep divide between those willing to challenge the enduring systematic structures that perpetuate racism in this country—typically people of color and their allies—and those who continue to reify, whether intentionally or unintentionally, color-blind and individualized understandings of discrimination is wider than ever. What remains evident in the midst of the post-Obama, Trump era is that many Americans rely on limited understandings of racism and have, as Bonilla-Silva (2010) asserted, “developed powerful explanations—which have ultimately become justifications—for contemporary racial inequality that exculpate them from any responsibility for the status of people of color” (p. 2).

The current racial climate is particularly problematic as now even colorblindness is under attack. Matias and Newlove (2017) observed that the Trump era has ushered in a transition from colorblindness towards white nationalism as whiteness and white supremacy are becoming emboldened within communities and schools across the country. These emboldened displays of whiteness, Matias and Newlove (2017) contend, are represented through the proliferation of the alt-right movement, the re-appropriation of civil rights language, and the disguise of hate speech through evocations of the First
Amendment. Flyers and posts featuring text like, "It's okay to be white" have appeared across high schools, college campuses, and social media platforms as it has now become okay to display feelings of white nationalism in public spheres.

Social studies educators must take responsibility for engaging with racialized pedagogies in their classrooms to prepare students to embody the racial literacy (Guinier, 2004), racial realism (Bell, 1992), and critical patriotism (Busey & Walker, 2017; King, Warren, Bender, & Finley, 2017), necessary given our current racial climate. Some argue that race is a social construct, but it is pure chance to enact racial justice is due to the lack of experience citizens have in talking and learning about race/ism. Research indicates that race talk is often filled with discomfort (Bell, 2003) and is shaped by rhetorical incoherence (Bonilla-Silva, 2010) as white people wrestle with how to reconcile their challenging worldviews (Bell, 2002, 2003). When race talk does occur, it is also littered with racial microaggressions (Sue, 2010) and assertions of perceived power or authority regarding race relations (Sue, 2010). Often, when whites experience feelings of white fragility (DiAngelo, 2011) they attempt to shut down racial dialogue through avoidance (Pasque, Chesler, Charbeneau, & Carlson, 2013) and through calls for silence and respect (Sue, 2010). Consequently, without frequent exposure to race talk, problematic understandings of race/ism, whiteness, and white supremacy are left unchallenged in whites which prevents them from embracing racialized understandings of the world and from engaging in work alongside people of color to dismantle systems of oppression.

Likewise, teachers, rarely, if ever, teach about race/ism. Branch (2003) contended that due to a lack of experience with racism, white educators have been unable to understand and, therefore, incorporate instruction about the devastating effects of racism in their social studies classes. Instead, teachers often perpetuate the master narratives present in many educational resources, which invariably promote a race-less, or colorblind, interpretation of society. Researchers need to investigate how teachers can create classroom spaces, or counter-spaces (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000), wherein racial conversations can thrive.

In what follows, I present findings from a study about the racial pedagogical decision making (RPDM) of one high school educator, Diego de la Vega (pseudonym), who places race/ism at the center of his interactions with students in an elective secondary social studies course, Race, Gender, and Ethnicity. Specifically, I investigate how Mr. de la Vega engages in racial identity introspection through examining his racial biography. Further, I explore the racial pedagogical decision making of de la Vega as he works with secondary social studies students to explore their own racial identities in pursuit of learning about race/ism.

### Race/ism and White Social Studies

Upon review of national curriculum standards created by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), Branch (2003) stated that a “clear warrant for teaching about race and racism” was present (p. 91). Social studies themes such as understanding different cultures and varying opinions, the development of individual identity, and understanding power and authority all lend themselves to the study of race/ism in society. Despite calls from race scholars, social studies education has failed to meaningfully incorporate pedagogy and curriculum that support identity development regarding race and ethnicity (Branch, 2003; Chandler & McKnight, 2009, 2011; Howard, 2004; Husband, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Martell, 2013). A survey of social studies literature demonstrates a demand for additional work dealing with race/ism and identity (Chandler, 2015; King & Chandler, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Ooka Pang, Rivera, & Gillette, 1998).

---

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>White Racial Identity Ego Statuses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact Status</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disintegration Status</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reintegration Status</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pseudo-independent Status</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immersion/Emersion Status</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autonomy Status</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **People of Color Racial Identity Ego Statuses** |
| **Conformity (Pre-Encounter) Status**          | Individual self-identity is devalued due to judgment based on white standards of merit |
| **Dissonance (Encounter) Status**               | Individual exhibits anxiety regarding their racial group and is confused about majority-group affiliations |
| **Immersion/Emersion Status**                   | The use of “own-group” standards to define one’s identity and making decisions for the betterment of one’s own racial group |
| **Internalization Status**                     | Individual maintains a positive viewpoint of their own identity and values other racial and ethnic groups |
| **Integrative Awareness Status**                | Recognition of one’s identity and shared commitment to support the efforts of other oppressed groups |
دریافت فوری متن کامل مقاله

امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات