Talking the Talk, Not Walking the Walk: Expressions from Underrepresented Students about Their Counselor Education Doctoral Programs

Dissertation

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Abstract

This qualitative study explored the perceptions of self-identified racial or ethnic minorities about their counselor education doctoral programs in relation to multicultural competence. More specifically, semi-structured interview questions were used to obtain information about their doctoral experiences related to faculty and peer relationships, funding, and academic opportunities. Nineteen participants, males and females representing African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans, comprised the sample for the study; participants were recruited from counseling listservs and through snowball sampling techniques. Six themes emerged from the transcripts: (a) intersectionality, (b) playing the game, (c) individual characteristics and attributes, (d) support, (e) voice, and (f) talk the talk, talk the walk. Implications for future research, as well as counselor education doctoral program recruitment, retention, and policy procedures, are included.
Dedication

This study is dedicated to all doctoral students persevering through their studies, finding their new identity, and navigating the numerous and complex relationships along the way.

More specifically, this dissertation is dedicated to the participants of this study.
Acknowledgements

My life has been a privileged one, largely due to the many experiences afforded to me through influential people. Without their presence in my life, whether front and center or behind the scenes, I doubt I would be where I am today. First and foremost, my family has provided the emotional, material, and financial foundation for my success. I will always be grateful to my parents for valuing education, hard work, perseverance, and excellence. The late nights spent co-editing high school reports and perfecting my projects certainly paid off, as did their constant push for me to assert myself and recognize my needs and rights. The fact that they set me up for success by paying for my undergraduate college education is not a minor detail. I often reflect on these many sacrifices made for my benefit. Likewise, my brother has been a major influence in my life; he remains a steadfast supporter of my educational ambition as well as any others. In later years, as my family structure shifted, my parents’ new partners and their extended families added to the support and encouragement of my career goals. They spurred me with frequent inquiries about my academic progress, and charged my batteries through debate and discussion of political or educational topics. I thank them for all they have done to help me get to this point.

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all-consuming and isolating, but my friends allowed me time and space for my work, while reminding me of the need for balance and self-care. My friends in Knoxville, Tennessee remained present, despite going weeks without communicating; they were ready and willing to meet me whenever I came home for a visit, accommodating my plans. My Columbus friends, too, always seemed to accommodate my time, while pushing me to have some fun and take a break.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Much has been written about doctoral students’ experiences in higher education in regard to completion and attrition rates (Berelson, 1960; Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005; Hughes & Kleist, 2005; Lovitts, 2001; Nettles, 1990). In 1999, Bair reviewed more than 430 articles pertaining to this very topic for her meta-synthesis of studies on doctoral student attrition and persistence. She found numerous themes across the articles including: a) attrition and persistence rates vary depending on field of study and program, b) department culture is influential in completion as is the advising relationship, c) financial aid correlates with success, d) and accepted measures of academic aptitude do not accurately predict doctoral completion. Owing to the fact that doctoral study in the United States was initiated at Johns Hopkins University in 1876 and grew exponentially from that point forward, there has been ample time and opportunity to invest in the study of the educational process and experiences of Ph.D. students (Berelson, 1960; Bowen and Rudenstine, 1992).

More recently, Lovitts (2001) collected data exclusively on doctoral attrition and argued for further study and recognition of the problem as one belonging as much, if not more, to the institutions as to the students. In this study, she found a 50% attrition rate overall, agreeing with Berelson (1960) and Bowen and Rudenstine (1992) who estimated the attrition rate as 40% and 50%, respectively. This finding was examined in relation to
different disciplines, and it was discovered that higher rates of attrition occurred in the humanities and social sciences, as compared with professional schools which saw only a 10% attrition rate (Berelson, 1960; Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Lovitts, 2001). Lovitts attributed the difference to program construction, noting that hard sciences and professional schools tended to have more structure and less ambiguity surrounding expectations.

Current reports confirm such claims of high attrition rates, especially in relation to ethnic minority groups. According to the 2007 Census population estimates, the racial breakdown of the United States is approximately 80% White, 13% Black/African American, 4% Asian, 2% Multiracial, 1% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 15% of the population identifies as being Hispanic/Latino (the Census defines Hispanic/Latino as being an ethnic quality, not a race). In 2008, the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) conducted a study of patterns in Ph. D. student bodies across all major disciplines and found that entering doctoral cohorts for 1992-1993 and 1994-1995 were approximately 78% White, 8% Asian, 6% African American, 4% Other, and 3% Hispanic American. By contrast, the completion rates, during that time, were as follows: 43% White, 39% Asian, 34% African American, 35% Other, and 33% Hispanic American. These figures support the high attrition rate claims and signal the underrepresentation of minorities in higher education. Similarly, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2009) reported that in 2008, over 60,000 students completed a doctoral-type program, including professional degrees such as the M.D. and J.D. In these doctoral programs, 56.2% were White, 5.8% Asian/Pacific Islander, 6.1% African American, 0.4% American Indian/Alaska Native, 3.4% Hispanic, and 28.0% nonresident aliens. This report yielded
completion information, but official attrition data is difficult to obtain due to the complexity of the issue and absence versus presence of students (Lovitts, 2001).

Lovitts (2001) provides sound reasoning for the importance of understanding the problem of attrition. She discusses the costs involved for the faculty and department related to actual money, as well as to time and other resources. She also suggests that underrepresentation of doctoral students in academic disciplines can signal a lack of need for the department, yielding program elimination altogether. Universities lose the dollars spent on recruiting individuals through marketing literature and other expenses, and society loses the opportunity to benefit from a potentially innovative and gifted scholar. Further, the students who depart bear their own costs regarding lost finances, personal and emotional stress, and professional upheaval. To this end, Lovitts posits four major categorical barriers to completion: (a) lack of information, (b) absence of community, (c) disappointment with the learning experience, and (d) quality of the advisor/advisee relationship. She also asserts that the “chilly climates” of some doctoral programs cause ethnic minorities and women to feel especially alienated from a sense of community. The underrepresentation of racial minorities in faculty positions can be one result of doctoral attrition, due in part to advising and mentoring experiences.

It is striking to see the low completion rates and default attrition rates across the board, especially in relation to minority groups. The American Counseling Association (ACA) claims membership breakdown is the following: 87% Caucasian, 6% African American, 1.4% Asian, 0.9% Native American, 0.2% Multiracial, 1.5% “Other,” and 3% identifying as Hispanic/Latino (ACA, 2009). Contrast those numbers with the U. S. Census, CGS, and NCES, and it is evident that racial/ethnic minority populations are not
proportionately represented in the major counseling professional organization, and by extrapolation the greater counseling community. Further, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) has a membership breakdown as follows: 86% Caucasian, 5% African American, 2.3% Asian, 0% Multiracial, 0.9% Native American, 2.5% “Other,” and 2.5% Hispanic/Latino (ACA, 2009). It is worth noting that ACA and its divisions do not mandate reporting of such demographic data, so the numbers presented represent the people willing to disclose their racial/ethnic identity and are likely somewhat skewed; percents were calculated using only those numbers reported. Despite the potential for skewed percentages, the numbers signal a need for investigation of the disproportionate representation of the dominant group.

Counselor education programs train both doctoral and masters level students to address social/emotional, career and academic problems as presented by clients. The doctoral students enrolled in these programs bring various professional goals with them. Further, many of these students aspire to become counselor educators at the university level. As a way of preparing for such a goal, many counselor education doctoral students join and participate in ACA, ACES, the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD), and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Such professional organizations propose standards of practice and competence, particularly in multicultural counseling.

The profession of counseling is relatively new, dating back to the late 1800s, and predominantly founded by European and European-American men. As more and more people sought counseling services and the field subdivided into specializations, counselor training programs responded; comprehensive professional identity and definition
developed throughout the 20\textsuperscript{th} century (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Minkoff & Terres, 1985). The aforementioned professional organizations likewise responded to the growth of counseling and counselor education by officially recognizing numerous specialty areas with unique missions; however, AMCD (which started with the name “Association for Non-White Concerns in Personnel and Guidance”) gained tardy recognition and official charter only as recently as 1972, several years post-Civil Rights Movement (Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development: A Historical Sketch [AMCDa], 2009). AMCD’s delayed acceptance and struggle for official status signals a potentially insidious problem within counseling; diversity and multicultural competence and tenets see resistance in various forms despite growing national diversity. As it stands now, ACA provides the umbrella framework and uniting quality for 19 divisions including ACES and AMCD, while CACREP facilitates standardization of programs and accepted basic components of becoming a professional counselor, including multicultural competence.

Given the growing import of multicultural competence in the counseling profession since the mid-1900s and the diversifying United States population who may seek counseling, a surprising dearth of research surrounds racial/ethnic diversity within counselor education doctoral programs. The future faculty who will train counselors to work with the public remains disproportionately representative of the already dominant Caucasian culture, a feature that seems common to other disciplines in higher education as well.
1.2 Purpose of the Study

This study created space for underrepresented doctoral students to express their stories and experiences within their programs to determine the factors that promote or inhibit success in their graduate programs. More specifically, full-time equivalent (FTE) and active doctoral students (currently enrolled for credit hours) from predominantly White institutions (PWIs) were interviewed to better understand their experiences related to Lovitts’ (2001) themes of attrition (e.g., lack of information, absence of community, learning experience, and qualities of the advisor-advisee relationship). Individual interviews were transcribed to determine patterns and themes that affect the culture of counselor education doctoral programs for underrepresented students.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Few studies have focused specifically on counselor education doctoral students’ experiences in their program (Beals, 2007; Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005; Hughes & Kleist, 2005; Protivnak & Foss, 2009; Willis, 2007), and, according to the few that have been published, they have generalized across racial/ethnic groups. For example, a recent study by Beals (2007) examined the experiences of sexual minorities, but, other than this study, no research is apparent surrounding underrepresented students’ experiences in their counselor education doctoral program. Understanding and working to better the experiences for underrepresented doctoral students in counselor education can serve both their short- and long-term experiences in the academy, and can more likely represent one of the primary tenets of counseling, to be culturally competent and inclusive (Arredondo, Toporek, Brown, Jones, Locke, & Sanchez, et. al, 1996).
1.4 Theoretical Framework

Institutions of higher education experience a lack of racial/ethnic diversity in their graduating students (CGS, 2008; NCES, 2009). Reasons for this could cover a wide spectrum. Critical Race Theory (CRT) claims several central ideas that attempt to explain the relationship between power, race, and racism in society’s structures, higher education being one such structure (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT scholars recognize the intersection of race, gender, sexual orientation, and other marginalized statuses and how one person can experience discrimination from a variety of angles. However, focusing on race provides a tool for critique and analysis of existing institutional culture (Delgado & Stefancic). Further, CRT recognizes that there is a Black-White binary in existence in the United States. Racial groups other than African Americans often group themselves with African Americans to be recognized for their oppression.

The main tenets and themes of CRT overlap somewhat and focus specifically on race as a construct and reality. The six tenets of CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) are:

1. Racism is an ordinary and real daily occurrence for non-Whites.
2. White privilege serves to maintain White dominance and racial juxtaposition.
3. Race is a social construction and has no basis in biology or science.
4. Essentialism is a false construct.
5. The construct of race has been and will be manipulated over time to suit the needs of the dominant group.
6. Narratives and voice of racial minorities can challenge dominant structures and status quo.
Additionally, four major themes emerge from CRT: (a) interest convergence, (b) revisionist history, (c) critique of liberalism, and (d) structural determinism (Delgado & Stefancic). These themes and tenets of CRT underscore the need for understanding how counselor education doctoral students perceive race/ethnicity factoring into their educational experience.

1.5 Research Questions

The underrepresentation of racial/ethnic minorities in higher education and within counselor education signals a need to understand the students’ perceptions of their programs. Understanding the experiences of racial/ethnic minorities in counselor education doctoral programs is a necessary step for facilitating change in the academic environment. Due to the lack of research on racial/ethnic minorities in counselor education doctoral programs, this study investigated the following broad research questions:

1. How do full time equivalent (FTE) racial/ethnic minority counselor education doctoral students at PWIs experience their programs, according to Lovitts’ (2001) themes of attrition?
   a. Are the academic experiences presented differently for racial/ethnic minority students than for other student populations?
   b. What are the students’ perceptions of the academic climate regarding race?
   c. How is the learning experience perceived to be the same or different depending on race?
d. What are the positive and negative attributes of the advisor-advisee relationship? Does race appear to factor into this relationship?

2. In what other ways does race/ethnicity factor into FTE counselor education doctoral students’ experiences within their program?

3. What factors do racial/ethnic minority students identify as enhancing their counselor education experience?
   a. How are these factors similar for other student populations?
   b. How are these factors different for other student populations?

1.6 Research Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative research design (e.g., semi-structured interviews), aligning with the core ideas of CRT that marginalized populations’ voices and experiences can challenge the dominant norm (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Experience narratives, including a critical race methodology, formed the methodological framework for this study, due to the focus on storytelling (Thomas, 2003); CRT advocates for giving marginalized populations voice and encourages “counter-storytelling” to challenge the dominant discourse (Delgado & Stefancic). Semi-structured interviews permitted the collection of racial/ethnic minority students’ doctoral experiences in counselor education programs.

After obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to conduct this study, targeted participants included FTE racial/ethnic minority doctoral students at any stage of their counselor education program (e.g., first year, second year, etc.). A flyer was posted on various national counseling electronic listservs to recruit prospective participants. The researcher also utilized the snowball sampling technique to identify prospective students;
such serial selection of participants continued until obtained information became redundant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, prospective participants were screened for inclusion depending on their academic status and racial/ethnic background. Incentives for participation included pro-rated Barnes and Noble gift cards for the first 25 selected participants who completed each stage of the study.

Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and confidentiality, were acknowledged, maintained, and documented throughout the study. Data collection included digital recorders which were used to record demographic questions as well as the semi-structured interviews. Data analysis consisted of transcription of audio-recorded interviews followed by open and axial coding for themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Trustworthiness, authenticity, and rigor of the study were upheld through the use of field notes, researcher self-reflection, research team triangulation, and member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

1.7 Definitions of Terminology

*American Counseling Association (ACA)*

This association serves as the umbrella professional organization for most counselors and counselor educators.

*Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES)*

This professional division of ACA has a membership consisting of counselor educators, clinical supervisors, and focuses on best practice for training counselors.

*Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD)*

Under ACA, this division focuses on diversity in counseling and counselor education; it was founded in the early 1970s.
Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP)

This is the main accrediting body for counseling graduate programs.

Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

This indicates that a student is enrolled in enough credit hours per their university policy to be classified as full-time.

Hispanic-Serving Institutions

These colleges or universities have a total Hispanic enrollment of at least 25% of the student body, both full-time and part-time (Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities, 2010).

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

These institutions of higher learning have the primary mission of educating Black or African Americans and are recognized under the U.S. Department of Education if accredited or working toward accreditation by a recognized accrediting body (United States Department of Education, 2009).

Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs)

These institutions of higher learning have policies and practices that pertain to the predominantly White student population, as opposed to HBCUs. PWIs generally witness greater recognition for job placement and institutional funding.

Race/Ethnicity

According to CRT, race is a social construction. For purposes of this study, race is defined using the current Office of Budget and Management categories which inform the United States Census: White, Black/African American, Asian, Multiracial, and American Indian/Alaska Native. The category of Hispanic/Latino is considered an
ethnicity by the United States Census. Further, participants were able to report their racial or ethnic identity according to their specifications.

*Racial/Ethnic Minority*

For the purposes of this study, this is a person who self-identifies as non-White according to the United States Census categories.

*Snowball Sampling*

This purposive sampling technique relies on serial selection of participants to form the complete study sample; secured participants refer researchers to additional potential participants for the study until information redundancy occurs (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction

This review of the literature seeks to briefly recount the evolution of counseling and counselor education as a discipline, while tracing the recognition and development of ideas related to cultural inclusion and competence in counseling. Additionally, a review of the current state of research on doctoral students’ experiences in counselor education programs is provided, with specific attention paid to studies looking at racial/ethnic minorities. The work of Lovitts (2001) models a thematic framework for understanding factors found to be qualitatively significant to successful completion of the doctorate across fields. Further, the theoretical framework for the study, CRT, is outlined to demonstrate its underpinning of the study.

2.2 Evolution of Counselor Education and Cultural Competence

Counseling as a profession bloomed at the beginning of the 20th century and developed into the complex, respected, and important field that it is today through pioneering actions of forefathers and as a contextual response to society’s needs (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Minkoff & Terres, 1985). Faced with challenges to identity and purpose, counseling has been deliberate in its structuring and has distinguished itself from psychology and other similar human service fields in that it focuses on wellness and human potential (Brooks & Gerstein, 1990; Zimpfer & Mohdain, 1992). This strengths-
based focus forms the basis of counseling and permits specialization and greater
development of the profession’s identity.

Vocational guidance jumpstarted the counseling movement, especially school
counseling, around the turn of the 20th century. The counseling movement formulated as
a response to industrialization and both World Wars I and II (Lambie & Williamson,
2004). The focus was on helping people choose the career most suited to their needs, but
counseling quickly grew into a more comprehensive and specialized discipline, with
professional organizations determining direction and purpose. Frank Parsons, often
regarded as the “Father of Guidance,” initiated the movement to match aptitudes with
jobs; psychometric assessments were also developing at this time and aided such
matching (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). As the field took on a more whole-person
approach, theories adapted and the discipline became known as counseling rather than
guidance. Carl Rogers is associated with this progression in the 1940s and is known as
the “Father of Counseling” (Lambie & Williamson). Gradually, other counseling
specialties developed, such as mental health counseling (Brooks & Gerstein, 1990;
Minkoff & Terres, 1985).

While the counseling field filled a societal need through providing vocational
guidance and whole-person counseling, it still faced professional identity challenges.
These challenges included recognizing and adapting to the changing society, providing
measurable results to ensure job security, and the continued movement away from
guidance to counseling (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Wrenn, 1983). Elmore (1985), in
his historical review of counselor education, proposed strategies that influenced the
identity of the profession. One of the early actions taken to address these needs was
recognizing the need for counselor trainers or educators, which initiated doctoral level
counselor training.

2.2.1 Counselor education.

Due to the growing field of professional counseling, it became evident that
counselor trainers were needed at a faster and greater rate in the early 1950s. West,
Bubenzer, Brooks, and Hackney (1995) attributed the rapid growth of counseling and
thus the high need for counselor training programs to the politics occurring in the mid-
1950s:

Doctoral preparation in counseling was strongly stimulated in 1958 when
Title V of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) became a
reality...The increase in counselor preparation institutes required an
increase in faculty to meet the new instructional demands, which led in
turn to growth in doctoral programs. (p. 174)

Initiatives into structuring counseling and training programs grew out of this and the term
“counselor trainers” became “counselor educators” in 1961 (Elmore, 1985). By this time,
the NDEA had funded over 90 counselor training facilities focusing on public school
counseling (West, Bubenzer, Brooks, & Hackney). It became apparent that organization
and standards-discussion was needed surrounding professional counseling and counselor
education.

One such organization already in existence was ACES. It targeted counselor
educators and supervisors and worked to standardize the field. In 1940, ACES started out
as the National Association for Guidance Supervisors (NAGS), and it later included
counselor trainers in 1944. The name changed in 1952 to the National Association for
Guidance Supervisors and Counselor Trainers (NAGSCT) (Elmore, 1985). The current
name of ACES came with the switch from “counselor trainers” to “counselor educators”
in 1961; the flagship journal, *Counselor Education and Supervision* (CES) emerged the same year (Elmore, 1985).

### 2.2.2 AMCD, multicultural competence, and ethical codes.

Counseling evolved through a series of events and by the hard work and leadership of professionals in the field. Despite the attention being paid to recognition of the field and fighting for the profession’s identity, diversity within and the ability to work with diverse populations did not factor significantly into the field until the 1972 charter of AMCD (AMCDa, 2009). Before this, members of the organization were merely pacified by giving voice to “Non-White Concerns” (AMCDa). Since then, AMCD has evolved into a strong organization complete with a highly respected flagship journal. The main goal of the organization is “to develop programs specifically to improve ethnic and racial empathy and understanding. Its activities are designed to advance and sustain personal growth and improve educational opportunities for members from diverse cultural backgrounds” (AMCDb, 2009). The importance of the organization and the persistence to achieve current status signals the growing focus on multicultural awareness and competence, yet the field remains heavily representative of the dominant White population.

An additional step toward acknowledging a multicultural and diverse society and its relationship with counseling came with the creation and operationalization of the *Multicultural Counseling Competencies* (MCC; Arredondo, et. al, 1996). The competencies were officially adopted by ACA as recently as 2003 and now influence the professional identity development of counselors-in-training along with the aforementioned CACREP training standards (ACA, 2003). According to the
competencies, counselors should seek to understand themselves as cultural beings and work to form a “non-racist identity” (Arredondo et al., 1996, p. 1). Following this initial self-analysis, the next competency area focuses on understanding the client’s worldview and cultural heritage. Culturally competent counselors recognize societal barriers and limitations predicated on aspects of diversity. This corresponds to the need for an examination of the disproportional representation of White counselors and counselor educators. Finally, the competencies require counselors to collect and build skills and interventions that apply most effectively to different groups. The development and publication of a framework for being a culturally competent counselor, assumed to be trained by culturally competent counselor educators, moves the field closer to being truly accepting and representative of the diverse population.

The ACA Code of Ethics for all counselors mandates cultural awareness and ability to work with diverse populations throughout the document (ACA, 2005). Counselors and counselor educators should consider diverse populations when determining informed consent, choosing assessments, and using appropriate language. The subdivision of ACA devoted to counselor educators and supervisors, ACES, includes on its website a mission statement embracing diversity: “ACES advances the generation and dissemination of knowledge that is responsive and respectful of our increasingly diverse world” (ACES, 2009). The recognition of a diverse society and the move toward becoming culturally competent and embracing as a field requires additional work to ensure equal access to counselor education and representation of racial/ethnic minorities in doctoral programs which will lead to a more diverse counselor educator pool.
2.3 CRT: Theoretical Framework

Critical theories emerged to challenge the status quo and expose truths behind structures that misrepresent or bias reality; perceptions are revealed to be unique yet manipulated to serve the dominant group. More specifically, critical theories dispute positivism, or the idea that social sciences can be universalized or essentialized (Agger, 1991); there are multiple forms of critical theory (Piccone, 2001). Many sources recognize Marxist philosophy as the foundation in which critical theories sit (Agger, 1991; Piccone, 2001), but Steinvorth (2008) says critical thought can be traced all the way back to the Sophists in the 5th century B.C. who rejected tradition in favor of employing reason to make major decisions. Critical theories borrow Marx’s analysis of class structure and economy as a framework for exposing inequalities between the few elite people benefiting from the labor of the many poor and oppressed, and apply the same concept to different aspects of society.

The Frankfurt School, the common name for the German Institute for Social Research, started in 1923 and is credited with the official initiation of critical theory. Influential people associated with the movement include Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Fromm, and Habermas (Agger, 1991; McLaughlin, 1999). The scholars in the school critiqued Marxist philosophy, although it provided a useful framework. More specifically, they suggested that this body of work was too positivistic and gave oppressed people a “false consciousness” that bound them to the ideology of the time and perpetuated oppression (Agger, 1991). This means that oppressed people were manipulated by the dominant elite with the “equal opportunity” messages of capitalism when in fact the opportunities and conditions were not equal: “In particular, capitalism
deepens false consciousness, suggesting to people that the existing social system is both inevitable and rational” (Agger, 1991, p. 108).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) and Ladson-Billings (2005) argue that W.E.B. Du Bois was a peer of the Frankfurt School yet not credited for his critical works. Du Bois (1903/1986) wrote about the “veil” in which “Black folk” must live and survive. The veil creates barriers to opportunity and restricts Black Americans from truly experiencing equality or genuine citizenship; it envelopes Du Bois’ “double consciousness” as seen in the following passage

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second sight in this American world, -a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity (p. 364).

Du Bois’ reflective writings demonstrate critical theory and were produced during the same time as the early German scholars, yet they are not recognized by the Frankfurt School or acknowledged as part of the critical movement. Critical analysis of the initial critical theorists provides insight (and irony) to the movement, modeling what critical theory espouses.

As Piccone (2001) noted, there are numerous critical theories used to analyze the structures of society for inequalities and bias; CRT emerged from the legal field in the mid-1970s to look at race and ethnicity bias throughout the United States’ governing history (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The legal scholars involved in this movement, including Derrick Bell, credited as the “father” of CRT, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Mari Matsuda, and Patricia Williams, took ideas from critical legal studies and radical
feminism as well as the works of Jacques Derrida, Sojourner Truth, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Martin Luther King, Jr. to form the central ideas of CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

The main idea of CRT is to assess and critique the relationship between race, power, and racism in institutions and structures established in society. Bell (1987) illustrates these points and explores specific examples, such as Affirmative Action clauses and Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas, through his use of chronicles or stories depicting such issues. The use of story or narrative is one of the tenets of CRT, and is discussed in more detail in section 2.3.6.

Although not portrayed in the literature as specifically a CRT scholar, Cornel West exhibits characteristics of the movement. In Race Matters (1993), West elaborates on Du Bois’ notion of the color line and examines institutional racism. In accordance with central themes of CRT, he criticizes liberal interventions aimed at eliminating and correcting the wrongs of racism. Stated differently, these actions serve to enhance White dominance by allowing only as much help as is comfortable for the powerful group and that maintains White privilege. Government intervention can be a good thing, but needs careful consideration and structure to ensure results that are desirable for all.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) provided the link between CRT in the legal field and education. They put forth three propositions surrounding race and education: (a) race remains a significant factor in society, (b) society is based on property rights, not human rights, and (c) looking at the intersection of race and property provides an understanding of inequity. Citing Harris’ (1993) “Whiteness-as-property” tenets, Ladson-Billings and Tate discuss how Whiteness yields many privileges such as reputation and status, right to
exclude, and rights of use and enjoyment. Whites experience privileges that other races do not and, in this sense, their Whiteness is like property or wealth. In education, this is seen when the resources are allocated to the wealthier White suburban schools and not to the urban, usually predominantly Black or minority, schools. Such inequity can be seen throughout primary and secondary education and higher education where Ladson-Billings and Tate state that African American students are made to feel like intruders, due to the Whiteness property “right to exclude.”

Many PWIs lack racial diversity in their graduating students (CGS, 2008; NCES, 2009); CRT serves as one potential explanation or theoretical framework for examining the state of racial diversity in counselor education doctoral programs. As discussed previously, the tenets and themes of CRT focus specifically on race and racism as a reality. There are six tenets of CRT that suggest that, although race is a social construction, racism is real for racial/ethnic minorities. Further, White privilege functions as a way to maintain White dominance, using race as a malleable construct; essentialism, or the idea that there are contained, standard attributes of different groups of people, is a false construct. Finally, the experiences of racial minorities can challenge dominant structures and the status quo (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Four major CRT themes pervade the tenets: (a) interest convergence, (b) revisionist history, (c) critique of liberalism, and (d) structural determinism (Delgado & Stefancic).

2.3.1 Racism is real and ordinary.

While many White citizens of the United States may believe that racism has been eliminated and replaced with equality across all situations, racism, in reality, has simply changed forms and become less explicit. Rarely do blatant and violent acts of racism
occur anymore; instead there is the more subtle version of stereotyping and profiling, restricted opportunities, lack of access to resources, and general everyday challenges that the White dominant group does not experience (Delgado, 1995b). Further, Delgado states that ingrained and institutional racism hinders racial minorities’ chances for a desirable career and creates attitudes of self-defeat.

Russell (1995) framed the discussion as the “dominant gaze” in which the media portrays mainly White characters and any racial/ethnic minority as deficient in some fundamental way. Such characterization reinforces stereotypes and perpetuates discrimination, serving and maintaining White dominance. Further, Bell (1995) illustrates that, while legal actions (e.g., *Brown vs. Board of Education*) aimed to eliminate segregation, it still occurs in the migration patterns of privileged White suburban families and Black urban families. For example, these Black urban communities tend to have fewer educational and financial resources in comparison to White suburban communities.

In higher education, Iverson (2007) studied the effects of university diversity policies, and concluded that these policies usually do the opposite of what is intended. To this end, racial/ethnic minorities are pushed to the status of outsider through claims about limited access to higher education and use of their racial characteristics to sell the university’s image as being diverse.

Similar stories of racial discrimination or common occurrences of racism are found in the counselor education literature. For example, Bradley and Holcomb-McCoy (2002) examined the career experiences of ethnic minority counselor educators and found that they tended to be untenured, have enormous service responsibilities, were assigned to
teach multicultural counseling courses, and had fewer publications than their White fellow educators. Assuming that tenure relies on scholarly productivity (e.g., publications and presentations), the time devoted to service illustrates challenges these professionals commonly face. In 2005, Bryant et al. used personal experiences to expose the discrimination and characterization that African American female counselor educators repeatedly face in academia. They argued that traditional images presented in the popular media have contributed to the way African American women are viewed today. Further, racial minority faculty members face the challenges of invisibility, overvisibility (e.g., being the “token” racial representative), or alienation and devaluation of their thoughts and goals (Bryant, et. al).

These examples of racial discrimination in higher education and in society in general support the CRT tenet that racism is real and an ordinary occurrence for faculty, and potentially for doctoral students. Since doctoral study across disciplines, specifically in counselor education, has a lack of diversity, it is imperative that research be conducted on students’ experiences. Such research can be used to assess the status of institutional racism in counselor education graduate programs. Then action can be taken to remediate such a climate and increase the number of racial/ethnic minorities engaged in counselor education.

2.3.2 White privilege as function.

The second tenet of CRT focuses on White privilege as functioning in power maintenance. The entire American system rests on the fact of White dominance; it is assumed that all people regardless of ethnicity or experience need to and will adhere to the White model (Delgado, 1995b). If this does not happen, the social consequences are
severe: (a) job loss, (b) negative stereotyping, (c) harassment, (d) profiling, and (e) targeting, to name a few (Delgado). Perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of this oppressive system is that many European Americans fail to recognize their privilege or their Whiteness-as-property (Harris, 1993). Whether conscious of it or not, Whiteness serves as a tool of oppression to create and maintain existing societal power dynamics; arguably no group actively utilizes this power more than White supremacists.

In 1998, Hill conducted a study about the contribution of language related to and supporting the concepts of Whiteness, White public space, and racism. She found that deeply rooted family heritage and a strong need for organizing principles underpin the perpetuation of racism. White power and privilege integrated in society is recognized as self-important and is fiercely protected through groups identifying as White supremacists. She further discusses how common American language practices (e.g., the use of “mock Spanish” akin to Schwarzenegger’s “Hasta la vista, baby”) that may seem innocent but actually downplay the significance and respectability of another language, and thus signal that English, or the dominant language of the United States, is the only worthy method of verbal communication. Likewise, native English speakers take more liberties with second languages and pay little regard to the integrity of the language. Non-native English speakers often experience greater stress and criticism when trying to speak English in its “correct” form. Hill further explains that White public spaces are constructed through language when (a) the dominant White, English group heavily monitors the use of English by “racialized” minorities; and (b) the same mistakes, when made by Whites, go unnoticed and remain invisible. This biased attitude toward
language illustrates how intertwined and subtle oppression affects the culture of the group.

Ladson-Billings (2005) states that CRT in education involves looking at how everything is positioned in relation to Whiteness. Further, she suggests that society’s structures and higher education institutions are based on Whiteness and associated “norms.” Students who do not adhere to these norms are rejected and face unnecessary barriers to their education and career success. Perhaps these barriers contribute to the attrition and non-completion rates of racial/ethnic minorities.

2.3.3 The social construction of race.

Following the idea of norming society to White ideals, CRT scholars, as well as scholars from other fields (e.g., anthropology), argue that race is a social construction and has no foundation in science or biology. It is basically a tool for categorization and demonizing, when not conforming to White standards (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Barth, Gingrich, Parkin & Silverman, 2005; Kuper, 1999). In fact, Collins and Mansoura (2001) and Subramanian, Adams, Venter, and Broder (2001) argue that humans are 99.9% genetically identical, according to the Human Genome Project; therefore no biological evidence of discrete race categories exists.

The critical legal scholar Ian F. Haney López examines race as a social construct in his piece *The Social Construction of Race* (1995). In this publication, he asserts that our physical characteristics still determine our social position. Legal proceedings (e.g., emancipation and affirmative action) fail to meet expectations due to ingrained societal beliefs about race and racism (Delgado, 1995b). Further, CRT disfavors liberalism and the idea that government action and legal reform can truly eliminate racism. They simply
revise the definition and surrounding policies. López further illustrates his definition of race, explaining that the concept is truly abstract and fluid. More specifically, he states:

a vast group of people loosely bound together by historically contingent, socially significant elements of their morphology and/or ancestry…social meanings connect our faces to our souls. Race is neither an essence nor an illusion, but rather an ongoing, contradictory, self-reinforcing, plastic process subject to the macro forces of social and political struggle and the micro effects of daily decisions (p. 193).

López further asserts that White people also live as a race and are racialized.

The social construction of race is evident in the breakdown of race demographics on the U. S. Census or on medical data forms. In 2002, Boehmer, Kressin, Berlowitz, Christiansen, Kazis, and Jones studied dental outpatients and racial categorization. They compared patient categorization by medical staff versus self-categorization using the following categories: (a) Hispanic, (b) American Indian, (c) Black, (d) Asian, (e) White, and (f) unknown/missing options for the medical staff. For the patients they used: (a) American Indian or Alaska Native, (b) Asian, (c) Black or African American, (d) Spanish, Latino, or Hispanic, (e) Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and (f) White. Results indicated that Whites were least incorrectly categorized as opposed to Asians and American Indians who were incorrectly assigned to groups most often. Similarly, Baker et al. (2006) reviewed typical practices of medical staff to assign patients to racial categories based upon a “best guess.” Such practices achieved the most accuracy between Whites and Blacks, but incorrect assignments for other groups. Toward this end, the authors suggested employing tools for patient self-report, including the U.S. Census categories. Determining race, when it comes to medical practice, is significant. There are a plethora of studies attributing health concerns to one group or another. Reporting,
as evidenced by these studies, is often wrong; therefore, the research outcomes are frequently misleading.

While race is a social construction and definitions can change with time and situation (Bartlett, 2001; Dein, 2006), it remains a necessary construct for the study of society and work required to eliminate discrimination. People in everyday life use racial terms and report incidents of wrong-doing, based purely on their perceived race and related worth (Dein, 2006). Human existence is politicized and constructs, such as race and gender, determine hierarchies and power structures. Moscou (2008) indicates that “race” needs to be operationalized in order to have consistent discussion and study. This is often a difficult task because of the ambiguity and anti-essentialist nature of such a concept. In order to have discussions about discrimination and racism in counselor education, a vocabulary and working definition of terms should be declared prior to embarking on research.

2.3.4 Intersectionality and anti-essentialism.

Under this CRT tenet, it is acknowledged that humans do not fit distinctly into one category. Each human being consists of multiple characteristics that define him or her (e.g., race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, experience, etc.). Due to this notion, it is difficult to essentialize or declare a single example. The human existence is very complex; people are often judged according to how far they deviate from the dominant norm.

The English anthropological forerunners, Edward Burnette Tylor and Lewis Henry Morgan, proposed an evolutionist theory of culture or civilization in the mid-1800s (Barth, Gingrich, Parkin & Silverman, 2005; Kuper, 1999). Their view held that
civilization evolved much like a living organism and that differences in the progress of civilization (as measured against their own culture) indicated the status of the population. Those populations who did not have as “advanced” technology, as the English or Western cultures, were considered primitive or, even less notable, “savages” (Barth, Gingrich, Parkin & Silverman, 2005).

Within the evolutionist idea is the message that biology plays an important part in a population’s level of culture or civilization. The early anthropologists, including Tylor and Morgan, conducted “anthropometry” (e.g., assessments of weight, size, and facial projection) and used the results to classify the races (Mukhopadhyay & Moses, 1997). It is quite likely that this contributed to racist policies and actions throughout the 20th century. In fact, Caspari (2003) states that this type of essentialism (e.g., a view that people fit into categories based on essential characteristics used to classify them) set a precedent for racism in Western cultures.

Intersectionality and anti-essentialism are crucial concepts to acknowledge when studying aspects of society and education. Students in higher education bring with them a myriad of characteristics that both empower and embattle them when interacting in the campus community (Tinto 1975/1987). Counselor education espouses multicultural competence yet remains void of proportionate representation of diverse professionals (ACA, 2009; Arredondo et al., 1996). Counselors will work with the increasingly diversified United States and will need to be trained to embrace and employ components of diversity in their practice. Having a representative body of professors to train a multicultural body of practicing counselors would not only be appropriate for the nation, but would also satisfy what the profession claims to be. CRT can serve as a tool to
analyze counselor education programs with regard to diversity policies and student experience.

**2.3.5 Differential racialization.**

The social construction of race leaves open the door for manipulation of how race is determined and how racism appears in society. Throughout American history, the concept of race has evolved to have different meanings, and the related ideology has likewise adapted (López, 1994). A feature of CRT, critique of legal actions such as affirmative action or desegregation of schools reveals that although the intentions of such laws may have been good, their legacy proves, at best, maintenance of discrimination levels (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This illustrates the CRT idea of Liberalism and that legal actions to reduce racism and discrimination are ineffective and potentially harmful to minorities. In 2005, Dixson and Rousseau claimed that *Brown vs. the Board of Education* simply reconfigured inequality rather than eliminating it. This notion relates to the “interest convergence” principle of CRT in which all actions toward equality have a limit and are based on the desires of the dominant, White population. Stated differently, the people in power and those experiencing privilege will only allow the reduction of their status as much as is comfortable for them; therefore, the interests of the dominant and non-dominant converge.

Much of the differential racialization relates to the construction of Whiteness and immigration law in the early years of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) highlighted the ever-changing requirements for entering the United States and being able to partake of the liberties assumed as a right of every human being. In fact, “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” really only applied to persons in power or with means to
become powerful through material property or through the color of their skin (Bell, 1987). Throughout American history, different racial/ethnic groups have experienced marginalization due to phenotypical or cultural attributes. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) provided examples of Japanese internment camps during WWII, and how Native Americans were bullied into compliance with the colonizers. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) provided similar examples. Further, in order to vote and have a remote chance of affecting public policy, citizens opted to fit the mold of Whiteness, which shifted through the years to include and exclude groups (e.g., Jews and Irish). Understanding how race definitions and policy shift with society is important when trying to understand the experiences of racial/ethnic students in higher education. It is quite possible that the interest convergence theme of CRT may affect how racial minorities are received at PWIs.

2.3.6 Narrative and voice.

A significant tenet of CRT involves storytelling and the use of narrative to dispute dominant ideology and assumptions. Delgado (1995a) proposed the acts of storytelling and “counter-storytelling” as a means to expose and combat discriminatory ideologies and to create new meaning. He also stated that all groups have a story or discourse, including dominant White cultures, creating varying and hierarchical ideologies. His position underscored the idea that different stories have different contributions and can drastically affect common ideology.

Bryant et al. (2005) exemplified how storytelling can provide valuable insight into the experiences of racial/ethnic minorities in counselor education. The authors referred to stereotypic images and roles expected of African American women; the roles were
demeaning, inaccurate, and essentializing, so their personal accounts of racist experiences in their departments aimed to counter the salient ideologies. With this in mind, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) stated: “stories by people of color can catalyze the necessary cognitive conflict to jar dysconscious racism” (p. 57-58). Otherwise, the dominant group can, and often does, disregard claims that racism continues to exist.

Dixson and Rousseau (2005), as well as many CRT scholars, argue that colorblindness is undesirable because of its neglect of personal experience, history and heritage. Further, storytelling can reveal unique yet common experiences of oppression and make racism real for those who do not experience it as an everyday occurrence. Revisionist history, another major theme of CRT, focuses on how history can be retold to see different perspectives of marginalized and oppressed groups. Such review of history through different lenses has the ability to open the eyes of the dominant group and allow for the understanding that reality is subjective and malleable.

Dominant ideologies also relate to the structural determinism that CRT claims perpetuates the discrimination and racial inequalities existing today. The American dream is a dominant ideology, stating that those who work hard and apply themselves can have what they want and gain success. Realizing that opportunity does not guarantee results and that racial/ethnic minority populations tend to have less access to the resources available to Whites, this cultural narrative applies only to the dominant group (Delgado, 1995a). As a way of altering this framework, counter-storytelling can help those in power realize that not everybody is equipped with the same potential and external resources to conform to this ideology (Delgado).
Meritocracy is another powerful narrative due to its ambiguous and manipulative nature (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Merit is elusive and depends on people deciding what is deserving of recognition. In this case, the bias toward what White Americans deem the highest standard might differ from what other racial/ethnic groups assess as desirable. On the contrary, this discrepancy in beliefs makes assessment based on merit difficult and often unfair (Delgado & Stefancic).

It is possible that the reason for low numbers of racial/ethnic minorities in higher education, specifically counselor education, ties to the mismatched idea and confusing messages of merit and standard. Perhaps, counselor education programs readily assert messages or stories about their diversity policies on their marketing materials. Students who attend these programs may have different and potentially negative experiences with professors, administrative departments, fellow students, and the different academic climates. It is quite likely that these experiences may cause them to redirect their energies and abilities into other programs or means of career success. Lovitts (2001) examines the causes of doctoral attrition related to program climate and practices, and Willis (2007) gives voice to the students who have withdrawn from counselor education doctoral studies. His findings support the idea that program climate yields significant influence over doctoral student success.

CRT yields important insight into the experiences of racial/ethnic minorities and how racism and oppression remain active in current society through structural determinism and cyclical patterns of White dominance (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Lopéz, 1994). Legislation to increase equality, in fact, often reconfigures the definition of race and equality in a way that maintains White privilege (Bell, 1995). Interest
convergence can change the situation, as well as the possibilities, for racial/ethnic minorities (e.g., desegregation and affirmative action laws), but overall satisfies the wishes of those in power. Higher education, counselor education in particular, illustrates the ideas associated with CRT, due to low enrollment and completion rates of racial minorities in PWIs. The numbers are disproportionate to the diverse population of the United States. Utilizing CRT provides a framework for analysis of counselor education programs. Such analysis can reveal areas for change and development to ensure the success of all students and the increased representation of racial minorities.

2.4 Doctoral Students’ Experiences

Berelson (1960) is credited as a pioneer in the study of higher education, and his comprehensive analysis and catalog of graduate education, including the master’s degree, is often cited for its thoroughness. He employed a mixed-methods approach, compiling available data (e.g., describing the numbers of graduates and dissertations), conducting interviews with many stakeholders in institutions of higher education around the country, and observing numerous meetings and proceedings. Recognized as one of the first researchers to estimate a 40% attrition rate for higher education, he attributed student departure to the student’s own lack of intellectual ability and claimed that greater attrition occurs following All But Dissertation (ABD) status.

Berelson further noted that doctoral students expect to be funded to complete their studies; therefore, financial support was a key factor in student success. Further, he argued that attrition was not necessarily bad and might actually be essential for the system to work. His findings further indicated that faculty members were unconcerned about student non-completion and believed the rate to be only around 20%. In contrast,
Berelson’s interviews and surveys of deans evidenced more concern, although they still attributed fault to the student. It is worth noting that his work was ground-breaking, paving the way for other studies to confirm and dispute his findings (e.g., Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Tinto, 1975, 1987; Lovitts, 2001).

In 1964, Tucker, Gottlieb, and Pease also conducted an in-depth quantitative review of doctoral study in the United States, but focused on arts and sciences programs at 24 universities, due to Berelson’s (1960) influential findings of different and lower attrition rates for professional schools. Further, Tucker and colleagues collected data from university records to estimate attrition rates and found the following: humanities 50%, social sciences 41%, physical sciences 30%, and biological sciences 29%, with an average overall attrition rate of 38.1%. Additionally, they surveyed 15,231 subjects, both drop-outs and completers, using a Likert-type scale. They found that participants rated most highly those programs and faculty that exhibited knowledge of the field, an awareness of current trends, and research skills. By contrast, programs and faculty received low ratings on sensitivity to students’ needs and helpfulness when it came to securing a job post-degree, and for teaching ability. Just as Berelson found, finances were a major determinant for doctoral student attrition. These findings foreshadowed future research that identified domains affecting whether students complete, or by default, depart from doctoral study.

Studying experiences of undergraduates contributed similar findings to the existing research. In 1975 and 1987, Tinto synthesized the existing literature and attempted to develop a theory of student departure from higher education using Durkheim’s theory of egotistical suicide. According to him, egotistical suicide occurs
when integration with the program and community fails and the student leaves college; integration involves adjusting to the academic lifestyle, feeling congruent with the institution’s ideals and purpose, and feeling central to the university’s mission. Further, he believed that pre-entry to higher education serves as a significant factor in completion or non-completion, specifically surrounding intention and commitment to the pursuit of a degree. Interestingly, Tinto made the point that referring to leavers as “drop-outs” misrepresented the many reasons for student non-completion. It focused too much on the students rather than the institutions. In other words, many faculty members attributed student departure to lack of ability; Tinto disputed this claim and asserted that only 10-15% of attrition is due to academic failure. In 2001, Lovitts argued a similar point, and outlined the detrimental effects of assigning fault only to the students without careful examination of other factors involved (e.g., advising relationships, sense of community, the learning environment, etc.).

2.4.1 Lovitts’ Leaving the Ivory Tower.

The aforementioned studies set the stage for Lovitts’ 2001 comprehensive work that highlighted the significance of and reasons for doctoral attrition throughout universities. The works of Berelson (1960), Tucker, Gottlieb, and Pease (1964), and Tinto (1975, 1987) provided methodological frameworks and solid bodies of knowledge inventorying the state of higher education in the mid-20th Century. Even in these few studies, the evolution from attributing fault solely to the student to recognizing a myriad of factors involved in student departure from graduate study is evident. Lovitts, spurred by personal experience with leaving doctoral study, aimed to shed light on the fact that students who leave doctoral study do so for a variety of reasons. Many explanations
relate directly to the institutional and program environment and not to the students’
scholastic aptitude.

Doctoral study can be arranged into three phases, according to the scholarly
literature (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Ellis, 2001; Lovitts, 2001; Tinto, 1987). Phase
one consists of entering the program and initiating the integration, which likely means
some feelings of isolation. It usually occurs during the first year. Phase two involves
achieving competence in chosen field and feeling more integrated into the new
community. At this juncture, doctoral student identity is developing. Phase two usually
occurs starting the second year and lasts until candidacy examination and/or internship.
Phase three encompasses the dissertation process and is marked by a more complete
formulation of the professional identity (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Ellis, 2001; Lovitts,
2001; Tinto, 1987).

These phases are important because many people falsely believe that most
departure occurs following the attainment of ABD status (Berelson, 1960), when in fact
Bair’s 1999 massive synthesis of the pertaining literature indicated that attrition rates
appear to be divided fairly equally among the stages of graduate study. Tucker et. al
(1964) estimated ABD attrition to be approximately 20% of all attrition. Knowing that
departure from doctoral programs happens at each stage, an exploration of the reasons for
attrition, and conversely completion, can be explored. In 2001, Lovitts presented four
reasons for non-completion: (a) lack of information, (b) absence of community, (c)
disappointment with the learning experience, and (d) quality of the advisor/advisee
relationship. Each of the categories for non-completion is discussed in detail.
2.4.1.1 Lack of information.

The process of obtaining a Ph.D. in a given field is complex, with many implicit and explicit aspects that can make navigation problematic for aspiring students. In 2001, Lovitts proposed that one main reason for non-completion was the lack of information necessary to form a cognitive map of the doctoral process and its many requirements. Further, she noted that many doctoral students did not receive the required information even at the stage of choosing and applying to a doctoral program. Too many students simply relied on a program’s reputation instead of investigating nuances of department culture or achievement records of faculty. Further, when the student actually began the process on campus and found that program goals and expectations did not match their own, they experienced culture shock. The remaining three categories put forth by Lovitts (e.g., absence of community, learning experience, and quality of advising relationship) were features of a program that needed to be somewhat understood, prior to agreeing to accepting admissions.

The students interviewed in Lovitts’ (2001) study reported that doctoral study was more rigorous than they initially expected and differed significantly from their undergraduate experiences. Additionally, these students felt stressed from the ambiguity of choosing an action plan to successfully complete the degree and secure a job, as well as determining what was expected from their professors. In the study, the faculty tended to see themselves as advisors only at the dissertation stage. This view of themselves left unanswered questions for students who were not yet to this stage and ultimately inhibited their success. Even at the dissertation stage, students were unsure of how to choose a topic and what to expect in a dissertation defense. Based on the aforementioned findings,
it is reasonable to believe that students were more likely to complete their degree when
provided with consistent and ongoing information.

Other studies, prior to Lovitts’ (2001), identified similar concerns. For example,
Anderson and Swazey (1998) surveyed 2,000 students in 1989, using a Likert scale to
inquire about many aspects of doctoral work. Their project focused on students in
chemistry, civil engineering, microbiology, and sociology from 99 departments. Noting
attrition rate findings from the works of Berelson (1960), Lovitts (2001), and Bowen and
Rudenstine (1992), these fields tend to have lower attrition rates than humanities,
sociology perhaps being an exception as a social science. They found that roughly 50%
of students believed expectations and evaluation of their work to be clearly outlined or
accurate. Further, students reported feeling pulled between focusing on faculty needs and
focusing on their own progress and needs concerning coursework, such as allowing
adequate study time. The lack of information surrounding boundaries between faculty
and student needs creates discord and frustration with the process and potential non-
completion.

Golde’s 1998 study yielded similar findings regarding the lack of information on
doctoral study and the resulting discontent with the decision to pursue the degree. For
this study, he interviewed students who departed from doctoral study at any stage, but
focused his analysis on 18 first year non-completers from both science and humanities
fields. The students reported feeling dissonance between what they expected of doctoral
study versus what it actually was; the large amount of time and focus required to be
successful resulted in a lack of life balance that did not suit their personal aspirations.
Many science students came to the conclusion that the department they had entered did
not match their personalities or research interests, harking back to Lovitts’ (2001) claim that pre-entry information such as department culture is important to know ahead of time. The humanities non-completers, interviewed in Golde’s 1998 study, reported reasons for leaving such as mismatch of curriculum expectations, attributes of practical application not being what was expected, and, like science students, realization of the reality of the profession.

Twenty-one mid-life (aged between 40 and 57 years) doctoral students were surveyed in Riddle’s 2000 study. The investigation focused on the graduate experiences of these students, more specifically the admissions and integration process, and the interactions with faculty and younger students. The participants confirmed the confusion surrounding program expectations. Logistical aspects such as securing financial aid were unclear, and learning how to write academically and how to balance the many and various demands of life outside of school were difficult for Riddle’s participants.

Lack of information serves as a major inhibitor to successful completion of doctoral study. Students need to know as much as possible about goals and expectations before accepting an appointment with a program and an advisor. Investigating facts about faculty members and talking with current students can reveal the truth about work style, time commitment and life-style adjustments necessary to complete a doctoral degree from a given university. Being unequipped to take charge of personal education experiences leaves the door open for disappointment and departure from doctoral study. Likewise, departments need to provide opportunities for information gathering.
2.4.1.2 Absence of community.

Community can be thought as a sense and spirit of belonging and successful integration of a group of people, and, in the case of doctoral study, it means developing a space within a program, as well as a professional identity. As mentioned earlier, Tinto (1975, 1987) emphasized the importance of initial integration into and adjustment to higher education as being a crucial stage. He asserted that students need to believe they hold a central place in the university’s mission and goals and that their work is important and recognized. Similarly, Lovitts (2001) expressed the significance of community in relation to attrition. She discussed in detail the different ways to foster community and integrate students, noting the influence of financial structures as well as “chilly climates” surrounding race and gender.

Many studies cited financial concerns as central to completion or non-completion. In 2001, Lovitts highlighted the types of financial structures employed as being more or less conducive to community-building and, hence, attrition. She detailed how teaching or research assistantships require students to be on campus regularly and usually come with space in a “gang office” where social interaction can occur. With these assistantships come training and orientation meetings which initiate the sense of community. Fellowships, by contrast, she says, do not require as much campus involvement and therefore do not contribute to integration in the same way.

A highly significant publication that extensively explored the phenomenon of Ph.D. attainment was Bowen and Rudenstine’s (1992) work. The authors concentrated on 10 universities chosen for their graduate school reputations and conducted interviews with faculty from each program, reviewed literature, including print materials used for
university and program recruitment, and completed observations of each department to
gather a sense of the culture. The researchers focused their attention on doctoral degree
recipients from national fellowship programs due to the difficulty in finding accurate and
complete information on non-completers; departments in social sciences, humanities, and
physical sciences were included. Bowen and Rudenstine found that students who relied
on teaching or research assistantships usually spent longer obtaining the degree and thus
put themselves at risk for non-completion. However, they had better chances of
achieving the Ph.D. than students who funded themselves. Like Lovitts, the researchers
noted the interaction/community aspect of possessing a teaching or research assistantship
and how that increased the chances of completion more so than fellowships, but they
claimed it was relatively insignificant.

In 1990, Nettles looked at how race factored into doctoral completion at four
Research I or II universities chosen for their numerous Hispanic and Black Ph.D.
recipients, relative to other institutions. He mailed a survey to over 1,000 doctoral
students of Hispanic, African American, or Caucasian race and found that Black and
Hispanic students were more likely to receive fellowships and loans to fund their
education than White students. Also, White and Hispanic students usually received the
teaching or research assistantships compared with the Black students. Nettles’ findings
regarding Black students’ lack of inclusion in the assistantship financial structure is
problematic. In addition, Black students reported feeling more racial discrimination
within the program than did White or Hispanic students (who expressed the most social
involvement of the three groups).
Two studies focused exclusively on the experiences of African American doctoral students and discussed financial influences on completion of the degree. Willie, Grady, and Hope (1991) surveyed faculty representing the Lilly Foundation and presidents of United Negro College Fund institutions to assess the qualities of African Americans’ doctoral pursuit. They found that many scholars had to find external work to support their needs, despite small Lilly grants awarded to them. Additionally, the researchers confirmed that African American students had less opportunity to become teaching or research assistants. The time spent at external jobs and limited integration through assistantships precludes community and increases risk for attrition.

The second study devoted exclusively to African American doctoral students was conducted by King and Chepyator-Thomson (1996). Their study involved a mixed methodology. Findings indicated that students required financial aid to complete the degree, but needed to work outside the program to supplement the aid funds. Additionally, King and Chepyator-Thomson found that while almost half of the respondents reported positive feelings about their academic environment, many perceived discrimination (e.g., being left out of social gatherings). Such findings signal an absence of community for the African American doctoral students and thus heighten their risk for attrition.

In her study, Lovitts (2001) talked about the “chilly climates” of some doctoral programs in which racial/ethnic minorities and women may feel especially alienated from a sense of community. Likewise, in 1992, Feagin attempted to gain insight into the experiences of Black undergraduate students in PWIs through in-depth interviews with students and university employees across several states. He found that many of his
participants experienced both blatant and subtle racism in the form of outright derogatory name-calling to exclusion of Black cultural norms and practices throughout campus. In addition, the professors often viewed the Black students as representing the entire racial group (i.e., “tokenism”), not as individuals with unique qualities. Feagin’s findings highlighted the difficulties that minorities might face when trying to integrate into a new educational phase of their lives; doctoral study might foster similar experiences. Akin to Feagin’s research is that of Ibarra’s (2001) who examined Hispanic/Latino experiences in higher education. He found that many racial minorities at PWIs feel outside the mainstream. He refers to the “educational pipeline” for White students, who tend to have smoother transitions and progression through their college years when at a university that adheres to their own dominant norms.

Women, particularly ethnic minority women, have unique and often unpleasant experiences in higher education. Both Turner and Thomson (1993) and Ellis (2001) discuss such experiences. Turner and Thomson examined narrative data from qualitative interviews with their participants and found that racial/ethnic minority women reported fewer support networks in place to meet their needs. Also, they perceived that racial/ethnic majority women felt like the academic environment was cooperative whereas the racial/ethnic minority women felt like it was more competitive, thus inhibiting a sense of community. Ellis conducted telephone interviews of both Black and White recent recipients of the Ph.D. in different academic disciplines; the sample was divided between men and women for both racial/ethnic groups. She found that Black women had a distinct experience of being marginalized both for gender and race. The lack of integration and feelings of isolation characterized the first phase of study for all
participants, but Black women felt especially separated from peers, placing them at
greater risk for attrition. Both studies signify the differences for racial/ethnic minorities
and the need for community enhancement for such populations.

In 1998, Anderson and Swazey noted the results of their study concerning
community. Most students valued integration and reported feeling a strong sense of
community as a result of interaction with faculty and peers. Sociology students, on the
other hand, felt the least amount of community within their program; their status as a
social science fits with the findings of Berelson (1960), Bowen and Rudenstine (1992),
and Lovitts (2001) that claimed social sciences and humanities have the highest attrition
rates. If sociology students are not feeling a sense of community support they have a
greater chance of non-completion.

Supporting the importance of community is the work of Riddle (2000), which has
already been discussed regarding lack of information. Riddle found that older students
felt a sense of community but preferred to interact with the faculty than student peers.
Participants claimed that fellow students tended to be younger and possess less practical
experience, requiring the older students to find balance between seeming too confident in
their knowledge and learning from the younger students. Also, the older students felt
more tension balancing family life and outside responsibilities with their academic
programs.

Doctoral study can be an overwhelming pursuit for most students; having a social
and academic community can mediate the stress. The students who participated in these
studies expressed some need for interaction with their fellow students as well as with
faculty through collaboration or extracurricular events. Feeling a sense of belonging and contribution can enhance the doctoral experience and can promote program completion.

2.4.1.3 Disappointment with the learning experience.

According to Lovitts (2001), the learning experience involves classroom time as well as interaction with faculty and fellow students, both academically and socially. Mirroring the aforementioned community discussion, Lovitts explains the learning experience as different because of its focus on the intellectual and professional development of the student. Non-completers, as expected, are less satisfied with the learning experience and feel less integrated with faculty and peers. Many participants in Lovitts’ study explained how classroom experiences had potential to be fulfilling, but that many professors would simply lecture on a subject of their own choosing without apparent consideration of the developmental curriculum or true purpose of the class. Further, students were dissatisfied with loose program structure in which there lacked a solid scope and sequence for the students; choosing classes and opportunities felt more random than the students had hoped. Further, students reported feeling unchallenged and stifled with regard to their own creativity.

Interaction with faculty and peers is an important part of doctoral study; yet, students stated that faculty tended to keep to themselves unless sought out. While professors stated that they were always willing to help a student with a problem, they did not make effort to get to know the students as individuals with a personal life. Likewise, students who felt isolated from peers lacked this crucial component of community and mutual learning benefit needed for success.
In 1992, Feagin looked at discrimination against Black students at PWIs and found that the Black students experienced greater barriers to academic progress than their White counterparts. White professors tended to view the Black student as the token representative of the racial/ethnic group and limited course options for Black students coming from poorer, urban areas. Feagin included several case studies of students who proposed innovative research topics centering on Black experience only to be told that the subject was not suitable. White students contributed to the hostile learning environment as well, taunting Black students with racist jokes and adhering to a White dominant culture, disregarding the different norms of non-dominant groups. While these barriers limit intellectual and professional development, they also contribute to the isolation and absence of community to which Lovitts attributes attrition.

Similarly, Turner and Thompson (1993) found that racial/ethnic minority women in pursuit of the doctorate were often neglected when it came to assigning apprenticeships or collaborating on publications and other developmental projects. As Ellis (2001) reported, Black women felt especially isolated from professional development opportunities as compared with Black or White males and White women. Racial/ethnic minorities, and especially women, feel increased and unnecessary barriers to their academic pursuit. Their learning environments are hostile and reduce the likelihood of degree completion.

In 1998, Anderson and Swazey received feedback from participants regarding the learning experience. They found that the students felt somewhat stifled due to the fact that they have prescribed coursework. However, the students generally reported positive opinions of the teaching abilities and involvement of their professors. Further, they
stated that professors encouraged self-direction and teamwork. Such characteristics of the programs promote degree attainment.

Devoting attention to mid-life doctoral students, Riddle (2000) discovered that older students felt comfortable in the classroom and with their learning experience. Mid-life students reported feeling at ease when conversing with faculty and believed their practical training and experiences aided them in the college classroom. They experienced joy, while learning new concepts, as well as while seeing how their practical training aligned with theory. Despite an overall positive report concerning the learning experience, older women experienced some gender discrimination from professors who discouraged their participation in the program. Older students at times felt as if they were included and had peer support, and at other times felt separate from their younger counterparts.

According to the aforementioned studies, interaction with faculty members that results in warm, accepting feelings and intellectual stimulation as well as friendly and helpful peer contact foster academic success. Professors who carefully construct their classes to reflect relevant and developmental curriculum challenge students, which creates the expected learning environment for many doctoral students. Further, students consistently reported these aspects as important to their learning experience, and the researchers found these aspects of the learning experience to profoundly affect the attrition rates of doctoral programs.

2.4.1.4 Quality of advisor-advisee relationship.

Advising and mentoring can be considered different actions; however, the students in Lovitts’ (2001) study expressed desire to have advisors who acted more like
Jacobi (1991) synthesized the literature regarding mentoring and higher education and revealed three components of a mentoring relationship: (a) emotional support, (b) direct involvement with academic and professional development, and (c) role modeling for professional socialization. Further, she outlined four additional components of mentoring based on the literature: (a) it is a helping and achievement-focused relationship, (b) it is reciprocal, (c) it involves personal, direct interaction, and (d) it shows the mentor’s expertise and experience. Per Lovitts’ study, students craved encouragement, involvement with academic development, interest in their personal lives and their characteristics as individuals, and general warmth and care from their advisors. As with the learning experience, students expected advisors and faculty in general to take an interest in their research, to offer opportunities to network and collaborate on projects, and to help with a job search when the time was right. Unfortunately, many students were assigned to an advisor who did not provide these desired behaviors or, worse, never had an advisor. Non-completers tended to rely on assigned advisors as opposed to the completers who carefully selected or were recruited by professors. Professors who were “high producers” of doctoral degree recipients exhibited actions and behaviors consistent with desired mentorship; the “low producers” did not.

Willie, Grady and Hope (1991) discussed ways in which scholars require a mentor, preferably one of similar racial or cultural background; such commonality helps to build trust, which they say is important for racial/ethnic minorities navigating a PWI. Lovitts (2001) noted that students thrive when paired with someone who shares research interests and personal characteristics. In 1993, Turner and Thompson found that racial/ethnic minority women had fewer mentoring experiences and less support overall.
This is similar to what Ellis (2001) observed; Black women felt the most isolated and challenged when it came to obtaining a Ph.D. Supporting the idea that students thrive with similar advisors, King and Chepyator-Thomson (1996) revealed through their study that Black students desired Black advisors and mentors, but there were none in their program.

More recently, Grant and Simmons (2008) conducted an experience narrative between a Black female professor and Black female doctoral student, both at PWIs. The student reported being positively affected by relationships with Black mentors who could disclose unofficial tips about negotiating a PWI and the world of the professoriate. Behaviors common to mentoring relationships proved useful, but the added dimension and support of working with a person who understands the challenges of being a racial/ethnic minority definitely helped the student. The professor reported adequate experiences with being mentored as a junior faculty member; she did not have the benefit of a Black female mentor as the student did and believed her career would be enhanced with such an opportunity.

In 1991, Germeroth created a survey to assess the experience of completing a doctoral dissertation. She sent the survey to 250 speech communication doctorate recipients and, with an almost 55% return rate, found that doctoral students tended to turn to the dissertation committee chair or advisor as well as a spiritual power for emotional support. Women in her study relied on professional counseling to help them through the doctoral process. Bowen and Rudenstine (1992) examined advising that occurred during the dissertation phase and found that professors ranged in attitude regarding that aspect of their jobs. Some professors actively mentored their students while others devoted little
time or attention to them. Obviously, as Lovitts (2001) points out, students require the interaction with the advisor/mentor to help them through an unknown process.

Undoubtedly, the advising relationship between student and professor is crucial for successful completion of a Ph.D. program, yet many students tell tales of horrible experiences and some even go without having an advisor. Ideally, advisors serve as mentors who take a genuine interest in their students and value what they have to offer. Time is spent on students and behaviors such as encouragement and friendliness increase the student’s chances of completing the degree. Further, matching personality and research interest, as well as racial/ethnic background, provides an optimal condition for student success.

2.4.2 Counselor Education doctoral students’ experiences.

Recently, numerous researchers have investigated attrition and attributes of persistence in counselor education doctoral programs. The findings conform to Lovitts’ (2001) themes of completion and non-completion (e.g., lack of information, absence of community, disappointment with the learning experience, and quality of advisor-advisee relationship). Counselor educators represent a relatively small group of academicians, and, based on Lovitts’ reasons to be concerned about attrition, losing students with great potential is troublesome. Understanding counselor education doctoral students’ experiences can yield significant information regarding recruitment and retention of talented individuals.

In 2005, Hughes and Kleist examined first semester experiences of four counselor education doctoral students and found three themes: vicissitudes of thought, integration into the program and student identity, and confirmation of abilities. Beginning a new life
path such as obtaining a doctorate is filled with unknowns, some of which can be eliminated with simple question asking and fact-checking about the program. Though the students in this study did not talk about leaving the program, their vicissitudes of thought between confidence and doubt show how significant it was to have as much information as possible. Further, the students found needed information and program expectations from second and third year doctoral students, as well as their advisors. This finding indicated a presence of some sort of community and a level of quality in the advising relationship; both aspects increase the chances of degree completion. Finally, the students talked about integrating themselves into the program through taking on challenges such as teaching courses and collaborating on projects. This signals an adequate learning environment.

Similarly, Protivnak and Foss (2009) studied counselor education doctoral students’ experiences in their programs using a qualitative methodology. They conducted a large-scale internet project and interviewed 141 counselor education doctoral students around the country. Results centered on department culture, mentoring, academics, support, and personal issues. Department culture was influential to most of the participants; it encompassed the responsiveness of the faculty to student needs, the sacrifices that students had to make to adapt, and unique experiences of racial/ethnic minorities. Students were mixed about how helpful and receptive the faculty members were to students’ needs. Some students reported positive experiences while others spoke of frustrating interactions with difficult faculty members. Also, many students felt like they had to compromise their personal values in order to fit in with the department culture. Racial/ethnic minorities reported difficulties transitioning to a PWI and finding
suitable mentors to help them with the process. In fact, mentoring was another notable finding from the study. Students found having a mentor to be especially helpful in navigating their program; they wanted someone who provided academic opportunities but who also exhibited “genuine caring and guidance.” This harkens to what Lovitts’ found in her 2001 study.

In 2005, Hoskins and Goldberg interviewed 33 current and former counselor education doctoral students. The most significant finding related to persistence within the program was the match the students felt with their program. More specifically, students thrived when they perceived their goals and expectations for the program as aligning with the professors’. Evidence of a good match involved collaboration on mutually interesting and beneficial projects and help with program planning. Close work with faculty lends itself to the sense of community and quality of advising known to be important for student success. Willis (2007), in his dissertation, examined lived experiences of attrition from counselor education doctoral programs. He focused on what happened after leaving, finding that students experience a range of emotions and personal problems stemming from an unfulfilled dream, change of personal and professional identity, and coping with transition to another career path. Lovitts refers to these kinds of consequences of leaving doctoral study in her 2001 work. Beals (2007) paid attention to sexual minorities and their perception of program climate in counselor education in his quantitative study. He developed a survey and conducted ANOVAs to determine that the climate for sexual minorities was mildly positive.

Counselor education consists of a small pool of qualified professors in relation to other disciplines; the professors are responsible for training qualified counselors,
representative of the cultural society, for the professional world. If counselor education doctoral attrition is present at rates equivalent to the literature’s claims, then the small pool is at risk for growing smaller and less representative. Further studies need to be conducted to explore completion and non-completion, especially regarding racial/ethnic minorities, to enhance the counselor education workforce.

Doctoral attrition is a significant problem in the humanities and social sciences, as Lovitts (2001) describes in her influential work; there are extensive costs to the individual, to the program and university, and to the society as a whole. Despite a myriad of studies devoted to understanding why students depart from doctoral work, there remains a high rate of non-completion across disciplines. As Lovitts summarizes, students leave due to lack of information about the program, expectations and graduate lifestyle, to an absence of community among students and faculty, to disappointment with the learning experience, and to the quality of the advisor-advisee relationship. The literature reviewed here confirms such reasons for attrition and contributes specific examples as support.

Many suggestions have been made to reduce or eliminate unnecessary attrition. Tucker et. al (1964) recommended more selective admissions processes, matching students with professors more closely, that professors develop more sensitivity to the students’ experiences, and making explicit the expectations of both students and professors. Later, Bowen and Rudenstine (1992) suggested numerous ideas to alleviate attrition:

1. Weave the student’s research interest into the early doctoral years to lessen the “paralysis” of choosing a dissertation topic.
2. Make the comprehensive exam relevant to the research interests.
3. Make the exam requirements explicit.
4. Provide assistance with funding.
5. Impose more specific parameters such as deadlines for drafts of the dissertation.
6. Enhance the spirit of community.
7. Create specific guidelines for completion.
8. Hold regular advising meetings.
9. Evaluate advisors on the quality and quantity of their advising.

Whatever the suggestion, programs need to recognize their part in the high attrition rates and take action to reduce it across doctoral programs. Students who leave often possess intelligence, creativity, and motivation; they leave for reasons attributable to the doctoral experience. Such aspects of the doctoral experience can and should be examined to foster a better experience and higher completion rates for all students, especially racial/ethnic minorities.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Doctoral student experience has been studied in a variety of fields, such as social sciences, humanities, and physical sciences to identify factors in completion (Berelson, 1960; Bowen and Rudenstine, 1992; Lovitts, 2001), but a specific look at counselor education has been largely neglected. Few studies attend to the experiences of counselor-educators-in-training (Beals, 2007; Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005; Willis, 2007), focusing on general student bodies or sexual minorities. There is a dearth of research on racial/ethnic minorities’ experiences in counselor education doctoral programs. The lack of research is troublesome, due to the profession’s emphasis on multicultural competence and the growing diversity of the United States. Reviews of higher education and membership numbers in counseling professional organizations reveal disproportionate numbers of racial/ethnic minorities participating in these institutions (ACA, 2009; CGS, 2008; NCES, 2009).

3.2 Purpose of the Study

Given the lack of information on the experiences of racial/ethnic minorities in counselor education doctoral programs and the commitment to diversity in the counseling profession, more research is needed on this topical area. Studies have been conducted on racial/ethnic minority faculty experiences within counselor education (Bradley &
Holcomb-McCoy, 2002; Holcomb-McCoy & Bradley, 2003; Holcomb-McCoy & Bradley, 2005), but racial/ethnic counselor education doctoral student experiences have been neglected. Doctoral attrition occurs for approximately 50% of students in the social sciences and humanities (Berelson, 1960; Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Lovitts, 2001), creating gaps in potential knowledge, physical and emotional hardship for the non-completers, and misperceptions and attribution of fault to the student for the departure from study (Lovitts, 2001). This information combined with the statistics that highlight the lack of racial/ethnic minorities in higher education, specifically counselor education, signals a need for research on the reasons for this absence (ACES, 2009; CGS, 2008; NCES, 2009). The counseling profession claims multicultural competence and acceptance, yet the field remains mostly representative of the dominant White racial group (ACES, 2009). This study provided an opportunity for racial/minority counselor education doctoral students to express their experiences in order to expose barriers and challenge dominant discourses.

3.3 Research Questions

The following broad research questions seek to determine barriers to successful completion of the counselor education doctorate for racial/ethnic minorities.

1. How do full time equivalent (FTE) racial/ethnic minority counselor education doctoral students at PWIs experience their programs, according to Lovitts’ (2001) themes of attrition?
   a. Are the academic experiences presented differently for racial/ethnic minority students than for other student populations?
b. What are the students’ perceptions of the academic climate regarding race?

c. How is the learning experience perceived to be the same or different depending on race?

d. What are the positive and negative attributes of the advisor-advisee relationship? Does race appear to factor into this relationship?

2. In what other ways does race/ethnicity factor into FTE counselor education doctoral students’ experiences within their program?

3. What factors do racial/ethnic minority students identify as enhancing their counselor education experience?

   a. How are these factors similar for other student populations?

   b. How are these factors different for other student populations?

3.4 Theoretical Framework: CRT

As discussed in Chapter 2, CRT serves as the theoretical framework undergirding the study of racial/ethnic minorities in counselor education doctoral programs. The theory identifies racism as an ordinary daily occurrence for minorities and looks at the intersectionality of race with other forms of oppression related to gender and sexuality (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Additionally, CRT claims that racism is seen in institutions and structures such as higher education, and racism is more covert than what the privileged norm associates with racism. For this reason and purposes of maintaining dominance, the concept of race, by default racism, is socially constructed and not supported by biology (Collins & Mansoura, 2002; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Lopéz,
1995; Subramanian, 2002). Using CRT as the framework assumes that race and racism is a factor in the successful completion of study by counselor education doctoral students.

3.5 Research Design

3.5.1 Epistemology.

This study used a qualitative experience narrative framework, influenced by critical race methodology (CRM; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), to guide the semi-structured interviews and data analysis. A central tenet of CRT puts forth the idea that personal stories from those who have been traditionally oppressed can serve as valid knowledge and can challenge the dominant discourse (Delgado, 1995a; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Narrative and CRM directly relate to this due to the storytelling component and association with CRT. Czarniawska (2004) states that people do not formulate their own stories in isolation, but with the influences of the dominant discourse and stories from other people. Furthermore, power comes into focus when we realize that stories are constructed for and imposed on us as is the case with the dominant discourse. Thomas (2003) explains the idea of the experience narrative which takes as its focus the stories about key episodes in a person’s life. Using race and racism as the focus, the methodology becomes CRM.

CRM ties closely to this study because of its focus on race and racism and the use of CRT as the theoretical framework. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) are credited with formulating CRM and aligning it with CRT. They argue for a method to counter “deficit” storytelling in which the dominant discourse portrays racial minorities as lacking in some fundamental way. An example can be found in Iverson’s 2007 study of university diversity policies for themes that impose stories onto racial/ethnic minorities.
She found that diversity policies characterized racial/ethnic minorities as problems, marketable, outsiders, and universally disadvantaged. While the diversity policies likely had good intentions, they created an opposite outcome than initially planned. To this end, Iverson advocated for counter-storytelling so that racial/ethnic minority students’ personal stories could modify or add to existing policies. A combination of CRM and narrative methodologies is the most suited research frame for this study.

3.5.2 Sampling.

Qualitative research views sampling differently than quantitative research; sample sizes are typically smaller and purposive (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this study, FTE racial/ethnic minority doctoral students in counselor education programs were targeted and screened for inclusion; potential participants could be any gender at any age, but they had to identify themselves as a racial/ethnic minority according to the U. S. Census categories outlined in Chapter 1. More specifically, they must describe their racial/ethnic background as non-White. Including participants from each stage of the doctoral process is important to ensure that the unique perspectives are captured, due to the idea that attrition occurs evenly across stages (Bair, 1999). In other words, a criterion-based, purposive sampling method was utilized (Heppner & Heppner, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This sampling method is appropriate for “hidden” populations due to the sensitivity of the topic of study (Lincoln & Guba); the racial/ethnic minority doctoral student participants are underrepresented and were asked to provide personal and politically sensitive experiences. Further, purposive sampling favors an emergent sampling methodology since additional participants were sought as the study progressed; the sample was not preselected (Lincoln & Guba).
3.5.2.1 Recruitment.

Participants were recruited using electronic listservs on which counselors, counselor educators, and students post about current professional issues as well as requests for research assistance (see Appendix A). The CESNET-L counseling listserv (CESNET-L@LISTSERV.KENT.EDU), which serves counselor educators, students, and supervisors, served as the primary recruiting listserv. Additionally, the international COUNSGRADS listserv (listserver@lists.acs.ohio-state.edu) was used to supplement recruitment; this forum provides space for counseling graduate students to discuss relevant topics. A request for participation was sent to all listserv members and included the selection criteria, instructions for contacting the researchers privately to express interest, incentive details, and the researcher contact information. Respondents to the recruitment email were then sent a screening document on which they identified their race/ethnicity, status in the program (e.g., first year, ABD, etc.), age, telephone number, mailing address for the incentive, and best time to conduct the interview (see Appendix B). Additionally, the screening document provided space for referral of other potential participants. Such snowball sampling maintained confidentiality in that participants were only told if someone referred them; no further information about participants completing the interviews was given. Snowball sampling was appropriate for this study due to the sensitive nature regarding perspectives of race and racism; participants proved helpful in referring additional participants for the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The researchers provided an incentive for participation. Participants selected and who completed the screening document, the telephone interview, and the member-checking received a $20.00 gift card to Barnes and Nobles bookstore. The incentive
amount was prorated for levels of completion: $5.00 gift cards, if participants withdrew after partially completing the telephone interview, and $10.00 gift cards, if they withdrew before the member-checking.

3.5.2.2 Sample size.

Qualitative research usually requires a smaller sample size than quantitative research. Sample size is not calculated as in quantitative methods; instead, obtaining information guides the sample size, which emerges throughout data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). When participant interviews yield no new information, then saturation of information has occurred; this “information redundancy” means that no new information is resulting from the additional participant interviews and sampling can cease (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002; Heppner & Heppner, 2004; Lincoln & Guba). Since qualitative studies are not generalizable to the larger public, the sample size remains small and relies on the qualities of each participant’s experiences; readers of the study are then able to decide whether they identify with the results, and information regarding a new topic is revealed for further research (Lincoln & Guba). Lincoln and Guba suggest for sampling to “repeat until redundancy-and then just one more time for safety” (p. 219).

Due to the underrepresentation of racial/ethnic minorities in counselor education and thus limited access, the expected number of participants needed to reach saturation was 20 to 25 participants; in fact, redundancy was reached much earlier. Themes and patterns seemed to emerge after just 10 interviews; continued sampling occurred due to the unique stories presented by participants and to ensure saturation. In total, 19 racial/ethnic minority doctoral students participated in the study, representing African
Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, and Asian Americans. Fifteen participants were female and 4 were male, with the mean age being 31.5 years. Appendix J contains more detailed demographic data for the participants.

3.6 Data Collection

Data collection involved semi-structured, recorded telephone interviews regarding participants’ experience narratives as a racial/ethnic minority counselor education doctoral student. The interview protocol was derived from CRT, the themes that emerged from Lovitts’ (2001) work on doctoral attrition across disciplines, and from a vetting process with current doctoral students (see Appendix C). Lovitts found that attrition, and conversely success, depends on factors unrelated to personal ability or characteristics. Her four general themes signal the influence of the program climate in doctoral student completion: (a) lack of information about program requirements, opportunities, and financial aid; (b) disappointment with the learning experience and not feeling challenged or not receiving well-rounded and necessary information; (c) absence of community among and between the students and faculty; and (d) the quality of the advisor-advisee relationship where enough support and guidance is provided. Her themes informed the study’s semi-structured interview protocol, as well as the CRT theoretical lens for this study that claimed racism is a real and ordinary occurrence. The vetting process involved meeting individually and sequentially with three current African American female doctoral students from the researcher’s program. The first meeting involved a general discussion of experience with a broad focus on CRT and Lovitts’ themes. From this meeting general questions were formulated and refined through the
two additional meetings. Supplemental data collection encompassed the use of field notes and researcher reflection from the telephone interviews.

For this qualitative study, ethical standards were thoroughly upheld. Institutional Review Board (IRB) consultation and approval was obtained prior to data collection (see Appendix D). Participants received an information sheet, detailing the study at the time they received the screening document; the participants were assigned a code prior to recording the telephone interview (see Appendix E). The information sheet was verbally reviewed, prior to recording, and all questions from participants were answered to their satisfaction (see Appendix F). Participants gave verbal informed consent to participate in the study, which was noted on a document containing participant names and associated codes; this document was secured for the duration of the study and only the principal and co-investigators had access to it. Transcription was completed by the researcher; all identifiable information was cleaned from the transcripts.

### 3.7 Data Analysis

Coffey and Atkinson (1996) state that there is no one definitive way to analyze data, so incorporating Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) coding procedures of open and axial coding used in relation to grounded theory seemed equally appropriate for this study. Analysis of the data occurred throughout collection, utilizing field notes and researcher reflection. A research team of two current female counselor education doctoral students experienced with qualitative procedures was formed to analyze the transcripts. The two research team members represented racial/ethnic diversity; one identifies as Jewish and one identifies as Hispanic (see Appendix G). Specifically, each research team member read the transcripts in entirety for open-coding and then re-read them for significant
words or passages (see Appendix H). Following this individual analysis, the research team met to discuss findings and determine themes. Open and axial codes were noted and compared with other transcripts to eventually result in six themes that point to the influence of race in counselor education doctoral students’ experiences (see Appendix I). Further, transcripts were examined for disconfirming evidence, or statements and patterns that challenged the emerging findings, which was represented in the six major themes as well.

3.8 Trustworthiness and Rigor of Research

Qualitative research continues to struggle for the same respect from the academic community that quantitative research receives. Despite many misconceptions about the lack of quality in qualitative research, there are numerous concepts and methods to ensure a successful and respectable study. As opposed to a positivist, experimental view, qualitative research explores the subjective experiences of participants to form an understanding of unique realities. Often, qualitative work provides valuable information on a previously unstudied phenomenon (Heppner & Heppner, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). There are several accepted ways to establish methodological rigor and trustworthiness in qualitative research; these important factors in conducting reputable research were applied to this study of racial/ethnic minority doctoral students’ experiences within their programs.

3.8.1 Credibility.

Perhaps the most important factor in establishing trustworthiness is creating a credible study. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility is achieved by seeking multiple sources of data such as participant interviews, member checking, field notes, and
research team analysis. Through this triangulation of information, results become solidified due to finding both confirming and disconfirming evidence across data sources. This study was comprised of recorded participant telephone interviews, transcript analysis, research team collaboration, researcher field notes, and member checking to ensure credibility. More specifically, the researcher maintained an on-going field note log in which musings on emerging themes, disconfirming evidence, and meanings of the data was recorded. Further, member-checking occurred once the research team agreed upon the themes; a brief summary of the themes was sent to each participant along with instructions for member-checking. Fourteen of the 19 participants enthusiastically confirmed the results; five participants did not respond, passively confirming the findings per member-checking instructions.

3.8.2 Transferability.

Transferability is the ability to apply findings to other settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Given the subjective nature of qualitative research and the small sample sizes as compared with quantitative research, results are transferable only as far as the reader interprets them to be related to their own personal experiences. The space for marginalized racial/ethnic groups to express their experiences in counselor education doctoral programs has potential transferability to other racial/ethnic minorities in higher education who review this study.

3.8.3 Dependability.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasized an “audit trail” to document the research process and results. The audit trail for this study contained the research proposal, interview protocol refinement documents, the finalized interview protocol, demographic
background information, recorded telephone interviews and resulting transcripts, code books, process notes, researcher reflexivity journaling, research team analysis and process notes, and email correspondence.

3.8.4 Confirmability.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained the fourth criterion of trustworthiness to be confirmability, or being able to confirm findings through examination of the data. The study and its results can be confirmed through the extensive measures discussed previously to establish trustworthiness: maintaining an audit trail, member-checking, thorough analysis of transcripts for confirming and disconfirming evidence, research team collaboration, triangulation of data, email correspondence, and field notes.

3.8.5 Rigor and authenticity.

Qualitative rigor is established when the methodological framework matches the data collection and analysis methods; all parts “fit” to provide consistency and coherence (Fossey, et al., 2002; Kline, 2008). Recognizing the CRT tenet of empowering marginalized voices, using a narrative approach to gather participants’ experiences and then coding the data for themes within and across narratives maintains rigor. Authenticity was met by supplying verbatim quotes from participants to confirm or disconfirm identified themes; including students’ direct expressions along with member-checking ensure the results accurately interpret and represent participants (Fossey et al.).

3.9 Researcher Subjectivity

The researcher’s role as a current FTE counselor education doctoral student and White female influences the research process and the results, potentially both positively and negatively. Awareness of the researcher’s White racial/ethnic dominance possibly
affected racial/ethnic minorities’ willingness to participate at all, and their vulnerability could have affected their responses. The results of this study might be interpreted and regarded differently coming from a person in the dominant racial group; participants expressed hope that it might gain greater recognition, due to that fact alone. Procedures were built into the recruitment and interviewing processes to reassure potential participants of their security when volunteering; these included private email correspondence, assigned codes, and use pseudonyms to present the quotes.

Part of the responsibility for the researcher was to spend time journaling about personal experiences as a doctoral student regarding Lovitts’ (2001) themes, race, and what peers have shared during the course of study. Moreover, thorough considerations of the reasoning and personal interest in such research occurred; recognizing the researcher’s power in all aspects was important to understanding this study. My interest in racial/ethnic studies comes from a history of relocating to South Africa as a child and witnessing the discrimination and racism present in a foreign country. Also, work as a school counselor in both affluent and poverty-stricken schools showed the researcher how different access to education can be. Finally, the researcher’s work as a doctoral student has broadened her thinking and experience relative to other racial/ethnic groups; she has become acutely aware of her privilege and Whiteness-as-property (Harris, 1993). After speaking with the participants, she wondered if her Whiteness was partially responsible for her many opportunities and assistance throughout her doctoral program.

Bergerson (2003) takes time to reflect on White scholars performing research using a CRT lens and acknowledges the potential for metaphorical colonization. She exposes the power inherent in such research and cautions careful consideration and
sensitivity. Her article helps the researcher to reflect on her position in this research and how her dominant racial/ethnic makeup can affect her procedures and findings. She does believe that there exists room for White scholars in the fight against racism; White people are racialized as much as any other, but with different consequences (Lopéz, 1995). Accepting that she was a racial being was important and contributed to her reasons for conducting this qualitative study.
Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

This study sought to understand racial/ethnic minority doctoral students’ perceptions of their counselor education programs to identify areas for further examination and growth. The field of counseling claims cultural competence and acceptance, yet the profession of counselor education remains representative of the dominant White racial group. What follows is a summary of the findings of this qualitative study along with participant demographic data. Specifically, the following research questions were answered:

1. How do full time equivalent (FTE) racial/ethnic minority counselor education doctoral students at PWIs experience their programs, according to Lovitts’ (2001) themes of attrition?
   a. Are the academic experiences presented differently for racial/ethnic minority students than for other student populations?
   b. What are the students’ perceptions of the academic climate regarding race?
   c. How is the learning experience perceived to be the same or different depending on race?
   d. What are the positive and negative attributes of the advisor-advisee relationship? Does race appear to factor into this relationship?
2. In what other ways does race/ethnicity factor into FTE counselor education doctoral students’ experiences within their program?

3. What factors do racial/ethnic minority students identify as enhancing their counselor education experience?
   a. How are these factors similar for other student populations?
   b. How are these factors different for other student populations?

Six themes or counter-narratives (Czarniawska, 2004) emerged from the semi-structured interviews: (a) intersectionality, (b) playing the game, (c) individual characteristics, (d) support, (e) voice, and (f) talk the talk, walk the walk. These themes revealed areas for further examination and growth and will be discussed in turn.

4.2 Participant Demographics

   While recruitment occurred through a national email listserv, nineteen doctoral students from the Eastern and Central time zones responded to and participated in the study; 15 were females and 4 were males (see Appendix J). Of these participants, 12 identified themselves as African American or Black, two were Hispanic, one was biracial, one was Jewish, and one was a Pacific Islander. Two other participants reported their racial/ethnic background as Chinese/Japanese/Hawaiian and Panamanian/Jamaican/Irish/Cuban. Ages ranged from 24 to 45, with the mean age being 31.5 years. All participants were from a CACREP-accredited or accreditation-pending programs.

   Participants represented each stage of doctoral study (e.g., first year, second year, third year, and ABD). Prior to embarking on the study it was specified that participants would be from PWIs; however, three participants reported their program as being in a
Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), which serves a student body of at least 30% Hispanic/Latino background. Further, two participants talked about their online program experiences; these students were required to meet their faculty members and fellow students in person at least once during the year. Both the HSI and online school information was deemed valuable to the study and was included.

4.3 Emerging Themes

Open and axial coding was used to interpret the raw data from the interview transcripts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Throughout transcription, potential themes and ideas were noted in a separate memo (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to facilitate analysis of the data. Once completed, the transcripts were given to each research team member for independent analysis. Each person was given instructions (see Appendix H) along with the research questions to assist with their reading and coding of the data. After one week, the team met to discuss the emerging themes and patterns, starting with a discussion of the independent open coding process. A list of 30 potential themes resulted from the initial discussion; axial coding followed to cluster the themes. Six final themes resulted with 100% research team consensus: (a) intersectionality, (b) playing the game, (c) individual characteristics, (d) support, (e) voice, and (f) talk the talk, walk the walk.

4.4 Presentation of the Findings

Once the six themes were established by the research team, they were sent to each participant for member-checking purposes. Sixteen participants responded with enthusiastic confirmation of all themes, and the three participants who did not respond implied consent per member-checking instructions. In order to enhance authenticity of the research, quotes from participants were used to elaborate on themes (Fossey et al.,
2002); pseudonyms were assigned to protect the identity of the participants. Using participants’ words not only established trustworthiness and authenticity, but followed CRT principles surrounding voice and counter-storytelling (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Each theme will be discussed in turn, including sub-themes.

4.5 Intersectionality

One of the central tenets of CRT is the intersectionality or overlap of aspects of diversity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Phrased another way, a person’s experience does not revolve around only one aspect of their being; people may be discriminated against based on their race, gender, and sexuality or any number of other permutations of being. Robinson (1999) discusses the multiple identities that everyone has, and the social constructs that shape those identities. She asserts that everyone needs to examine their own privileges, oppressions, and assumptions about other people. Further, Ellis (2001) reported her findings that Black women at PWIs experience greater marginalization and barriers to success than their White female counterparts, and certainly more than their Black or White male peers. A third of the participants expressed versions of intersectionality when thinking about discrete incidents (e.g. teaching and supervision, funding, etc.) in which they felt some sort of negativity during their program.

Tulip, Holly, and Aspen claimed that their chronological ages perhaps factored more into their experiences in their program than did their race or ethnicity. Tulip (24) identified herself as bi-racial, saying that her mother was White and her father African American. She also reported being in the 2nd year of her program and overall had positive experiences. She stated that “pretty much everyone [in the cohort] is older than me, so I feel like that’s been kind of a separating issue…” She described her cohort as
consisting of mostly White males with one African American female, and despite feeling like her age influenced her interactions with peers, she believes everyone works well together. Later, she explains how she feels like the faculty treats her differently from other students:

They just kind of treat me differently, but in a good way….I think part of it is I got my master’s degree from this program, too, so the faculty know me very well. I also think it’s because I’m younger. They kind of think “Oh well, [Tulip] doesn’t have a lot of experience in the working field, so if we tell her to do something, she’ll probably do it.” I don’t think it’s ethnically related...

Tulip does not believe her experience has been negative overall, but she does feel like her youth, when compared with others in the field, creates a barrier to being perceived as competent or experienced. Aspen is a 28 year old male student who comes from a lower socioeconomic status and identifies as Asian American. During the interview, he described his traveling history from Hawaii to the East coast of the U.S.; this migration revealed to him his privileged and dominant racial/ethnic status in Hawaii, and how it shifted to one of being a minority in his current program. Like Tulip, he also feels as if his age and demeanor negatively impact others’ perceptions of his abilities as a counselor or in the doctoral program:

A lot of clients say “I don’t want to meet with you; I don’t want to work with you…” And I’ve had some people say “it’s because you’re young and no one’s going to take you seriously.” And my question is “what gives you that idea? Am I walking around with a freaking lollipop, listening to the Backstreet Boys?”…People tend to look at me, too, and I tend to look a lot younger than I am….I’m pretty energetic, animated, or whatever you want to call it. But you know, I like to be pretty laid back,…I don’t get bent out of shape over some little thing. I believe it gets perceived as a maturity thing.

Aspen has had people directly tell him that his youthful appearance detracts from his professional presentation and makes people question his competence.
Holly is a 32 year old female nearing her comprehensive exams. She identifies her race/ethnicity as being Panamanian, Jamaican, Irish, and Cuban, but she referred to her Hispanic/Latina heritage more than the others. She experienced her age as being a barrier to her work with students in a teaching or supervisory role, rather than her racial identity. Believing she looked younger than she actually is, she told her story about how students challenged her professional knowledge and ability:

The one thing that irritated me...is they always wanted to know my age. And I’m not ashamed of my age, I was frustrated, and I had to tell the students “well if you think you can do a better job, why don’t you get up and teach?” That shut them down real quick. So I think my age is always an issue when I’m up in front of the class, because they think, I do look young, I mean trust me, I’m a high school counselor, and they think I’m in high school. That’s why I always have to dress up and keep my hair down, so that they know I’m actually an adult. But my age, and a lot of the students now are actually older than me. I have problems with Black males. I had someone tell me I didn’t know anything before, and I had to put him in his place in a very nice way.

It is evident through her statement about Black males that while age is certainly a significant factor for Holly, race might also factor into some of her program relationships. She later relays a time when age, race, and gender potentially intersected, during an encounter with another male student:

[The male student]...told me in the middle of...when I was trying to correct him, what errors he was making so he could make corrections, he told me “wait a minute, let me finish.”...And I’m just like “what the Hell?” Did he just tell the professor, the instructor “wait a minute?” Hold up. Do not tell me that. So I let it go...and then I said it again because I knew he was going down the wrong path. He told me “didn’t I tell you?” ...And it had to do with [the fact that] I was a female because he would say stuff. He always treated females- I noticed that he treated females like that. The male students in the class he didn’t treat like that.

Holly initially claims her age negatively factored into her experience, but then she goes on to elaborate on how her gender also played into her relationships with the students she
taught. Her experience exemplified the ambiguous nature of discrimination and the intersectionality of aspects of diversity.

An African American female with ABD status, Begonia (29) reported coming from a lower socioeconomic status. When probed about how race or ethnicity affected her academic experiences or opportunities, she also stated that she believed age and gender have more of an impact:

I don’t think that [race/ethnicity] has affected my experience in my program as much as…what my chronological age is, and then I look much younger than my chronological age, and my gender. I think those have been bigger influences….I look really young; a lot of times people tell me I look like a teenager, and so people tend to not take me seriously.

She later focused on gender and how being female has presented unnecessary challenges to her academic success:

I think that Black males in the whole counselor education profession period are more respected than Black females. I think it has something to do with sexuality, in my own perspective, but I can’t prove that….Because myself and one other woman, we’re the only females that came in with our cohort, and…as we were finishing our coursework, a lot of the time that we spent talking together was about how we’re totally ignored as the females in our group.

Although focusing on gender, Begonia qualified the males as Black, indicating that race intersected with gender and age.

Likewise, Camellia, a 32 year old Black female in her 3rd year of doctoral study, perceived the relationship between her race and gender as creating resistance from her students from the beginning, and certainly when discussing multicultural competence. She talked about teaching the concept of privilege through class readings to her class, and then having students challenge her and the co-instructor:

I think it was more-so resistant to us from the very start, before that article or that presentation was even given. So, yeah, I think it was some of that diversity
component of being women and of being diverse, ethnic minority women.

As a doctoral student, co-teaching courses is part of the professional development for becoming a counselor educator. Facing pre-judgment from students based on race or gender affected potential success.

Finally, Poppy believed that socioeconomic status strongly influenced students’ experiences in doctoral programs. A 29 year old Hispanic female, Poppy has obtained ABD status and attended a HSI. Her family maintained a strong cultural influence in her life; they lived several hours away and were unaccustomed to the demands of higher education, which clashed with family values at times. She talked about how the students who were supported financially and who did not have to work on top of the program requirements seemed to receive a more well-rounded comprehensive doctoral experience:

Researcher: It doesn’t sound like necessarily there was equal access to [opportunities], but it sounds like it was because of money, needs, financial needs, more than ethnicity. Would you agree with that?

Poppy: Not necessarily. In some situations, I think it was more…but again, those who I call working class citizens are minorities. You know what, I think it was more like money because these people had an opportunity, they didn’t have to work because they have husbands who support them or they have rich dads who support them….They didn’t really need it, because they had somebody supporting them, but they had the time to do it because they didn’t have a job….There was a lot of injustice in regard to those opportunities, and there still is some right now.

The students who did not have to work, from her perspective, were able to take advantage of more opportunities than the unfunded students, who were trying to balance the doctoral program with outside employment to fund their own education. She also saw a pattern with the White students falling into the financially supported group while racial/ethnic minorities seemed to comprise the “working class” students, although she hesitated on declaring that outright.
The statements above illustrated the major theme of intersectionality. Within this theme are three additional sub-themes related to aspects of racial/ethnic diversity, stereotypes, tokenism, and experiences within and between racial groups, that factor into the participant’s doctoral experience. Each are discussed below.

4.5.1 Stereotypes.

Stereotyping occurs throughout society and targets all groups and is perpetrated by all groups. CRT disclaims essentialism, or the idea that there is one standard for each group against which everyone else can be measured (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). In other words, essentialism claims that there is one prototypical male, one prototypical female, one prototypical African American person, etc. CRT discredits that belief and asserts instead that every human is comprised of so many intersecting qualities that make no person like any other person. Put more scientifically, Subramanian, Adams, Venter, and Broder (2001) discovered that humans share 99.9% of their genetic code and therefore only 0.1% of our characteristics differ. There is no quintessential representative of any given group, yet so many people classify people based on stereotypical ideas. At least seven participants reported feeling the need to counter stereotypes or feeling like others expected them to live up to their racial/ethnic stereotypes, during their counselor education doctoral program experience.

Five of the African American female participants brought up stereotypes surrounding being Black and female. Olive (32) is in her first year of doctoral study and identifies as African American. She reported feeling the issue of stereotyping come up between her peers in the program. She attended an HSI in an area where African Americans were marginalized based on skin tone, and her perception was that the faculty
and doctoral peers were unsure how to interact with her in the early part of the program.

As an example of this, she stated:

I felt like I was being watched in a sense of “I’m not sure how to take her; I’m not sure how to interact with her because she doesn’t act like the typical dark-skinned African Americans that we see, that we grew up with.” …I have a feeling they expected me to be like the, and I hate to say this,…like the typical African American female, you know smart mouth and all of that. And I believe I’m fairly calm; I’m extremely rational and logical...

She voiced her opinion that her interactions improved, as she progressed through the program and people got to know her and vice versa. Olive later shared some of her interactions with her Hispanic peers and how they talked about stereotypical Hispanic traits. For example, she asserted: “Now I’m hearing a whole lot of stereotypical characteristics, like about Hispanics…and it’s from Hispanic students, like Hispanic individuals who are saying [it], so I’m learning what they think.” Her experience signaled that emerging professionals in counselor education were not modeling the cultural competencies so emphasized by the associated professional organizations.

Daisy, a 29 year old African American female at a PWI, had a similar experience with faculty and peers comparing her to another African American female in the program when most of the cohort and department were White. Daisy, in her second year of the doctoral program, felt the juxtaposition of her non-stereotypical characteristics and behaviors with the stereotypical attributes of her Black female peer:

I’m one of two African American or Black students in the program….Sometimes with Black females you have a stereotypical way of being. Sometimes Black females are categorized as being bitchy or aggressive or dominant, and a lot of times that’s just misunderstood….[Another Black female student] has a difficult experience just, I guess, being misunderstood, and then also misunderstanding some of the White students and the White faculty, and a lot of those issues were already in progress when I came on board.
Such misunderstanding of a person inhibits potential success in any endeavor. Not only did Daisy’s peer face that stereotyping, but she also faced it vicariously. On another note, Begonia (29, African American, ABD) faced similar stereotyping of being aggressive or dominant in her program. As an example of this she stated:

I never really noticed it but I guess I’m fairly blunt, so I think that sometimes tends to make people uncomfortable….This is where I think the perception of bluntness comes in. I think, because I’m an African American female, that people perceive me to be more blunt that what I really am….Yeah, I think I got a little Sapphire victimization going on.

Bryant et al. (2005) brought the Sapphire character into their discussion of African American women in the counseling profession. They described the basis of the stereotype as coming from a 1960s television show in which Sapphire was an aggressively dominant Black women belittling African American men and generally being “loud, animated, and strong-willed” (Bryant et al, p. 314). Such characterization of anyone, based on misinformed generalizations, creates barriers to communication, collaboration, and professional success.

Iris and Tulip both talked about feeling the need to avoid fulfilling or even hinting at confirming the stereotype about Black people not meeting high standards. Iris is a 34 year old African American female in her third year of study at a PWI. She stated that “sometimes people may think that Black people are sometimes slow and they’re not getting what they’re saying.” She further stated, however, that her program experience has been positive in that there are many Black students; Iris believes such representation is “reaffirming that we can do this profession, and that we can work with people that are not in our race and ethnicity.” Tulip (24, bi-racial, 2nd year), based on her discussions
with other racial/ethnic minority students, gave an example of when the potential stereotyping of a racial/ethnic minority student factored into the educational experience:

A lot of them did say that they fought so hard to not live up to stereotypes when their White peers could turn in a paper after the class was completely over or months late, and they would receive the same grade as them, even though they’re busting their butt. In my opinion, I think that part of that is societal pressure, not necessarily pressure from the program. And I also think that our faculty members probably would have treated them the same way if they would have had some kind of legitimate excuse. So I think sometimes we tend to put more pressure on ourselves than we actually need to, at least in this environment. You really don’t want to live up to a negative stereotype that may be portrayed in the media or something like that.

Russell (1995) talked about the “dominant gaze” in the media and how everything is in reference to the White norm. Tulip saw racial/ethnic minority students as facing pressure to avoid fulfilling a stereotype that decreases respect, professional or otherwise, of a certain group. Sometimes, this resulted in a perceived injustice in comparative treatment of students.

Similar to the experiences of the aforementioned African American women, Aspen (28, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, comprehensive examinations) elaborated on being stereotyped for being an Asian. The generalization that all Asians are smart and gifted in math and science definitely came into his experience. For example, he stated:

Because I look Asian they believe “Oh, but this guy’s probably really smart.” I really believe that because people will often times say to me and ask me things, “Oh, well you should know this stuff, right?...You’re probably really good at this stuff, right? Aren’t you a quantitative researcher?” Fact is, I’m a qualitative researcher. I’m not very good at math....I think people, some people don’t really know what to expect from me because they think “Oh, he only pretends to act this one particular way, but in reality I know he’s really like this. I know he’s a genius kid, or this hard-core quantitative researcher.”

Aspen exhibited frustration as he talked about his experiences of being stereotyped as an Asian. He, like Olive (32, African American, 1st year), felt like the people in the
department did not know who he was or how to interact with him, due to their assumptions about him. To this end, counselors are trained to listen and seek understanding of their clients; this should easily transfer into working relationships to secure success for everyone, but it often does not.

Finally, Oak shared his experience as a 35 year old African American male with ABD status at a PWI. He elaborated on what he believed to be a common problem for racial/ethnic minorities; they refrain from sharing their opinions on topics related to race for fear of being stereotyped negatively. For example, Oak claimed:

I come from a really sort of activist family background and I was not going to perpetuate the notion that why is it that only minorities or people of color are the ones that talk about issues regarding race or ethnicity? I would maybe say a few comments and then I would just back up as well, because there is a fear that you may come off a particular way.

It is highly unfortunate and a detriment to the profession that people fear being classified negatively simply for expressing their views on a topic that affects everyone. It certainly challenges the claim that, as a field, counselors aim to be culturally competent.

4.5.2 Tokenism.

Similar to stereotyping, tokenism in this study involved the view of racial/ethnic minorities as representative of the entire racial/ethnic group. It frequently surfaced in class or conferences, and sometimes it was often an active choice by students to be a token in hope that it led to increased diversity in the program. In 2007, Iverson wrote about how institutions of higher education use minorities as commodities to sell their diverse image; this occurs through putting racial/ethnic minority faces on marketing and recruitment materials. Likewise, Bryant et al. (2005) highlighted the over-visibility of racial/ethnic minorities in some departments, where the program seeks to prove their
diversity so they put the minority in places of visibility. They cautioned that this does not necessarily mean that the program had truly integrated diversity into their culture. Five participants mentioned or hinted of feeling like a token, as a forced spokesperson or as a voluntary representative of diversity.

Myrtle is a 3rd year doctoral student at a PWI. She identifies as being African American and is 31 years old. She generally felt like her counselor education program made an effort to welcome and celebrate diversity and to integrate it into the academic culture. She was quite aware, however, when she was the only person of color in her class. For example, she stated:

"Depending on who I’m taking classes with, I might be the only person [of color] in my class. In the cohort that came behind me there are no African American students, so, when I take a class with them, I’m the only person of-I’m the only African American person. Now there’s an Asian student, so I’m not the only minority, but I’m the only Black person in class."

Myrtle’s statement reflected her feelings of isolation, and the significance of another racial/ethnic minority joining the group.

Fir is a 30 year old Black male in his second year of the doctoral program at a PWI. He immediately noticed that he was the only racial/ethnic minority student in the program; and has experienced the same sensation of isolation as Myrtle. To illustrate, he said:

"It’s a visual of even when you’re in the classroom it was obvious I was, at that point…I was the only Black person in the cohort. So you’re seeing 12 faces, technically all of the faces look Caucasian…So in the classroom, I felt everyone had that bond, or they assumed they had that bond of all being White, and then there was me."
His feelings of isolation inhibited his self-expression and made him feel like a token in the cohort. Tulip (24, bi-racial, 2nd year) also referenced feeling used as a symbol for diversity in her program:

It’s real easy for the college to kind of say “Okay, we’re going to use [Tulip] as our way of diversifying things. She’s put together, you know, but she’s brown-skinned so it’ll look like we have diversity here.” …And so I feel like it’s kind of easy for them to say “Oh [Tulip] is going to co-lead the counseling center. That way she’s kind of like the face of our counseling program, with a White female so it looks like we have more diversity than we do really have.” …When it comes to like community outreach and stuff like that I feel like I’m the token person to represent the minority whatever for our school.

She maintained an accepting view of such an imposed role, stating that if it helped her succeed and receive opportunities then she embraced it.

Holly (32, Panamanian, Jamaican, Irish, Cuban, comprehensive exams) and Aspen (28, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, comprehensive exams) also felt both like forced spokespersons for diversity, as well as voluntary representatives of diversity for purposes of recruitment. Holly oftentimes struggled with the role of spokesperson being placed upon her in the program. The following quote is presented as an example: “I’m really into multicultural issues…sometimes I feel like I’m the spokesperson for Latinos, and…sometimes I don’t feel like talking about it, but it’s fine because I know they’re really trying to learn.” Other times, Holly recognized the need for serving as a token representative, such as in her professional organization work. As an example of this experience, she stated: “Most of them are White, so they always want to have a minority perspective, and…I do understand that trying to reach those members who are minority.”

Aspen’s experience has included both feeling forced to act as spokesperson for a racial/ethnic group, as well as voluntarily serving as a token to increase overall diversity.
in the program. When talking about his overall positive relationships with faculty, who are mostly White, he stated: “I don’t necessarily like being the spokesperson, you know, to be called upon to be the spokesperson.” In class, Aspen has faced tokenism when discussing cultural issues. For example, he stated: “Sometimes we’re going to have a lecture about Asian Americans, of course, everyone is going to turn around and look at me. And I was like ‘What the fuck do I know?!’” He goes on to talk about being the visual representative on brochures and other recruitment materials: “The graduate school called me to pose for them for some type of brochure.” For this incident, he agreed to it, with the small stipulation of receiving the completed materials; however, he never saw the final product. As far as helping with the counselor education program recruitment and admissions process, Aspen enthusiastically served as a token representative of diversity. Below is an example of this:

I typically make it a point to be [at admissions day]. If I’m out at my internship, or if I’m at work, I typically take a day off to do this, because I believe it’s important, especially if I know we’re going to be interviewing a diverse sample. I want incoming folks to see me, and I use this [opportunity]; I want them to at least see me, even if that means being a token. I think this is a case where being a token is a good thing.

Through Aspen’s experience and the stories from the other participants, it seemed like being a token was something that may be forced upon students, but might also be used as a tool for increasing diversity within counselor education.

4.5.3 Within-Group Affects of Race/Ethnicity.

This subtheme involved the interactions of members within one racial/ethnic group and participants’ views that people harbor some prejudices (so the majority group should not be the only focus of building multicultural competence). The within-group
theme emerged as participants reported differences between regional ethnic groups or in skin tone, and when others would compare the one or two racial/ethnic minority students in a program with each other or against some previously set standard. The comparisons made between students from the same race/ethnicity relate to stereotyping, too. Daisy is a 29 year old African American female in her 2nd year of doctoral study at a PWI. She told her experience of being compared to the other African American female concurrently in the program. Below is an example of this:

…I just felt like a lot of people were looking to see how [I] would react in class or how I would react under pressure, and I just did my best to be myself, to not try to sugar coat, but to…try to prove a point like “Here I am as another Black woman.”…Because I know ultimately it’s considered “the two Black women in the program, and you know, here’s one we like, and here’s one that we may not like so much.”

The above statement was an example from Daisy’s experience in the program, but she also shared a time that with-group comparisons occurred while working as a counselor, in another context:

Apparently there had been another Black female counselor that worked at the agency…before me, a few years before me….And my supervisor, she’s a Caucasian female, went on to say “I know in your culture that’s not necessarily bad for like older women or older men to treat a Black child like their own…But here we don’t do that.” And I don’t think she was being racist or anything like that…then she went on to say “but you’re so nice, and you’re this and you’re that.” …It went on to be here I am against another African American female who might not have been seen in such a positive light for whatever reason. So, I just feel like I’ve been compared a lot.

Her experiences highlighted a subtle way in which many people perpetuate oppressive behaviors that counter the notion of cultural competence. It is not likely in a PWI that a White student would be compared with another White student to assess how far one deviates from the other’s standard or stereotype.
Olive (32, African American, 1st year) and Poppy (29, White Hispanic, ABD, HSI) both discussed the differences within their racial/ethnic groups as they related to their doctoral experiences. Olive, who previously described her program as residing in an HSI, observed that the African Americans in the surrounding area were assessed based on skin tone. Below is an example of this:

> I assume [their experiences in the doctoral program] would be [different from other groups’]. I can assume that it might be, just from watching, just from seeing the interactions of African Americans in the community. And I think it has something to do with the skin, the skin tone, so like darker skin African Americans aren’t as active or inactive as the lighter skinned African Americans.

Her observations that experiences would likely be different based on skin tone illustrate the within-group comparisons; how dark or light skin color is affects members’ experiences within one racial/ethnic group. Poppy similarly compared members of Hispanic ethnicity:

> Even though it’s a HSI, like even though it’s only two hours away [from home], it's so different, it’s like a different group of Hispanics. Like people I’m used to…everybody speaks Spanish. My experience was very different. So to me this group of Hispanics here that are only two hours away, they don’t know their Spanish.

Entering her doctoral program emphasized the differences within her racial/ethnic group as far as regional characteristics and cultures. She reported how interesting and helpful it was to encounter people who were classified in the same way ethnically, but who exhibited a culture acculturated to the dominant language. Poppy also faced mixed messages on how her academic and career path intersected with cultural expectations from home:

> Everybody’s like “Oh you’re so young, you’re so young, you’ve done so much!” …And then I go to school and they’re like “You’re so young, but you need to publish.” And then I come home and they’re like “You’re so old! When
are you going to get married?”

Her encounter with different expectations points to the within-group differences she experienced. Her Hispanic family members prioritize family traditions while her professional Hispanic peers placed a strong emphasis on career and academic success. Such conflicting messages produced challenges to program completion and professional goals beyond obtaining the degree, such as entering the professoriate. It also signaled a need for counselor education to become more aware of what students bring with them culturally when they begin a doctoral program.

Hickory and Forsythia also talked about within-group experiences in which members of their own racial/ethnic groups created challenges or were tougher on them than on student peers from outside their racial/ethnic group. Hickory is a 26 year old Hispanic male in his 1st year of doctoral study, and he attended an HSI. From his perspective, his Hispanic professors provided the greatest barriers to his success:

I’ve never experienced discrimination or racism from an Anglo person. I’ve actually experienced negative things from people of my own race, from a male Hispanic professor and a female Hispanic professor….I don’t know if it’s jealousy or not wanting people of your own culture to succeed, but it’s interesting because in my area I was taught about what’s called a crab syndrome, just like when one crab in a bucket wants to get out, the other crabs kind of bring that crab down, so that’s kind of how I felt with some professors from my own identity, and it’s kind of hurtful.

Forsythia’s (33, African American, comprehensive examinations) experience was similar. She felt like the African American professors posed more challenges to students who had the same racial/ethnic identity:

Well I know of one of my professors; she was my advisor. She was really kind of hard on me….but another African American student that was in the program made the statement that she just wants to make sure that we’re just doing the very best because we are African American.
Different standards based on race or ethnicity were certainly not a desirable quality of a counselor education doctoral program, and fostered the idea that, as a field, counselors are not culturally competent.

Another view of within-group aspects of race/ethnicity in counselor education was presented by Iris (34, Black, 3\textsuperscript{rd} year) and Hickory (26, Hispanic, 1\textsuperscript{st} year). Both participants emphasized how important it was for everyone to examine their cultural competence and biases; no one is exempt from self-assessment and growth. For example, Iris made the following point:

\begin{quote}
You know when people say “Oh, Black people aren’t prejudiced,” It drives me crazy because I’m like “yes they are!” Anybody can be prejudiced, anybody can have biases. It doesn’t necessarily mean you’re racist; it’s not based on race, it’s based on people, and I think you need to learn from different people in order to become aware of your biases.
\end{quote}

Similar to Iris, Hickory responded to his experience by stating:

\begin{quote}
I don’t like Hispanics oppressing other Hispanics, and that’s something that I talk about in discussion many times in my program and in my previous coursework, that okay, “letting the Anglo know.” And I’m thinking “No! We need to look at ourselves first.” We need to look at our own culture before we do that. We need to look at the within-group discrimination first, because it is happening a lot.
\end{quote}

Both participants felt strongly about the need for every racial/ethnic group to be aware of the prejudices and biases within the group. Although they both referred to their own African American and Hispanic groups, respectively, applying the self-awareness principle to White counselor educators and students was equally applicable.

Intersectionality defines aspects of diversity as overlapping instead of discrete characteristics. The participants in this study reported numerous examples of feeling negativity in their programs, but they believed it to be related to the intersectionality of race, age, and gender rather than race/ethnicity in isolation. Further, participants
experienced racial/ethnic stereotyping and tokenism with frequency. Finally, within-group experiences stirred additional reflections on the part of several participants.

4.6 Playing the Game

During analysis of the transcripts, it became clear that participants overwhelmingly thought they needed to screen themselves at PWIs as far as how much they revealed about personal culture, their language, dress, or behavior, and that they felt pressure to do more and better work than their White peers. More specifically, 15 participants talked about what the research team dubbed “playing the game”, or editing personal cultural attributes, social politeness, the majority privilege influence, and proving yourself. Such behavior was strategic, deliberate, conscious, and protective for the participants during their doctoral program.

4.6.1 Screening Dress, Language, Behavior.

While most people regardless of racial/ethnic background must change personas based on the situation (e.g., professional versus casual), the participants in this study revealed a need to do this for their cultural identity. They discussed how they needed to conform to the dominant group’s ideals to receive the same opportunities or esteem as did their White peers; this meant editing speech, guarding personal information, dressing to fit in, and generally aligning their behavior with that of the department. Delgado (1995) warned that racial/ethnic minorities needed to conform to the dominant group’s ideals or else face consequences; these could be limited opportunities, increased isolation, and added barriers to success. Similarly, Hill (1998) wrote about the interaction of language and “White public space”; people with English as their first or primary language take for granted their language dominance and use it to mock other languages. She referred to
using Spanish phrases from pop culture that were usually presented with little regard for pronunciation or accuracy. When the non-English speaker attempts English, they tend to face greater scrutiny for correctness. In 2005, Ladson-Billings echoed these sentiments when she used CRT to analyze education. Her assessment was that those students who do not conform to the dominant White “norm” faced superfluous challenges.

In this study, five participants or more disclosed an experience during their doctoral program that aligned with the aforementioned publications. Laurel (27, Polish/Jew, ABD) attended an online school which allowed her greater freedom to present herself as she felt comfortable and suitable. She talked about guarding her Jewish identity due to personal past experiences of anti-Semitism. An example of this is the following: “I’m not very open about being Jewish, and so it’s not something I’m upfront about. So I don’t think it influences [relationships in the program] that much, just because I’m not, I don’t normally share about it.” Tulip (24, bi-racial, 2nd year) shared her opinion about succeeding in her counselor education program, which was also in a PWI:

I feel the more you look, or speak, or dress like the people, the faculty members, or the people in your cohort that are White, that the more they accept you. So, if you are really hanging on to things from your African American culture, maybe were really influenced by Hip-Hop music growing up and you have a Hip-Hop type of dress, or you might speak with a little slang because you grew up in a certain area, I feel like that is going to be looked upon more negatively.

She further stated plainly that any exhibition of culture deviating from the White ideal prohibited success and was considered less-than.

Oak (35, African American, ABD) asserted, as a racial/ethnic minority, that implicit message at PWIs suggest that you must edit your language and behavior when
interacting with colleagues. More specifically, he argued that one’s minority culture must be put aside and not brought into the counselor education doctoral experience. As an example of this he stated:

I don’t know if you’ve heard of amongst African Americans—amongst some minorities and in particular African Americans, there’s a phenomenon where we code-switch. You know, Dr. [Oak] that you meet in the department is probably not the same [Oak] that you’d see hanging with his family and friends. There’s some cultural aspects that, to be quite honest, that you have to keep at bay when you’re at a PWI, and I’m sure that, well I know that’s a phenomenon that takes place in our department.

While many of these individuals behaved more professionally in such environments, it is quite conceivable that many Whites do not feel they have to screen cultural aspects of their identity. Olive (32, African American, 1st year) also received the message to restrain her cultural identity: “I don’t [present] the stereotypical African American actions or characteristics, I do have some of them, but I just know that there’s a time and a place to be comfortable.” Countering the negative idea of submerging cultural identity to succeed, Poppy (29, Hispanic, ABD) instead embraced her cultural identity and emphasized it as part of her professional identity.

Researcher: How do you think your ethnicity factors into the perceptions from the faculty and from peers?

Poppy: I think it’s like my whole thing. I think it’s like Hispanic/Latino rights, that’s me. That’s what I stand for….I’ll be like counseling Hispanic/Latino parents or working with Hispanic/Latino students, or in education or leadership with Hispanic/Latinos. That’s constantly my agenda. So that’s who I am.

Of note regarding Poppy’s statement is that she attends an HSI; therefore, she represents the dominant racial/ethnic group in that situation. This parallels the idea that, in PWIs, White students are able to present their cultural identities without hesitation.
4.6.2 Majority Privilege Influence.

Due to the inclusion of participants from HSIs, the question of majority surfaced in the study. At PWIs, White students are often widely represented, and students of color are underrepresented. At HSIs, Hispanic students constitute over 30% of the student body. In this specific environment, the dominant group is Hispanic and Whites are seen as the minority. For this section, the majority influence reflected the racial/ethnic group which held the dominant position; therefore, it should not be assumed that Whiteness is always the dominant culture in specific environments. That said, minority populations face assumptions of power and privilege surrounding opportunities and relationships with people in the counselor education program.

Related to this point, Olive (32, 1st year) referenced her experience as an African American female student at an HSI. She saw her White peers as minorities and the Hispanic students as the more powerful, privileged group. For example, she stated:

In this specific population the majority isn’t Caucasian students…Here I find myself comparing more to Hispanic students because they seem to get—they don’t get a lot more opportunities, they just may be more aware of the opportunities….so that excludes both Caucasians and African Americans and anybody else in between.

The majority influence was subtle yet powerful, regardless of which group held the title. Aspen (28, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, comprehensive examinations) succinctly defined majority privilege with the following example: “I think when you’re in the majority population [the influences of cultural identity] don’t cross your mind; you don’t have to think about that kind of stuff.” Endine (44, Black/Afro-Caribbean, 2nd year), who reported a generally negative doctoral experience, also felt the effects of majority
When she presented what advice she would give to a White doctoral student versus a student of color:

I don’t think they need any advice because the honest truth is there is a difference…Because they’ll say “We’re treated alike” and I’m like “yeah, not really like that.” If you look at certain things, how you’re spoken to sometimes, how often you’re told information, the relationship you develop is also different. But they don’t think it’s there. They’re not aware of their privilege.

Her doctoral experience has been one of constantly coming up against majority privilege and struggling to find a way through it for her own success.

Three other participants echoed the subtle nature of majority (White) influence and privilege. Their view was that no matter how much cultural competence building occurred or what efforts were made to welcome and celebrate diversity, Caucasian faculty members and doctoral peers simply were not able to understand the challenges facing racial/ethnic minorities. Holly (32, Panamanian, Jamaican, Irish, Cuban, comprehensive examinations) told entering students of color to remain focused, as she explains below:

I told one person you have to remember what your goal is, and remember that you may have to explain things a little bit different, like how you think of things, because a lot of White faculty members…they really don’t know. And you can’t get upset with them because they don’t know. It’s not that they don’t want to know. They try,[and] they just don’t get it.

Forsythia (33, African American, comprehensive examinations) and Tulip (24, bi-racial, 2nd year) disclosed similar perspectives. Forsythia believed that the faculty aimed for cultural competence, and also indicated that she had not experienced any discrimination in her program. However, she did suggest that the White faculty in her program could only be so competent due to their racial dominance. More specifically, she stated: “Our faculty is pretty much multiculturally aware to a certain extent they can be, being
Caucasian….I mean there’s certain things that they’re not going to get or understand, and I understand that so I don’t take it to heart.” Tulip (24, bi-racial, 2nd year) also advised new doctoral students of color to maintain patience with their White faculty and peers, who had limited awareness of minority experiences. As an example of this, below is an excerpt from Tulip:

I think I would have to say that the faculty is very accepting in that they, you know, try their hardest to be considerate and to understand our perspectives, but they don’t always, they don’t always completely understand. And to not take that personally, but to understand that it is kind of a part of being White or not a minority, is that you can’t fully understand what it’s like to be in our shoes until you are there.

Deep-seated and differing worldviews were also expressed by a few of the participants regarding majority influence. Amaryllis (34, African American, ABD) talked about her experience with negotiating the individualistic, ambitious, and competitive nature of her doctoral program, which she believed was related to the majority cultural values:

As an African American female, my value systems are slightly different than the traditional realm of academia. I don’t usually embrace competitive, individualism that you often find amongst that circle….I never felt excited to publish. I felt pressure to publish, and that didn’t feel good. I’ve never really been a conformist, and I felt like the atmosphere was really created for people who do feel comfortable with that drive.

The feeling of being an outsider hindered the success of doctoral students who had their own vision and goals. Oak (35, African American, ABD), on the other hand, relished the academic climate that Amaryllis found challenging; however, he thought that the majority influence highlighted his status as a racial/ethnic minority when it came to opportunity.

I do know some of my White peers were steered in directions that would enhance
their experiences in the program even more. For instance, there is this program at our university that is geared toward helping future faculty members. Even in researching that, I just didn’t know that it was out there, even coming in, so when I found out that other students had found out about it from...you know the information wasn’t necessarily disseminated throughout everyone in our program.

Daisy (29, African American, 2nd year) also saw the White majority influencing her doctoral experience. As previously discussed in the within-group subtheme of intersectionality, Daisy was subjected to comparison of her personality and behavior with other African American females who exhibited stereotypical behaviors. Daisy observed that in a PWI, there would not likely be such a comparison of White students:

I think being in a PWI...if a White student does something or whenever a White student has done something that no one else agreed with, or we just didn’t like, or maybe seemed rude...it seems like with a White student at a PWI, it comes down to personality or manners or whatever, right. But if it’s a minority student, then there’s that comparison again.

From Daisy’s perspective, a White student’s undesirable actions or behaviors are a result of his individual personality and must be accepted as unique characteristics. However, when racial/ethnic minority students committed the same actions or behaviors, they were measured against a stereotype or others in their racial/ethnic group.

While the focus of this study was based on the perspectives of racial/ethnic minority students in PWI counselor education doctoral programs, the subtheme of majority privileges surfaced in many participants’ interviews. Many of their experiences were directly related to how the majority influence stood out and needed to be discussed.

4.6.3 Proving Yourself.

Several of the participants perceived the need to prove themselves to the counselor education department, including peers and faculty, or reaffirm their life path. However, one participant stated that she did not feel the need to prove herself. While
completing a doctoral degree certainly means demonstrating success and ability, many of
the participants experienced a greater need to prove their intelligence, ability, and worth
to fellow students or faculty. The additional striving to excel stemmed from negative
interactions with colleagues or the desire to combat stereotypes.

In response to being asked if he ever thought of leaving doctoral study, Fir (30,
Black, 2\textsuperscript{nd} year) expressed determination to obtain his degree, despite negative
interactions with peers. His experience was that of peers explicitly doubting his
capability as a counselor and as a doctoral student. After debating on the merit of a
doctoral degree for his career path, Fir resolved to remain true to himself:

I’m glad I’m back because I always wanted to get my education, and I was upset
to think that potentially I was letting someone else deter that….I’m making sure
I’m putting my best foot forward and doing everything I can. Pretty much to
prove myself and to prove to myself that this is what I want.

As he faced the unnecessary barrier of others’ doubt, Fir realized how much extra effort
he would need to put forth to be viewed positively.

Endine (44, Black/Afro-Caribbean, 2\textsuperscript{nd} year) and Forsythia (33, African
American, comprehensive exams) expressed the need to do twice as much work or exude
double the quality of work to be considered equal to their majority peers. For example,
Endine was confronted with this message early in her program and quickly figured out
what it would take to succeed in her program:

First semester I had to show that I was worth it to be in the program…so the first
semester was very stressful….And as the only person of color in the first year
group (and it’s a very small group), I just have to make sure that I am over-doing
more….doing the best that I can and going over and above to maintain myself.

She succinctly described the experience of proving yourself when she said: “I just always
have to keep in the back of my mind that if you need to climb, you need to climb two
stairs instead of one just to make sure that you climb.” Near the end of her interview she came back to this idea: “Sometimes you may have to work twice as hard to get the, not necessarily the same grade, but the respect.” Further, she viewed the majority White students as having to climb one stair at a time to succeed.

Similarly, Forsythia recounted her feelings of pressure to do more than her dominant peers in order to be viewed as performing the same. When talking about within-group aspects of her racial identity and how African American professors may provide increased challenges to prepare African American students, Forsythia stated: “I don’t know if you’ve heard of that whole thing- you have to be twice as good to prove you’re just as good- type of thing?” One of her mentors was also African American and emphasized to Forsythia that “you’ve just got to be excellent; you’ve got to be, do better, do more just to be equal.” Tulip (24, bi-racial, 2nd year) emphasized, however, that students of color entering doctoral programs needed to remember to take care of themselves and not get lost in the pressure to prove themselves or feel compelled to serve as the “voice” for their racial/ethnic group:

I would tell them that they’re just as capable as their White peers, and that they can’t be so hard on themselves, because I feel like a lot of times minority graduate students put so much pressure on themselves to perform well because they don’t want to live up to a stereotype of the lazy Black person, or somebody who is just getting on by the skin of their teeth.

Poppy (29, Hispanic, ABD) also felt pressure to prove herself. As a Hispanic woman, she was expected to build a family as a young woman; both an education and a career were not seen as important. To this end, Poppy chose to pursue a doctoral degree which took her away from home and delayed the start of her family, causing conflict. Recently, she was asked to write an obituary for a family member, and, through this
experience, she felt pressure to not only honor that person, but to prove herself by staying focused on her life choices:

…that obituary was extremely hard for me….not only because my grandpa passed away, but I wanted to show everybody “Look at me. I am very smart.” and “Look what I’ve done….No, I’m not married, but my grandpa’s still proud of me.”

Poppy faced similar pressures as other participants to show everyone that she could be successful and excel in academia, but her pressure came from outside the counselor education program. Her heritage influenced her progress and interactions with faculty and peers. In her case, the department was welcoming of her culture, but, in other places, she felt isolated.

Finally, Olive (32, African American, 1st year) also implied that racial/ethnic minorities had to work harder than their White peers to succeed; however, she was not having that experience in her doctoral program. On another note, Olive believed that her place in the department was equal to other student groups, and that her encounters with faculty had been positive. For example, she stated:

I don’t feel like anyone treats me differently because I’m the only African American. I’m not given any leniency nor am I given anything to where I have to work harder to prove myself. I don’t feel that, but again, that may be because of my perception.

Proving yourself was part of these students’ experiences. Placing additional challenges or higher standards on students, due to their race/ethnicity, even if not done deliberately, did not emulate cultural competence in the field of counselor education. This hostile aspect of some of the counselor education programs likely reduced the potential of the students in this study.
4.7 Individual Characteristics and Attributes

The theme of individual characteristics and attributes emerged as participants relayed the importance of their inner drive or motivation, how their personality factored into opportunity and interactions, the desire for rigor and challenge, and persevering through the program despite feeling negativity due to their racial/ethnic status. The early studies involving doctoral study in general claimed that students who departed from study were to blame as opposed to environmental or program climates (Berelson, 1960). Lovitts (2001) and Tinto (1975/1987) challenged the student-at-fault theory and instead looked at all of the reasons why students may leave doctoral study. As discussed in Chapter 3, they found that more often, the departing student reported hostile climates, negative relationships with faculty and peers, financial concerns, or life circumstances as influencing their decision to discontinue study. The participants interviewed for this research upheld the notion that applicants accepted into doctoral programs possess all of the academic capabilities needed for success, but that external pressures or hostile climates based on their racial/ethnic minority status may prove a significant barrier to their success.

4.7.1 Inner Drive/Self Motivation.

Inner drive and self-motivation factored prominently in the interviews. Ten participants spoke of internal motivation as spurring them to doctoral study (e.g., Forsythia, Endine, Ares, Daisy, Camellia, Iris, Zinnia, Myrtle, Olive, and Rose) either from an early age or following work experience in education as a counselor. Beyond the inner drive to obtain the highest degree possible, eight participants shared incidents
during their program in which they had to rely upon themselves and their self-motivation to accomplish tasks and get what they needed to enhance their academic experience.

Rose (45, African American, ABD) advised incoming students of color to remain true to themselves and to their own goals.

I would advise them to listen to everything they’re told, and create a standard for themselves whether or not they believe it is expected of them, so for their motivation to come from within, and don’t waiver from that. Even if it appears that something is… maybe a standard is less than what they might aspire to, reach higher, go bigger, do more. Don’t do the minimum.

Fir (30, Black, 2nd year) echoed this advice based on his experience of being told he would not be able to be successful with his goals of maintaining a private practice while also teaching. He stated: “I listen to ‘What does my voice say?’ What is it that I want, not what is it that others want for me, but what do I want?…What do I want to accomplish?” His career goals conflicted with those of the faculty, which were that academia came first and foremost. Fir believed he could find balance and perform both roles equally. Likewise, Zinnia (25, Filipino, 1st year) suggested minority students starting a doctoral program should seek out a student mentor, and to speak up when their needs are not being met. For example, she said:

I feel like I get what I need because I ask, you know? So, I would really advise them, like especially if they feel like they’re being discriminated against, to hook up with a mentor, because that’s what the program offers…and if you’re not happy with your mentor, get a new one.

Poppy (29, Hispanic, ABD) also actualized her self-direction throughout her program. She explained her success: “Anything else that I’ve accomplished [aside from a grant project] is because I’ve gone and pushed for it.” These participants recognized the
importance of asserting their needs and of remaining focused on inner goals throughout the program.

Scholastic opportunity and funding for graduate study were also areas in which the participants quickly realized how self-motivation and inner drive were imperative for success. Their perceptions of this did not necessarily involve race/ethnicity, but, rather, unknown subtleties of department culture when it came to inclusion on projects. Oak (35, African American, ABD) expressed frustration with his experience with learning opportunities. As an example, he stated:

You know, of course when you’re a doctoral student there’s a lot of autonomy and you’re really self-directed and driven and things of that nature, and that’s been no problem whatsoever. I just think the level of mentorship should have been more equitable across students,…especially if the need was voiced early on. His perception was that despite his best effort to collaborate, he learned of opportunities late after a “trickle down” effect. His White peers seemed to know about such prospects for building their career before he did, although he actively sought such information.

The hidden rules of successful doctoral study were not lost on Forsythia, a 33 year old African American female. While she was able to benefit from various opportunities, she had to gain understanding and comfort with the process of securing opportunity. Her statement below exemplified this idea:

It’s almost as if there’s a meta-rule that people don’t know about. Once you’ve been there, like with the co-teaching for example… I thought they had to ask you to co-teach with them. They’re like “No,…if you’re interested in co-teaching classes, come and ask us.” Nobody knows this unless you say something,…so that’s been an issue….You have to volunteer as a student; they’re not going to seek you out to do stuff. You just have to volunteer if there’s something you want to do.
Forsythia also exhibited inner drive and self-motivation when it came to funding her doctoral study. She stated: “I had to seek out funding for myself just before I quit my job, just to make sure I had some funding. So I did that on my own; nobody really told me anything.” Lovitts (2001) talked about the importance of a “cognitive map” in which students have the knowledge prior to entering a program, and, therefore, can navigate accordingly. Forsythia’s experience of belatedly learning the underlying rules of doctoral study delayed her success and caused unneeded stress.

Again, Aspen, Olive, and Forsythia emphasized the need to exert inner drive and self-motivation to succeed. Aspen (28, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, comprehensive examinations) stated that he was told by his advisor to express interest and to put yourself into the situations of which you wish to be part. For example, he stated: “[My advisor] told me ‘If you don’t express the interest, I’m not going to go out and chase you down.’” Olive (32, African American, 1st year) made the same point when she stated: “I think that the opportunities are out there, but it doesn’t come to you. So the people who are more proactive get more. I think that’s a good thing, because that’s what it will be once you’re done.” Forsythia (33, African American, comprehensive examinations) relied on her self-direction to work her way through the program. She explained: “I’m a pretty autonomous person. I can do things on my own; I don’t need my hand [to be] held….You’ve got to have some sort of autonomy.” The participants shared their experiences with taking initiative to succeed, whether that was a hidden rule or part of their individual characteristics and attributes. Tied to this subtheme was the possibility that race/ethnicity influenced students’ knowledge of opportunities and procedures.
4.7.2 Personality and Attitude: Being Liked.

Hoskins and Goldberg (2005) found that students chose doctoral programs in counselor education based on program match. This means that the students looked for similar values or ideals, behaviors, and research interests in their preferred doctoral program. Participants in the current study echoed this idea when they perceived opportunity to be based on your personality or how well-liked you were by faculty.

Four of the participants felt like opportunity to work with professors was based more on personality and demeanor than race/ethnicity. Fir (30, Black, 2nd year) confirmed this when he said that collaborative prospects came through advisors and networking. For example, he stated:

> It’s more word of mouth, and it still goes to personality. If you’re liked, you are on more things. Or, not necessarily if you’re liked, if you’re more like a yes-person, where you really will say yes to whatever, you’re put on more different things….so it’s more through your advisor.

He perceived inclusion to center on your relationship with your advisor, and if you expressed willingness to participate and help with different activities; he also seemed to equate being liked with saying yes to many projects. Hickory’s (26, Hispanic, 1st year) experience mirrored Fir’s. When asked about how students are extended collaborative opportunities and whether there were differences based on race/ethnicity, he said:

> No, I mean I think the people who want to do the research are the ones who are motivated and really want to, and that seems to be enough for professors….I think it has a lot to do with personality….So I think professors want to work with students they can get along with or [who] show respect in class.

It was interesting to consider how personality is assessed in these situations and whether race/ethnicity factored into such assessments of someone’s likeability. Camellia (32, Black, 3rd Year) agreed that successful progress in the program was determined by
willingness to participate rather than race/ethnicity. She explained: “No, I don’t [think race factors into perceptions of students]. I really just think it’s the work you put forth in the program.”

Oak (35, African American, ABD) had an opposite experience to Fir and Hickory. He reported being enthusiastic and eager to participate in research, co-teaching, and other scholarly activities, only to be turned down or not even informed of opportunities. The statement below illustrated his point:

With regard to [feeling outside the department],…of course there are all [of] their personalities,…there are availability things that come into play, but I know specifically…in my case, when I made concerted efforts with regard to being available and with regard to asking to collaborate…and [then] sometimes with being directly rebuffed, you know, it was really frustrating. It was.

Aspen (28, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, comprehensive examinations) attributed opportunity to possessing similar values and research interests as the faculty in the department. He stated: “People tend to…kind of gravitate more towards professional interests and research interests.” Zinnia (25, Filipino, 1st year) also believed that networking was important in gaining success and access to opportunity. For example, she suggested: “You have to network within the college….so if you know people and you know their interests, then you can ask them. If people like you then they’ll recommend you, too.”

Personality played into Amaryllis’ (34, African American, ABD) assessment of being successful in a doctoral program and what advice she would give to both students of color and White students. Her statement below exemplified her point:

I believe that everybody’s journey is different. I think that I could have a horrible experience with a professor and you could have a positive experience with that professor, and I don’t think it has to do with my race. It’s about what we both
While everyone brought different attitudes, ideas, personalities and other traits to a given situation, race/ethnicity seemed to come into question when determining someone’s personality. The participants here overall did not see their racial/ethnic minority status as affecting their experience with regard to opportunity. Instead, being liked and willing to work influenced their opportunities.

4.7.3 Rigor and Challenge.

As previously discussed, false assumptions of student fault or inability to complete doctoral-level work was used to explain doctoral attrition across disciplines (Berelson, 1960; Lovitts, 2001). Attributing blame to the student was inaccurate, and neglected an examination of what doctoral programs were doing to help or hinder student progress. The assumption that students were not capable or able to handle such a high-level of work was again challenged by the participants’ experiences. Eight participants stated directly that they expected rigor and challenging, intellectual work prior to beginning the program. Some were satisfied with the high standards they faced, while others felt like the rigor of their program should be increased.

Poppy, Olive, Tulip, and Rose all expected their doctoral programs to be challenging academically and in relation to personal sacrifice and dedication. Poppy, a 29 year old Hispanic student at the ABD stage of her program, revealed this when she said, “I knew it was going to be a lot of work, time-consuming….so it was going to be a lot of work, like emotionally, physically. A lot was going to be required of me.” Olive (32, African American, 1st year) simply stated, “I expected it to be fairly difficult, actually.” She had extenuating circumstance of moving to a program that was far
removed from family and friends. Upon completing a portion of her doctoral degree, she decided that the program “definitely [required] hard work and focus”; her prior education at another university, she believed, greatly prepared her for the challenge, though. Tulip (24, bi-racial, 2nd year) had high expectations for a doctoral program that would meet her academic needs. Not only did she desire an academic challenge, but she also looked for learning opportunities and diversity. For example, she disclosed:

I would say that I expected a program that focused on clinical practice, research, and being an educator equally….I expected some freedom, you know, ability to research what I wanted to research, teach about topics that I wanted to teach about, maybe do some in-services or something like that. I did expect diversity. I expected diversity not only in race or ethnicity, but in research interests, in age, in experience, those kinds of things….so [in] choosing this university, I expected it to be challenging.

Rose (45, African American, ABD) was skeptical of finding a program that would suit her academic goals or possess high standards. She stated: “I wasn’t sure that the program would really meet my needs, that it would be as rigorous as I would like.”

Oak, Daisy, Aspen, and Zinnia also preconceived their doctoral experience to be highly stimulating and requiring much effort. Oak (35, African American, ABD) sought deep discussion about important and relevant counseling topics. As an example of his intent, he said:

When you think of starting the doctoral program you think of being in these classrooms where there are these really in-depth conversations between students and faculty. And so that’s what I was anticipating, and, actually, I was looking forward to. So that was one of my expectations, [having] that higher-level conversation with regard to everything.

He later added the expectation of being “challenged in the areas of research and writing, also challenged with regards to improving my clinical skills.” Upon reflecting on his
actual experience, Oak was satisfied with the level of rigor in the program. He confirmed this when he stated:

> With regard to academics, you know, [it has been] overall really good, I think. I like a challenge. The only reason I say that is because I’m just one of those guys who is always up for a challenge, so, yeah, I was challenged or have been challenged academically throughout the program. But I’m certainly not shying away from being challenged even more.

So despite the program be adequately strenuous for Oak, he actually relished the idea of greater depth and challenge.

Daisy (29, African American, 2\textsuperscript{nd} year) had much to say about her expectations and actuality of rigor and challenge in her doctoral program. Like Poppy (29, Hispanic, ABD), she thought the program would demand sacrifice in many ways. She suggested this by saying: “I heard it was really labor-intensive, time-intensive, and so I just expected that.” Daisy also expressed some minor disappointment with the attitudes of her peers, who she observed as resisting challenge and rigor, and how that affected her experience. Daisy’s definition of the rigor she expected from a doctoral program included “intellectually stimulating conversations, challenging term papers, something that really provoked me to think deeply about concepts and ideas, and projects, or the use of technology.” Unfortunately, she did not feel as if her expectations were met, and, instead, her experience was “more of an extension of my graduate work, which is good, but I wouldn’t say that I’ve learned anything new and ground-breaking.” She went on to explain her frustration with the program’s less-than-expected standards:

> I grew up in a family that just valued hard work and education, and you work really hard, and it’s every day that you’re working really hard, and so this program…I feel like I’m working really hard, but I don’t feel like I’m working hard intellectually.
Both Oak and Daisy expected constant effort and intellectual wrestling with concepts, but neither believed these needs or desires were fully met.

Prior to embarking on doctoral study, Aspen (28, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, comprehensive examinations) developed his understanding of doctoral work from his discussions with professors and mentors. As he learned about the experiential and procedural differences between the master’s degree and the Ph.D., Aspen gained enthusiasm of his chosen path. Upon discussing the doctorate, his mentor influenced his expectations, as stated below:

When you want to talk about doctorate level work, I remember her saying, it’s like a whole completely different ball game. You’re no longer going to be a student. You’re now expected to be a creator of knowledge….so I remember when she told that to me, I had that in the back of my head, and I had that expectation coming in here, that it will be harder, a lot more work, but there will be an expectation of me to produce…research, produce knowledge, articles...

His expectations were met after starting the doctoral program; he talked of professors who emphasized rigor and told students to toughen up. At one point in the program, when Aspen was involved with numerous supplemental projects to his coursework, a faculty member stressed the importance of preparing for the role you want. Aspen explained this incident as follows: “I was told ‘You want to be a faculty member, you want to get a job as a counselor educator, [then] when you graduate, you better look like a counselor educator’.” Zinnia (25, Filipino, 1st year) reiterated this concept as she explained that her expectation was a doctoral program that satisfactorily prepared students for the professoriate. For example, she stated: “I felt like whatever program I was going to be in, it should prepare you for the real world, and I feel like this program really does that.”
Despite eight participants directly stating they expected a difficult program, three participants reported their experience as being a greater challenge and requiring more discipline that they had originally expected. Laurel (27, Polish/Jew, ABD) had continued in her same university from master’s to Ph.D., so she expected the program to be similar to what she had already been through. She stated:

I think I had lofty expectations in terms of the time it would take me to get through the program, because I had done the master’s [and] they were counting so much of the master’s toward it. I thought this is going to be really quick, and my master’s was such a difficult program, so I thought that nothing can be harder than this….The reality of it was that I was working harder than I ever thought I would work, and it was quite challenging, quite rigorous.

Hickory (26, Hispanic, 1st year) was pleasantly surprised by the high expectations that faculty had for him to find a counselor educator position at a research-focused university, when, in fact, he planned to return to his hometown and to work at a teaching-focused school. He described his program experience as “rewarding and challenging.” When asked what advice she would give to other in-coming students of color, Begonia (29, African American, ABD) stated she “always [tries] to tell them to be prepared to face challenges, both academically and personally, from the faculty.” Her message was applicable to all students, she said, but the students of color potentially faced greater challenges purely based on their racial/ethnic status.

4.7.4 Perseverance.

It seems reasonable to assume that many doctoral students, at times, feel like they are simply persevering through their program, doing the work and completing the necessary steps to graduate. In fact, several of the participants in this study stated that they were just trying to get through and to rediscover their non-doctoral program lives.
Poppy (29, Hispanic, ABD) even described doctoral study as an “endurance contest.” But perseverance took on new meaning when it came to remaining committed and focused to finish despite instances of racial/ethnic discrimination or challenges. Five participants talked about finding their resolve to get through the program despite barriers based on race/ethnicity.

Oak’s (35, African American, ABD) experience was one of frustration with not being included and extended collaborative opportunities. He perceived the White students as being offered more chances to succeed and being involved with research more than he had been able to, despite his best efforts to make it happen. Based on these incidents that may or may not be attributable to racial/ethnic identity, Oak resolved to complete the Ph.D. so that he could fight such inconsistencies in the future as a counselor educator. As an example, he stated:

With regard to problems within the program, I have not taken any other actions…I am now in self-preservation mode…so I can finish my dissertation, and so once I finish that, and I get to my new counselor education position, I will definitely work actively within the profession, and especially within my own institution, to address some of the things.

Although he recognized areas for growth or at least exposure, Oak believed self-preservation was his best decision so that his efforts could be maximized later.

Zinnia (25, Filipino, 1st year) supported this notion of perseverance. She believed her racial/ethnic minority status to be one with more privilege than other racial/ethnic minorities; but even still, she refrained from bringing her racial/ethnic identity into her doctoral experience. This coping skill had served her well and was part of her life since childhood. She explained:

I met a lot of doctoral students who…feel the same way I feel, too, as far as “I’m
not going to worry about what you think of me; I’m going to just do what I need
to do to get what I need and get what I want”…I think a lot of it has to do with my
upbringing, too. My parents never emphasized minority. All the schools I’ve
been to, like even when it was emphasized, I didn’t notice it because I didn’t
focus on it. I try to have a positive outlook on things, so…I don’t even know if
I’m discriminated against.

She, like Oak, decided to do what was required, remain focused, and get through the
program. Olive (32, African American, 1st year), too, advised incoming students of color
to persevere and stay focused on the end goal. She explained her perspective:

African American students who are interested, and, actually I say this to
everybody, just remember your purpose in being here. Don’t let anything get you
off-track of what you’re here for, because no matter what else is going on, even if
you feel like you’re being treated unfairly- yeah, you can fight it to make sure it
doesn’t happen to other people as well….but remember what your purpose is.
You know, get what you need from them, from the school. You don’t have to like
everybody, you just have to be respectful. Get what you need from them, use
them for what you need…so that you can move on.

Amaryllis (34, African American, ABD) faced specific incidents of negativity that
she perceived as based on her race/ethnicity during her doctoral program. At one point,
the faculty advised her to “consider a less scholarly program,” which she considered “one
of those bumps in the road” to earning a Ph.D. in counselor education. She did not take
their advice and instead persevered through the program successfully. In her words, she
reported her experience:

I’m not a quitter usually….I had something to prove at that point, and so decided
to stick it out even though it was difficult, it wasn’t easy, you know. I decided to
stick it out. I didn’t want to give them the satisfaction of me not successfully
completing the program.

During the program, she witnessed people conforming to professor’s desires with regard
to dissertation topics or presentations, and that when they agreed and went along with the
faculty, they seemed to be “pushed along.” These occurrences strengthened her resolve
to “keep [her] eyes on [her] journey and not get caught up in what was happening for everyone else. How much of [being pushed along] is cultural or individualistic, [she’s] not sure.” Amaryllis maintained a positive and forward-thinking outlook on her doctoral program, reframing negative experiences into opportunity for growth.

Endine (44, Black/Afro-Caribbean, 2nd year) also told of situations in which she felt discriminated against or observed the White students getting favored. She felt ambiguity surrounding her place in the program early into her experience; such ambiguity initiated her coping skills to get through the program. She used a phrase from her home culture to describe her perseverance: “The professors have the blade, and I have the handle, so I can’t pull too much….You just have to know to let [unfair treatment] go. Let it slide, like water off the duck’s back, and move on.” Her advice to minority students entering doctoral study was to “have a very thick hide.” At one point, Endine considered leaving doctoral study due to the treatment she was receiving, but instead she persevered.

For example, she reported:

I think I’m at a point where I’m not going to let anyone rock my boat. I have a goal, and I just need to do what I need to get it without belittling myself, my morals, or my standards to get what I want.

Her need to focus on the basics of getting finished with the degree echoed that of the other participants’. The fact that students in doctoral programs anywhere felt negativity enough to resort to coping skills is a problem that needs to be addressed. Individual characteristics and attributes of the participants in this study spoke to their earned places in doctoral programs. Despite encountering challenges and barriers due to their racial/ethnic minority status, they displayed the inner drive, self-motivation, and perseverance to succeed.
4.8 Support

It likely comes as no surprise that support in various forms factored heavily into many of the participants’ experiences. Lovitts (2001) found the same when she studied departers from doctoral study; a feeling of community, relationships with advisors/mentors, interactions with peers, and financial support all weighed in. In 1996, King and Chepyator-Thomas discovered that African Americans often felt outside the group when it came to social gatherings in graduate programs; and Turner and Thomson (1993) declared that minority women felt the most isolated in academia. Support for obtaining a doctoral degree is a vital component of successfully completing the degree; participants in this study identified support, or the lack of it, as relating to peers, feelings of connection, relationships with faculty and advisors, family influences, and funding.

4.8.1 Peers.

The influence of peers surfaced in all 19 interviews. Three participants spoke of the influence of friends in their decision to pursue the degree, while nine others discussed the merits of a cohort-model. Additionally, a few participants reported forming a sort of pact with fellow minority students for the extra support garnered from shared experiences and perspectives at PWIs. Overall, participants reported positive and negative characteristics with doctoral peer interaction.

Rose, Zinnia, and Poppy claimed that their relationships with friends who were also in the counseling field influenced their decision to pursue a doctorate. Without the encouragement and information obtained from these friends, these participants may have decided on another career course, and counselor education would lose their scholarly contributions. Rose’s (45, African American, ABD) friend also applied to the same
program, and they were able to work through difficult times together. As an example of this, she stated: “We’ve been a support to each other during the course of the program. It’s been really, yes, really important, really a big factor in me continuing at certain points [when the program didn’t meet my needs].” Zinnia (25, Filipino, 1st year) also had a friend who went through the same program as her and positively encouraged her to complete the degree. Poppy’s (29, Hispanic, ABD) best friend confirmed her progress into a doctoral program: “[My best friend] had been in the program for two years prior to me applying. She did the master’s program with me, and she continuously encouraged me to apply.”

Once accepted into a program, a cohort model seemed to provide needed support for most of the participants. Some interviewees reported negative experiences with their peers, but, overall, the participants viewed the cohort as necessary to their success. Hickory (26, Hispanic, 1st year) summarized this idea well: “When I first applied to the program, somebody told me that the best part of the program would be the cohort experience, and the worst part of the program would be the cohort experience.” Many of the participants likened the cohort to a sort of family, complete with conflict as well as loving support. Hickory also stated: “You know, just like with all families we’ve had our disagreements, we’ve had our arguments. But that represents 5% of the time. The other times have been very rewarding and engaging as well.” Daisy (29, African American, 2nd year) also compared her cohort experience to a family-type group. For example, she stated: “We have a good relationship. We are supportive of one another, we cheer one another on, we do things outside of class….and it really feels like we’ve created a mini-family.” Further, Olive (32, African American, 1st year) described her cohort experience
as possessing positive and negative qualities of a family. She stated: “I think it’s just like the connections that you get have positive results from support, but also just like a family you get sick of each other.” Finally, Poppy (29, Hispanic, ABD) says having a cohort that was like a family helped her get through the really tough parts of her program: “It’s a cohort system, so that was very helpful. We’re like a family, like we really hate each other and love each other sometimes, but at the end we still help each other out.”

Most participants spoke highly of a cohort system and feeling an automatic support system for this phase of their education. Aspen (28, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, comprehensive examinations) credited his peers with allowing him to succeed. He praised them in the following statement: “There’s no way I could have survived this long and this far in my program without them.” His group often got together for social gatherings outside of the program, and this community-building helped Aspen cope when his doctoral experience became overwhelming. Rose (45, African American, ABD) also talked about how her peers were very supportive when it came to the educational experience:

We have a very cohesive relationship, very supportive. From time to time we do study groups, and help each other during the dissertation process. We had two members who did not pass their comprehensive exam…so we all sort of rallied around those students.

Endine (44, Black/Afro-Caribbean, 2nd year), too, relied on her cohort when her feelings of being discriminated against surfaced; she was able to talk with them honestly about what was happening and how she would handle it. She explained:

I would say for the cohort I am with, and the one before me, they are very open, very encouraging. They were aware of what was happening, and so they were more encouraging. It was like I was one of the group.
It is unknown how Endine’s experience with negativity in the program would have affected her progress had it not been for the support of her peers. Zinnia (25, Filipino, 1st year), Iris (34, Black, 3rd year), and Camellia also positively assessed the benefits of their cohorts, saying that social events, talking through program events and activities, and other gatherings were helpful. Camellia (32, Black, 3rd year) stated:

Everyone is really helpful, extremely helpful…Some of us have been there longer than others, and we just really try and help each other out and get to each other and use each other as a resource, giving support when things really seem stressful and kind of overwhelming.

Unfortunately, two of the participants reported outright hostility or exclusion from their academic peers. Such treatment from fellow students stood out to Fir and Oak, who both felt like they had made an effort to integrate themselves into the group. When asked about his relationship with peers, Fir (30, Black, 2nd year) said:

It started out good with two [peers, but] coming in I really did start to feel like the blacksheep. I was seeing some sort of that competitive edge people had. It was a lot of questioning, but it wasn’t... like “Oh, let me get to know you.” It was more like “I want to know what you do, that way I need to know if we’re writing a paper together, or what classes we’re going to sit next to each other in.” I could kind of feel you really don’t want to know me, you want to know what I can offer for your CV.

Fir perceived his peers as ultra-competitive and judging of others, especially him, in the group. He felt like assumptions were made about his work ethic and ability from the initial point of contact with his doctoral peers. After his first year, Fir decided that leaving doctoral study would be a better choice than remaining in the hostility and judgment coming from the program. When he changed his mind and committed to finishing, he experienced open hostility from his peers. For example, he shared:

…I could also see some people were happy about [me leaving]. That’s fine. When I came back,…one person pulled me aside and said “When I heard you
had left I felt, I laughed and I thought it was funny because all I ever hear is 
you’re lazy and you never get your work done.’”

Many of the assumptions and ideas surrounding his work ethic came from the faculty, in 
Fir’s perception. Despite earning a high grade point average, people viewed him as lazy 
and unfit for doctoral work. His experience underscored the outdated idea that students 
who leave study simply were not able to do the work; Fir was quite able, yet negativity 
and program climate pushed him to leave doctoral study, albeit temporarily.

Oak (35, African American, ABD) faced a negative climate as well, even though 
he perceived it as directed only to him. He reported enthusiastic attempts to work with 
others on projects and to be involved with his peers. However, his attempts were 
rebuffed, as exemplified when he stated:

When I think cohort I think of a team, you know? So I was looking to 
lean on team members for certain things, and so I think it’s a cohort in name and 
not a cohort necessarily, or a cohort in how one matriculates through the program, 
and not necessarily a cohort in the sense that you have members working together 
and collaborating.

More succinctly, he surmised that his cohort had no “cohortness.” His self-proclaimed 
personality was one of persevering and staying focused on his goals in order to be a 
change agent in counselor education as a faculty member.

Two participants reported feeling the need or desire to form a sort of pact or 
group within a cohort to help each other and to truly understand the challenges facing 
each other as racial/ethnic minority students. Amaryllis (34, African American, ABD) 
encountered discriminatory practices from faculty members regarding her work; this 
experience pushed her to form an alliance with her fellow African American students for 
support when these types of incidents occurred. She explained as follows:
There were four African American students in the program. Three of us were women, one was a guy, and we just developed a pact amongst us to get each other through; and basically that would be calling each other on a regular basis or even if there was some time that fell through, just making an effort to reach out and say “Hey, where are you? We haven’t heard from you in a while. How are you doing?”…Because, you know, it was a really isolating journey and a lot of times [we] didn’t feel understood as individuals.

Amaryllis implied that without the support of her peers, and specifically peers from a similar racial/ethnic background, her progress through the doctoral program would be much more difficult.

Forsythia (33, African American, comprehensive examinations) believed grouping with other racial/ethnic minority students would be beneficial when studying at a PWI. Being with others who understood your perspective and experience would enhance the overall experience. She declared:

I feel like as an African American- you know, you can’t be friends with people just because of their color- but I feel like there should be a camaraderie between us as African American students, and there’s not any follow-up in the program….Because I think as [African Americans] we should be able to support each other and help each other.

Given the focus on White culture and norms at PWIs, and the higher number of White students in associated programs, it seemed like a reasonable idea for racial/ethnic minority students to want to band together to get through their educational experiences. They would have different views and perspectives that they could more comfortably express with people who faced similar challenges at PWIs.

The participants looked to peers for support and encouragement throughout their doctoral experience. Most of the participants in this study felt that support, despite minor conflicts and disagreements; however, two participants felt excluded and negativity coming from their peers, which hindered their success.
4.8.2 Isolation/Connection.

In 2005, Bryant et al. studied racial/ethnic minority faculty in counselor education programs and found that many feel alienation from colleagues and invisibility, as if their input on department culture did not factor as heavily as their White counterparts’. As discussed previously, at other times racial/ethnic minority faculty felt the effects of tokenism and devaluation of their thoughts and goals. Tinto (1975/1987) emphasized the need for students to feel integrated into the school or program’s mission and community to succeed. Further, Nettles found in 1990 that Black students reported feeling isolated and discriminated against in higher education. Three of the participants in this study spoke about the time it took to merge into the cohort or their peer group; the time in-between transitioning to a doctoral program and feeling comfortable with the students caused feelings of isolation. Seven participants reported experiences, both good and bad, of connection or networking with faculty.

While these participants indicated overall positive experiences with their peers eventually, they had feelings of isolation and disconnection in the beginning of their doctoral program. Such feelings of being alone in the process affected their success because they lacked support upon starting an intense academic endeavor. Forsythia (33, African American, comprehensive examinations) talked about her experience:

I came in at a weird time and didn’t really have the support that I needed because I was kind of like in the middle of the students that were about to graduate. So I came, I started, and I was taking classes with them. Then there were new students, so I kind of felt like I was in the middle, until I got along further in the program.

Later, she advised incoming students, especially minority students, to find a support system early in the program, as follows:
I would say more [importantly] for students of color, because it can be isolating, especially where we’re at in the [city], because it’s a predominantly White town. There’s the college and then there’s cornfields out here…It can be an adjustment if you’re not used to it, so you have to have those contacts of support, you need to make sure you keep that going.

Forsythia put words into action to signal her emphasis of getting connected to the group. She tried to get the doctoral students together to build community and lessen isolation for everyone, since her campus combines online instruction with brick-and-mortar classrooms. For example, she stated:

I had actually tried to start a doc student…support group where we can get together and…we can talk about school stuff if you want, but just to talk about whatever’s going on, how we’re handling being in a doc program with everything else going on in our lives, that type of thing, because I think it’s just needed.

Unfortunately, not many students were able to attend the group, although some made sacrifices to be there to gain the support of their peers.

Zinnia (25, Filipino, 1st year) also felt disconnected from her doctoral community when she started her program. She explained: “I started in January; I kind of felt out of place starting in the middle of the year, because some people started last semester and some people started this semester.” Her program organized student mentors for each incoming doctoral student; Forsythia found this very helpful for her to feel part of the program. Starting her doctoral study as a part-time student, Myrtle (31, African American, 3rd year) felt isolated from her peers who attended full-time. She shared her experience as follows:

I started part-time; that was kind of difficult at first because the program is geared toward full-time students, so I didn’t really have…the peer cohort experience at first. So that made it hard, because a lot of times I felt like…they’d be doing things as a group, and I’d be kind of doing things by myself….So I guess…the first year I felt, you know, disconnected from everybody.
Once she changed to full-time status, Myrtle felt much more integrated into the peer group.

Several participants talked about having a connection or networking with faculty for collaborative opportunities. Daisy (29, African American, 2nd year) found this problematic as far as equalizing opportunity for all students. She offered her opinions:

You find what you can, and that is a problem that I think all of the students kind of feel with our faculty. You know, [school] has a website, like a university-wide website that…lists some TAs that come open. Other times you just have to happen to have faculty connections or just know people on campus or just get lucky.

Zinnia (25, Filipino, 1st year) echoed this idea: “You have to know people. You have to network even within the college.” Both participants recognized the need to put themselves into situations in which they would be offered opportunities to work with faculty.

Aspen (28, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, comprehensive examinations) felt a strong, affirming connection with his advisor, which determined his application to his current doctoral program. He described his advisor’s influence:

They offered me good financial compensation…But at the end of the day I just really felt really comfortable with my advisor. I felt like he was looking out for me….I felt like he was going to really take care of me….I just felt like some connection…I felt like we already have a connection so I actually ended up coming here.

He was lucky in that he felt a connection even before beginning doctoral study, and this feeling positively influenced his success in the program. Fir (30, Black, 2nd year), on the other hand, did not feel connected to his advisor, which contributed to his temporary decision to leave doctoral study. For example, he shared:

Ironically for me there’s been very little contact with faculty. Like pretty much
the faculty person I really do speak with is my advisor, and even then, at times, I have hesitancy, really, in speaking with her because I feel like she is so busy, things get overlooked or misconstrued. So it’s, to a point, left a bitter taste in my mouth.

Fir indicated feeling isolated from his peers, too. Begonia (29, African American, ABD) also felt like her faculty members did not assist her progress, which caused her to feel alone. As an example of her experience, she stated:

You don’t have anybody to stand up for you and…really make strong recommendations, because they’re either indifferent to you or you haven’t had much time with them, because they’re your fourth advisor and they can only do so much. So you just kind of really feel isolated.

She also believed the division between the counseling and counseling psychology departments as well as the racial issues within the faculty contributed to students’ feelings of isolation.

Finally, Oak (35, African American, ABD) reported experiences of isolation and lack of connection. As stated previously, he tried to integrate himself into projects and collaborative activities only to be turned away or given evasive answers to his questions. Sometimes, it even affected what and how much programmatic information he received. For example, he stated:

I really have a lot of questions, and sometimes you don’t know what questions to ask, and some people would get the answers to those questions and sometimes they would trickle down to you and sometimes they wouldn’t. I found myself help outside of my department.

Feeling like you belong in the place you have chosen to work or learn was vitally important, and an inherent part of counseling in general. While many of the participants eventually realized their integration and involvement, several reported continued states of exclusion and disconnection. In order for any student, and especially racial/ethnic
minority students, to succeed, they must gain that feeling of belonging early and consistently throughout their doctoral study.

4.8.3 Faculty/Advisor/Mentor Support.

Many studies have addressed how relationships with faculty affect a student’s experience in college (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Feagin, 1992; Germeroth, 1991; Lovitts, 2001; Protivnak & Foss, 2009; Riddle, 2000; Tucker et al., 1964). Interactions with faculty members in general influence how a student perceives the field he or she is entering. Faculty, intentionally or not, model behaviors and attitudes for students that may be adopted by the students. Relationships with advisors and mentors can help a student succeed and thrive, or they can have a demeaning and detrimental effect on the student’s learning experience. Advisors, for the purposes of this study, are the officially assigned faculty members who are required to give guidance and advice on educational decisions and career path. Mentors, on the other hand, may or may not be the student’s official advisor, but they provide support and guidance and are chosen by students based on agreeable values and ideas (Jacobi, 1991). All nineteen participants in this study reported incidents with faculty in their departments that were both positive and negative. Some participants experienced great encouragement and direction while others fought for interaction with their advisors, and battled discouragement and general negativity. Several participants spoke to the benefits of finding a mentor when the advising relationship proved challenging and unhelpful. Also, numerous participants referred to a mentor from outside of the department or from prior experiences that nudged them in the direction of pursuing a doctoral degree in counselor education.
Ten participants reported how strong the influence of a faculty member or mentor from previous educational experiences proved to be in their choice to pursue a doctorate. Often, it was a person from their own racial/ethnic background that pushed them in the direction of doctoral study or at least put the thought in their heads. Forsythia (33, African American, comprehensive examinations) attributed her entry into graduate study to an undergraduate faculty member she worked with: “I had some other professors that were like mentors in undergraduate that were African American, and they encouraged me to go get my master’s and eventually to go get my Ph.D.” Likewise, Begonia (29, African American, ABD) encountered a supportive and inspiring professor in her undergraduate program, who guided her in the direction of the doctorate. She talked about her experience as follows:

He was an African American male, rather young….He also taught most of the multicultural classes in the psychology department. And the classes I had with him were Psychology of the African American Experience, Psychology of Race and Racism, and I really enjoyed those classes. And I really appreciated his enthusiasm for the subject, and so…his influence, I mean it wasn’t a direct influence, I never talked to him and asked him tips precisely about pursuing graduate education, but just seeing his attitude toward the academy made me interested in it.

The spark that this undergraduate professor ignited in Begonia was furthered by her current faculty who encouraged her to apply to their program.

Aspen’s (28, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, comprehensive examinations) undergraduate advisor fostered an academician professional identity in him through involving him in research and writing and other aspects of the professoriate. For example, Aspen stated: “My advisor that I had in my undergraduate [program] was a really good advisor and he really encouraged me to do a lot of research, a lot of really
good work, and he encouraged me to do graduate study.” This initial foray into academia kept Aspen motivated to continue, so when he encountered his current advisor at a conference, he was open to the idea:

The counseling program that I’m in now…I was studying abroad with my master’s program….and it culminated at a counseling conference….and I was presenting my research there….and while I was presenting there I met a professor who was presenting on something very similar….He’s now my advisor….I met him there….we talked, and found that we had similar interests.

This professor, who was also Asian, remained in contact with Aspen after the conference and offered support and opportunity to collaborate on projects. Eventually, he asked Aspen if he had applied to the program, which spurred Aspen to do just that.

Hickory (26, Hispanic, 1st year) also met a mentor at a conference, and the mentor encouraged him to apply to his program. For example, he stated: “I guess there was somebody in this program who kind of took me and mentored me at a conference before I even applied to the program. So that made a huge impact on my decision to come here.”

The professor helped Hickory with his presentations when it turned out that the co-presenters were unable to attend. Such support and assistance stood out to Hickory, and he decided to apply. Fir (30, Black, 1st year) was asked directly by a professional colleague whether he would consider doctoral work:

She asked me “Where do you see yourself in five years? What is it that you want to do?” And this is me just meeting her, and it amazed me because I love that kind of question anyway, and she liked my answer so she said ‘Just letting you know, I’m Dr. [So-and-So] and I’m at [University], and I think you should apply.

Since he had already considered a Ph.D. prior to this conversation, this exchange with his colleague served as a catalyst in his career; she ended up becoming his advisor.
Poppy (29, Hispanic, ABD) was fortunate to have a mentor that helped her and other students actually see what a doctoral program looked like and what the surrounding community felt like. Such hands-on experiences provided a normality or comfort that enabled her to follow through on her decision to pursue a doctorate. She shared her experience:

One of my professors from the university I attended, which is for real an HSI….He really encouraged all of us to go, and he took us on a field trip over here, and he’s like “I want you guys to see.”…You know what? I’d say he was one of the ones, too, that really pushed me to do it.

Poppy and the other students presented here really benefited from having a connection to doctoral study, and to see people who represented their racial/ethnic identities in positions in academia.

The difference between mentor and advisor was felt by at least 11 participants. About half of them reported positive experiences with their advisor, while the other half told of neglect or hostility in the relationship. Several participants summed up this idea with statements indicating they had an official advisor but used unofficial mentors or other faculty members to get what they needed:

*Forsythia (33, African American, comprehensive examinations)*: “I have one assigned advisor, but I go to different professors to get different information or advisement.”

*Rose (45, African American, ABD)*: “I have [one advisor]. I rarely utilize her, but I’ve had one advisor.”

*Camellia (32, Black, 3rd year)*: “Well I have the assigned advisor, but I have another professor that I tend to work with.

Myrtle and Daisy expressed satisfaction with their advisor, but that they also employed mentors to enhance their experience. Myrtle (31, African American, 3rd year) stated:
My advisor, I had a good relationship with her, and there was another professor who kind of reached out to me. He’s African American, and I guess he would check on me at times, and see how I was doing.

Similarly, Daisy (29, African American, 2\textsuperscript{nd} year) stated: “While I have one official advisor, I’ve really been able to email or call on or meet with all of the faculty for just different projects and different questions that I have.” Both Myrtle and Daisy felt fortunate to feel supported by more faculty members than just their advisor.

Focusing on the advising relationship, four participants reported hostile encounters and demoralizing attitudes compared with three participants who told of positive relationships. Rose’s (45, African American, ABD) advisor was one of two professors who gave her ambiguous but negative feedback about her performance. As an example, she stated: “The advisor that I have is actually one of the professors that gave me the not-well-received feedback. I’ve made a conscious effort to kind of distance myself.” Rose was open to constructive criticism, and, in fact, welcomed it, but her experience with this person proved harmful to her academic journey and inner confidence.

Amaryllis (34, African American, ABD) faced intense negativity from her department and advisor. During her program she was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and sought counsel from her advisor about ways to navigate the program with this diagnosis. Unfortunately, her advisor was less than willing to help her continue. She shared:

I had one official advisor…he was the professor of some of my courses…I would describe him as a little aloof….He wasn’t my favorite person. At one point I was advised to drop the program, and I guess I need to back up, because you asked if I had a disability. I don’t consider it a disability, but I do have a formal diagnosis of ADHD which is on record at school, so I guess it is a disability for the purposes
of this study. And when that diagnosis was solidified, and when I went to process that with my advisor, there was a recommendation to consider a less scholarly program.

Her oppressive encounters did not cease with this advisor, whom she avoided after her experience with him. She explained that at one point in her program, the climate was generally hostile, which was attributed to the dean’s influence. During this time, however, the negativity was directed toward her in blatant ways. She shared some examples:

The dean at one point was my dissertation chair, but when I didn’t progress at the speed that she wanted me to progress, she basically dropped me and told everybody else to drop me. I learned about a year ago from another professor, after the dean was gone, that she pretty much put it out there “Don’t touch [Amaryllis], she’s not ready.” When I would reach out for help, the help was not available. People would probably not respond to the email or drag their feet on the email or create hurdles for me to jump over.

Although the counseling field teaches acceptance and helpfulness, Amaryllis’ experience proved this to be untrue in her program. Thankfully, she finally secured an advisor who was supportive and helpful to her in her journey. Her experience was as follows:

The current program chair has always been a great supporter, even down to today when I finally got the nerve to ask for letters of recommendation. You know, in my question I said something about “I’m fully aware there have been bumps in my journey, but I feel as though they have equipped me to be a really good educator.”…When I got to my email, he was so gracious and so edifying and basically said “You know you’ve done well, please flush out anything you might think or feel that’s contrary to that. If we need to talk for you to undo that narrative, let’s do that.”

It was not acceptable that a program’s hostile infrastructure would affect a student trying to make her way; fortunately Amaryllis’ program reconfigured in time for some damage to be undone.
Begonia’s (29, African American, ABD) advisor proved no better than Amaryllis’ first advisor. When Begonia would go for advice and guidance, her advisor perpetually placed the questions back onto Begonia. These useless encounters with her advisor influenced Begonia to switch advisors eventually. She stated:

I was trying to see what she thought the breakdown [of internship hours] should be, and it…was a really difficult conversation, because every time I would ask her something, she would say “Well what do you think?”…Not with an attitude, but like it’s a test, like can I get the right answer. So I said “I don’t know. That’s why you’re the advisor and I’m not.”

Begonia found a mentor from another department who proved to be more helpful and supportive of her pursuit of the Ph.D.: “She’s been the one person who has been like what a mentor is supposed to be like in terms of supporting you and encouraging you.”

Forsythia (33, African American, comprehensive examinations) faced the political challenge of changing advisors in her program. Her initial advisors were not ideal from her perspective, and they often “bumped heads” on decisions and ideas. In order to change advisors, however, the student had to confront the original person to get permission. As may be expected, Forsythia claimed this caused unnecessary awkwardness, so she and others chose to keep the official advisor and seek help elsewhere. For example, she explained:

It’s politics, so I just went ahead and kept her, but I just utilize a lot of professors to talk about a lot of things, and she doesn’t care. She’s still technically my advisor on paper, but I’ve learned how to go to other people to talk about different things.

In fact, she advised incoming students of color to find professors who are helpful and supportive: “And to find mentors, also. I contacted a couple when I was in college, and
made contact with some other professors, not just African American, but professors of color, just to keep the network in contact.”

Not every participant had bad experiences with advisors. Tulip (24, bi-racial, 2\textsuperscript{nd} year) praised her advising relationship: “So far I think everything’s been really good….My advisor has been wonderful and definitely very supportive of me.” Fir (30, Black, 2\textsuperscript{nd} year), likewise, reported a good working relationship with his advisor:

One thing I will give my advisor credit for, she knows I don’t like just extra work. So if it benefits me, yes put me on it. But if it truthfully has no benefit for me, it’s more [of] I’m finishing your work for you as a professor, that’s not something I like to do, so she respects me in that fact.

Aspen’s (28, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, comprehensive examinations) relationship with his advisor moved beyond a simple working relationship into more of a friendship. He stated: “The relationship I have with my advisor is like…he’s really funny….I mean, you know, [another professor] is cracking jokes…in class about the relationship I have with my advisor.” He went on to say that it is not only fun and joking. For example, he stated:

He drives me nuts with all the work he makes me do, and all the faculty know that, and our office manager, she knows, and the classes know that he’s particularly harder on me than he is on other folks….But I know from my faculty and from my other doc students that he doesn’t offer [opportunities] to everybody. The fact that he’s offering to me is, I know he’s looking out for me, and I know he means well.

Aspen’s experience has been one in which his advisor has also been a mentor; his pursuit of the Ph.D. has been adequately supported and encouraged from within the program.

4.8.4 Family.

The influence of family on the participants’ doctoral experiences was also noteworthy as a subtheme. Nine participants credited their parents, grandparents,
brothers, sisters, or spouses as influencing their decision to return to school for a Ph.D. Five spoke to the additional support provided by family, or to the challenges that family posed to their success. Overall, family had a large presence throughout the interviews.

When asked who or what influenced their decision to pursue a doctorate, nine participants claimed family members were at least one main reason. Oak (35, African American, ABD) reported that his grandparents, as well as his family at large, were instrumental in his decision:

I was always driven or inspired to pursue higher education by my grandparents, [they] really instilled in me at a young age to take advantage of opportunities that they weren’t necessarily afforded, and so that’s where it began….It was my parents as well, but you know the stories that some of our “old folks” tell us, it really stuck with me when I was young. That’s not to slight anything. My parents certainly encouraged me with any type of education. So I would say my family.

Zinnia (25, Filipino, 1st year) also credited her parents for their family and cultural influence on her education. For example, she stated: “Oh my family, my parents. Education is very important to them. They come from the Philippines, a third world country, so education is everything to them, a value they instilled.” Further, Olive (32, African American, 1st year) stated her immediate family pushed her to follow the path she had chosen from a young age: “I knew I wanted to be called ‘Doctor’ even at seven [years old], I don’t know where that came from. And then, my mother and my grandmother and my brother influenced me to keep going.” Her brother modeled a successful educational and career path, so his influence was both direct and indirect.

Laurel’s (27, Polish/Jew, ABD) husband was the supporting factor in her doctoral experience, while her parents instilled the value of education. She explained it as follows: “I think it goes back to my parents really prioritizing education as being
important, but I think that I’m very grateful that they did, but I think mostly the support of my husband was really instrumental.” Hickory (26, Hispanic, 1st year) came from a highly educated and degreed family, so his family culture has been one of obtaining the highest degree in a given field. This challenged his Hispanic heritage, which has faced barriers to educational success in this country.

Well, my family, I don’t come from a traditional Hispanic family. By that I mean I’m aware of the statistics that show 3.6% of Hispanics obtain doctoral degrees and so forth. In my family, the norm was an advanced degree. As I told you, my grandpa was a lawyer. There are six people with law degrees, medical degrees, somebody who has a degree in pharmacy, so the expectation was always there that I wasn’t going to just get a bachelor’s [degree], but at least a master’s [degree].

Hickory went on to talk about how his family ties influenced his choice of program:

“Similar to other Hispanic families, I’m very close to my family….So I wanted to remain close to home.” Fir, Tulip, Amaryllis, and Daisy also emphasized the influence of their families on their decision to pursue a Ph.D. in counselor education.

Following their entry into doctoral study, three participants mentioned how supportive their families were during the process. Forsythia (33, African American, comprehensive examination s) relied upon her family for support during her dissertation. She disclosed: “I know at this point with working and trying to get my dissertation done, I’m going to have to have some support. My family does that, too, because they’re really supportive of me doing that.” Olive (32, African American, 1st year) leaned on her family for social support in the beginning of her program, when she had moved away from home and knew few people: “I definitely pull into myself more, and I’ll talk to more familiar people because I have a great support system within, as we talked about, within my family. I still talk to my family on a regular basis.” Finally, Hickory (26, Hispanic,
1st year) followed the example of Forsythia and Olive, and relied on external sources of support to get through the program. For example, he stated the following:

I’m fortunate I had other support. Without that support, I probably would have internalized all of that and who knows what would have happened. So that support, that additional support from the outside was vital to keeping me and helping me get where I am today.

Poppy and Amaryllis both spoke about how their families posed challenges to their academic progress. Poppy’s (29, ABD) Hispanic heritage placed women in the home as mother and family-builder. This cultural norm surfaced in her family and challenged her when she made the decision to pursue an advanced degree, away from home. She reported her experience:

My personal life changed. I no longer have my family to be around. I come from a very, very large family, and it was hard for them to let me come here. I know that I’m grown, but I’m still not married or anything like that. And culturally, it’s not really acceptable that I’m over here. So I not only had the pressure of the class work and getting in assignments, but the pressure [of] constantly being told “When are you going to come home? Why haven’t you come home?”….So I had to really explain….even though I’m over here studying…so that’s been a challenge I think.

Poppy found comfort in her cohort and with her faculty, who were very understanding of the cultural pressures she faced.

Amaryllis (34, African American, ABD) was a mother and wife, so her duties to her family sometimes interfered with the demands of the program. She realized the requirements of her professors and thoroughly understood the syllabus for each class, knowing that her life choices might cost her some points. She spoke of specific incidents when her family life might conflict with academics:

One thing I would say is that as an adult student taking an online course, I viewed my syllabus as my informed consent. So if a professor said “If you turn in a paper late, you’re going to be docked a point”, or whatever the case may be, when I had
to turn a paper in late or if I chose to turn a paper late, I did that with the knowledge of what that as going to be….and there were times when I made a conscious effort to turn something in late. Maybe my son had a football game, or maybe I had to take my daughter somewhere, and I felt like that was looked upon negatively.

Amaryllis’ family came before her academic program, so she felt fine with her choice to sacrifice a point in a class in order to be a mother to her children. In fact, later she said: “I was really focused on being a mom and wife and the degree was kind of like [low priority comparatively].”

The participants in this study viewed family as providing the necessary foundation for valuing education as well as the support to get through the doctoral program. Sometimes personal and cultural factors interfered and placed added pressure on the students, but they did not diminish the role family played in their doctoral experience.

4.8.5 Funding.

The scholarly literature is replete with the effects of funding on doctoral students’ experiences and success (Berelson, 1960; Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Lovitts, 2001; Nettles, 1990; Willie, Grady, & Hope 1991). It has been found that students are more successful when they have financial assistance for their studies; students who must work outside of a graduate program face barriers to completing study. Sources of funding such as assistantships or fellowships affect the outcomes differently, but it is clear that having funding is strongly related to success. Surprisingly, the participants in this study indicated that the funding issue was equal across races/ethnicities, even if that meant that no one was receiving anything. One person also observed that racial/ethnic minorities
had more opportunities for funding. They spoke of the need for funding, how it affected their opportunities, and how to secure funding.

Ten participants believed funding to be fair across students, and, of those ten, several talked about how helpful the program was in securing financial assistance. Oak (35, African American, ABD), despite feeling inequality elsewhere in his program, observed funding opportunities to be spread equally throughout the student body, and that faculty helped secure finances to complete the degree. He stated his view as such:

Fortunately our department has a really good or a really strong relationship with funding resources, and so because some of our professors have been there for a while, they’ve been able to build and acquire some of the funding for our program that’s very beneficial. So pretty much anyone, just about, who wants an assistantship can just about get one, and that was really one of the draws to the university, to be able to get funding like that. It was for me….It’s very important; it plays an important role for the sustainability of the program because it’s for recruitment purposes….So with regard to funding, I’d say it’s been equal across races, genders, sexuality, and all of the above, because everybody I know who has wanted an assistantship has been able to get one.

Holly (32, Panamanian, Jamaican, Irish, Cuban, comprehensive examinations) also perceived equality when it comes to doctoral study funding. When asked if she saw any differences in how White students versus students of color got funding, she said: “No, I don’t see that at all, because they take care of everybody.” Additionally, Camellia (32, Black, 3rd year) believed all students had the same access to funding: “I don’t think it boils down to race at all. I’ve seen a diverse group of students taking advantage of those opportunities.”

Myrtle (31, African American, 3rd year) explained how students receive funding in her program. Every student had equal opportunity and they all get offered some sort of compensation. She explains further:
When you come in full-time, everyone is offered that, where they’ll pay your tuition and you’re offered a graduate assistantship in the department. So that’s kind of a given, once you get in you get that….I know when I came in, our advisor, she was very helpful about sending out information and job postings and things like that….Basically, when you come in full-time you get your tuition paid, and then they’ll help you.

Aspen’s (28, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, comprehensive examinations) experience with financial assistance was also one of fairness and help. He observed his department to allot finances to every student to help them progress. He stated: “Typically our department has been able to get every student who applies for it, or has been nominated, has been able to get every student placed.” Zinnia, Tulip, Endine, Rose, and Olive all reported similar stories of equality when it came to funding.

By contrast, several participants divulged instances in which funding was unequal or the department failed to help them secure it. Forsythia and Fir told of minority scholarships or tuition waivers that assisted with recruitment and retention of racial/ethnic minorities.

_Forsythia (33, African American, comprehensive examinations):_ I want to say it’s equal, that’s how I feel, because they have that internship waiver. So anybody that decides to take internship can get their tuition paid for, so it’s not like it’s based on your status as far as your ethnicity is concerned. Though one of my professors was saying, she’s a White female, like if some of the White students ran out of loans like I did…they wouldn’t be able to apply for that diversity fellowship to get the money from that to be able to continue. So, I don’t know, there might be more funding opportunities for students of color than there are for White students.

_Fir (30, Black, 2nd year):_ That’s one thing as far as I know at least is handled fairly and equally, where we’re all pretty much receiving a scholarship, we all get a tuition waiver, but then even though, well maybe I guess it’s not as fairly. I know minorities in the program get an additional waiver, one for being a minority, so I don’t necessarily know if those that are Caucasian even know about that.

It should be noted that Forsythia and Fir came from two different programs.
Poppy (29, Hispanic, ABD) did not feel like her department did enough to help her and other students finance their education, and she vocalized these concerns:

I have gotten into some arguments with my professors because they’re like “We need you to publish, we need you to publish.” And I said “Well how do you expect me to publish when I have to work, and you guys expect so much from us and yet you don’t help us out.” Because there’s always a way, and we are in an HSI, and I’m sure there’s a grant that could be written, or I’m sure that there’s money allocated that is going somewhere else….There is not that help.

Her frustration was evident as she told this story, although her complaints about funding seemed to have little to do with discriminatory practices based on race or ethnicity.

Begonia (29, African American, ABD) did think race/ethnicity played into her experiences with funding, since her state repealed the affirmative action laws; universities are now not permitted to award race-based scholarships or funding. For example, she stated:

So they tell you to apply for [funding awards], but it was less money and then, you know, you have all those stipulations, and so now in [state] with that new law…the “No Affirmative Action”,…so that funding is kind of screwy, so it’s just really competitive.

Daisy (29, African American, 2nd year) also experienced competitive funding, but she had the added pressure of being left to find various funding sources on her own. She reported that it was almost like an additional test or learning experience in the program:

It’s really [like] you find what you can, and that is a problem that I think that all of the students kind of feel with our faculty….I mean it’s just like there’s no advocacy in that area for us. If we find funding great; if we don’t have funding it almost looks bad on you.

She talked about how one year a student may have funding and the next year it would be taken away for someone else. Students remained alert to this potentiality and needed to constantly be looking for ways to finance their education. While funding was certainly
an important factor in the students’ pursuit of a Ph.D., it appeared, from these participant’s stories, that funding had been mostly equal in their programs.

Support was a major theme that emerged from the interviews. All of the participants had something to say about various forms of support, whether it be related to peers, faculty, family, or funding. It was clear that support factored into the doctoral experience to ensure success.

4.9 Voice

Voice is a central tenet of CRT; under this theory, marginalized groups are provided space to express their “counter-stories” (Delgado, 1995a; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Inquiring about what racial/ethnic minorities perceive about their program may challenge some common narratives about diversity in counselor education. The overall purpose of this study was to create a space for racial/ethnic minority doctoral students to present their experiences and perceptions of their programs. However, voice also emerged from the data as a theme; participants expressed gratitude and appreciation for the study being done, their stories with feeling able or unable to voice concerns about their programs, and feeling like their racial/ethnic group was represented in counselor education.

4.9.1 Study Support.

Seven participants voiced support for the study being conducted and the need for this type of research in counselor education. Some thought it would spur future research in the same area, while some thought it would enhance training of and practice by counselors. Further, some spoke about the significance of a White person conducting the research, and how that might be heard differently by people in power. In 2003,
Bergerson emphasized the need for more White people to be involved with issues regarding race and ethnicity, since White people are also racialized. She reiterated the point that White researchers who immerse themselves into studies on power and institutional racial/ethnic issues can provide a different credibility or recognition of such problems. Often, she says, racial/ethnic minorities are not heard properly or taken seriously, with claims that they might hold resentment for historical injustices. Reform and conversations surrounding equality can only benefit from all groups participating.

Upon being asked if there was anything else each participant wanted to share about their experience, several took the opportunity to express appreciation of the study. Fir (30, Black, 2nd year) believed the fact that a White person was executing the research and writing the articles created additional legitimacy, and that such issues would gain more prominent recognition in the field.

I’m very happy that you’re doing this study….I told you my experience in the class where many of the articles on multiculturalism or minority issues are not necessarily in the mainly peer-reviewed journal articles or the more esteemed ones. And I said I’m also finding that those have also been written by a minority, so I said hopefully now the voice will get out there even because it’s not written by a minority person specifically. You are a minority in the sense that you’re female, but I have a feeling that, because you’re Caucasian, that will help.

While this study was attempting to examine the perceptions of racial/ethnic minorities in counselor education, the fact that a participant felt like minorities get pushed aside or disregarded with equally legitimate ideas and research was troubling.

Aspen (28, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, comprehensive examinations) also voiced appreciation of the research at the end of his interview. He shared many experiences, both positive and negative, in his doctoral program, and he was hopeful for the future. For example, he stated: “Thanks for the opportunity; I enjoyed it. I didn’t
hesitate at all to participate. I really think this is good stuff what you’re doing. It’s kind of disappointing that there’s not more of it.” Oak (35, African American, ABD) saw the need for continuation of research on the experiences of racial/ethnic minority students, and wanted his voice to be heard:

That’s why I jumped at the opportunity to participate in your study, to be able to add my experiences in the hopes that it would hopefully generate future research in this area. Specifically, yeah, it’s almost like before we go espousing these things, let’s do a self-check first.

He affirmed the assumptions behind the study, that counselor education claims multicultural competence yet does not always demonstrate it.

At several points in her interview, Camellia (32, Black, 3rd year) welcomed the research and related it to her future research interests. After she shared a particularly tense moment in which someone presented on racial issues and was shut down by the professor, Camellia used it to support the need for such research: “So I definitely see a need to do some more research around, you know, [racial/ethnic minority experiences] in general, and I hope to do some research also around this as well.” Camellia referred someone to participate in the study, so we talked briefly about how many people wanted to participate. The high numbers of respondents caused her to say: “Yeah, I think it’s definitely worth exploring, it’s important to the field. It’s just important and needs to get looked at to see what are the implications once it’s all said and done, and how to move forward.”

Hickory (26, Hispanic, 1st year) talked about the need for multicultural issues to move to the forefront of counselor education curriculum, although, he said, there are so many topics that should be in the forefront. He expressed validation for his idea through
this study: “By you doing your dissertation on this topic,…I believe it’s important and that your faculty, your chair, believes it’s important as well. I appreciate that you’re doing this study.” Rose (45, African American, ABD) also thought this study would benefit the training of counselors and supervisors. She explained:

I would say that this study that you’re doing is very important. I think that having more studies like this would be very useful for counselors-in-training, and those supervising counselors to better get a sense of these needs and increase a dimension of cultural competence, and that even in terms of cultural competence and race, people can, who are African American, have membership in many different sub-cultural groups. And so studies like these are very important, and I do appreciate you doing it.

Finally, Tulip (24, bi-racial, 2\textsuperscript{nd} year) echoed the same aforementioned sentiments regarding appreciation of this study. She expressed it as follows:

But I just want to say thank you for doing this research, because it is something that’s very important for our field, well fields everywhere, but especially our field because I’m in it. And I think that it’s great that you’re doing this, and that hopefully we won’t have to be asking people what their experience is like in 20 years, because it will just be the same as everyone’s.

So many participants’ gratitude and appreciation of the merits of the study point to the need for marginalized groups to have more voice in their programs and higher education in general.

4.9.2 Student Expression.

The subtheme of student expression involved the ability of students to speak out in their program for their own needs or about something that is not satisfactory for larger numbers of students. The ability to speak out depended on many things, program climate and student personality being two components. Tinto (1975/1987) talked about the importance of students feeling integrated into their schools, or feeling like they are important to the school’s success and mission statement. Bryant et al. (2005) wrote about
the “Mammy” and “Sapphire” mischaracterizations of African American women; Mammy sacrificed her needs and wants for the sake of others, while Sapphire spoke out, only to be labeled as aggressive and angry.

Five participants reported times when they felt like they could speak out with their opinions, versus times when they felt stifled. As previously discussed, Oak (35, African American, ABD) did not feel integrated with his cohort, and many times felt excluded. He decided to confront the issue by bringing it up with the department, as he explained: “It’s something that I’ve actually brought up when they’ve asked about it, and with regard to that. I told them that it was a cohort model that had no cohortness to it.” Other times, he observed discussions surrounding race being silenced by the faculty as well as the students. It was not explicit, but more like people would not offer their opinions on the topic. He spoke about his experience: “It seems that even when no particular place with race or ethnicity would come up in the context of the existential course, it would literally get silenced! To the point where you could hear the crickets creaking, you know!” His frustration with the closed atmosphere regarding issues of diversity did not outweigh his desire to avoid stereotyping of racial/ethnic minorities. He carefully chose how much and what he wanted to say in such discussions. Despite his caution at being a minority who talked about minority issues at a PWI, Oak believed the program perceived him as “a bit of a boat-rocker, because I will say some of the things that other people are afraid to say, and touch on topics that other people see as sensitive.”

Aspen (28, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, comprehensive examinations) also felt comfortable enough in his doctoral program to bring up issues with which he was unhappy. During one of his courses, which he was taking late in the sequence, he
realized how out of place it was in relation to the rest of the course placements. The course introduced how to write the dissertation, but it came before the research sequence was completed. Aspen thought it should come later, so students had all of the information to succeed in the class. He described this incident:

And ultimately they changed it, they’re going to be changing it for next year, and I like to think it was because of some of my complaining, or bitching, or whatever you want to call it. I think it had some part to do that.

Also during his doctoral program, Aspen reported feeling comfortable with his identity, enough that he could reveal his thoughts to his peers: “They know who I am, and there’s no denying who I am….now that I feel kind of comfortable with my classmates, I’ve been more honest with them about my feelings, and my opinions, my views, my perceptions of things.” Unfortunately, Aspen did not always feel able to express his frustrations or opinions. His master’s program taught him to be guarded until he felt the trust necessary for open communication. For example, he stated:

I also say if I’m not honest, if I don’t come out and be very honest, or say how I really feel, it’s because I don’t believe- I didn’t say these things in my master’s, you know, because I didn’t believe they wanted to hear it…..And I didn’t trust them.

The climate of the program must be one in which all students feel the option to express themselves and be regarded with respect, even if there is a disagreement.

Feelings of oppression played into Fir’s doctoral experience. As discussed before, Fir (30, Black, 2nd year) felt excluded from his peers and often experienced outright hostility from them. When asked how his race has affected his experiences, Fir stated:

I would say it’s greatly affected it. I feel as though some of the issues I especially would not have had if I was Caucasian. Part of that is even, I feel as though my
voice is different in the sense…of how I voice things of my viewpoint, [for example] the situation with one of my professors where she was just like “Well, obviously we’re not going to agree on this, so let’s not speak about it anymore.” So, for me, it left a bitter taste for if we’re sitting there talking about multicultural issues,…and I was giving my point of view on it, but, even then, I felt like I was being shut down because my point of view did not match her point of view of what a multicultural issue should be.

Fir’s report of this silencing experience came from an incident in which a professor refused to acknowledge his experience as a Black male. Instead, she insisted on talking only about gender and denied his viewpoint. Fir’s inner strength and strong self-identity supported his ability to speak up in the program. He described his determination as follows:

I just don’t put up with B.S.,….I have my voice and I use it, but they maybe under the guise or expectation that one that’s a minority does not use their voice. But in my background, or my family,…it was “you have your voice, you use it.” So I do use it….But to me I had to earn my way into the program, you didn’t just give it to me. So I would just use my voice.

Program climates that stifle student voices were unacceptable and created unnecessary boundaries to success.

Daisy and Begonia spoke about using their voices to speak their mind. Daisy (29, African American, 2nd year) reported that she believed her peers to perceive her as vocal and confident: “I think the students also…see me as able to speak my own mind.” She was able to respond well to confrontation by another student regarding her class presentation. Begonia (29, African American, ABD) used her voice to create awareness for incoming minority students to the doctoral program. Due to her experiences with discriminatory acts and negativity, she felt compelled to attend admissions interviews to give students her polished opinion on the program. She stated:

So I always participate in admissions, but I try to get time with the…students
alone, and I just try to, without just outright speaking negatively, just prepare them for what’s ahead, but saying as much as I can without disparaging the program.

Five participants talked about using their voices for self or other advocacy. Poppy and Hickory advocated for Hispanic culture and students with a Hispanic ethnicity.

Poppy (29, Hispanic, ABD) unexpectedly found her voice, which was much stronger and well-supported than she had anticipated, when a classmate made derogatory statements about prominent Hispanic people. She reported the event:

One of the students said that the reason some of these Hispanic leaders are successful is because they have an inferiority complex… I was not okay with that. And he mentioned that these people had been through so many bad experiences that they were going to be toxic leaders, and I didn’t know where it came from, but I guess I do know research and… I let him have it, just in a very professional way…. When I need to talk, I’ll talk.

She was proud of her ability to confront negative, stereotypical messages on cue. Her voice served to advocate for a minority group. Hickory (26, Hispanic, 1st year) also advocated for Hispanic students, but in the high school arena: “I advocate for Hispanic kids who are exposed to low expectations, and speak about some of my research and others’, so I think [my peers] see me as somebody who wants to produce change for others.”

Olive (32, African American, 1st year) advocated for herself regarding the program’s perceptions of her non-stereotypical ways: “I just said I’m not going to fit what you think I am; I’m going to be who I am and this is how it’s going to play out, so you deal with it.” Her peers expected her to adhere to stereotypical African American female characteristics of being confrontational, irrational, having a smart mouth, but Olive’s personality did not follow their expectations. Zinnia (25, Filipino, 1st year) used
her voice to get her needs met. Her program assigned mentors to incoming students, but her mentor was hard to contact. She valued the mentoring relationship potential, so she asked to have a different mentor: “I just kept bugging them, so they just ended up giving me a new mentor….I feel like I get what I need because I ask.” Similarly, Fir (30, Black, 2nd year) used his confident voice to instill change in his program. When he was treated unfairly by the professors, he decided to let people know so it could be addressed:

I’m going to have to put up a fight. I’m going to have to be that person who is that new voice, because if I want that change to occur, I then have to be the one to create that change.

When it came to feeling empowered and comfortable enough to use their voices, the participants here had mixed reviews. Some felt like they could easily speak their mind, while others felt compelled to use their voice for change. Others were definitely silenced by their programs. This was a problem that needed to be addressed.

4.9.3 Representation.

The membership numbers of ACA and statistics of doctoral degrees granted to minority students reveal underrepresentation of racial/ethnic minority groups (ACA, 2009; NCES 2009). The dominant group in counselor education is White, yet the potential clientele is highly diverse. The participants in this study verbalized the desire to see faculty members who represented their cultural heritage. Ibarra (2001) talked about how Hispanic students felt outside the mainstream at PWIs; King & Chepyator-Thompson (1996) wrote about Black students seeking Black advisors or mentors during their study. In 2008, Grant and Simmons looked at the experiences of an African American female faculty member and an African American female student. The student appreciated the mentorship she received from other African Americans, while the
professor noted the absence of role models from her culture during her initial years as a faculty member. Having mentors who represent your racial/ethnic identity, or at least a minority identity, is important for students to feel supported, develop their professional identities, and to gain tips on navigating a PWI or university setting in which they are a minority. Iris (34, Black, 3rd year) summed it up nicely: “I think in order to learn ethnic considerations, you need to learn from people from different ethnic backgrounds.”

The majority of the participants speaking about representation referred to faculty and people in positions in power; however, Aspen and Oak looked at representation in their cohorts. Both felt isolated with regard to their racial/ethnic identity. Aspen (28, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, comprehensive examinations) said: “As far as students of color…in my cohort I’m the only visibly, visibly different student.” He believed that even his name singled him out as the only Asian student. Oak (35, African American, ABD) assessed his minority status in his program:

    I know in my program, basically out of the last, the previous, let’s see…three cohorts ahead of me and now three cohorts behind me, I’ve been the only African American male….so I haven’t seen anybody who may have a similar background as myself. With regard to race and gender in the program, it really makes for, at times, a frustrating experience.

If there are no minority students in the doctoral programs, then there will be no minority faculty members in counselor education.

Seven participants stated something about the representation of their racial/ethnic identity in their faculty, or in powerful positions in general. Aspen reported a positive program climate when it came to faculty representation of diversity: “So we have a pretty diverse faculty….we have faculty that believes in it.” Rose (45, African American, ABD) also had good things to say about her program:
In my master’s program it was predominantly White; I never saw a minority professor. And now in the doc program, just the landscape of the students has changed. We are predominantly African American, and the faculty is probably, I would say, 40% African American now.

She believed her racial/ethnic group to be represented in both the faculty and students. She also served as the representative to a group of master’s students who were disgruntled with the faculty. She described her interactions with them: “I think the fact that I was African American and just related differently to the students was instrumental in them being open and able to receive the information in a different kind of way.”

Unfortunately, five participants experienced a lack of representation in their faculty and the profession. Iris (34, Black, 3rd year) believed the lack of Black professors in her experience had not been totally negative. While she would have liked to see more diversity in the field, she felt like her program measured up when it came to cultural competence: “You might not get a lot of Black professors, but that is okay that you don’t, because I think they do a good job of teaching cultural awareness.” Zinnia (25, Filipino, 1st year) expected to have a White advisor when it came time to finalize the committee: “There are really no minorities, like faculty, in the counseling program for Ph.D.” The lack of representation in counselor education spurred Holly into pursuing a doctoral degree. When asked who or what influenced her decision to pursue a doctorate, Holly (32, Panamanian, Jamaican, Irish, Cuban, comprehensive examinations) said: “Because when I was in my master’s program I didn’t have anyone who looked just like me.”

Poppy (29, Hispanic, ABD) also experienced a lack of representation of Hispanics in her counselor education faculty. When she found someone who was Hispanic and could serve as a mentor or advisor, she jumped at the opportunity. For example, she
stated: “The other person that I chose, he…was brand new and he’s the only Hispanic in our program. So I clung.” As she immersed herself in the degree and began to attend conferences and other events, Poppy realized how little Hispanic representation there was in counseling. She described her observations:

Then I came [to this university] and I started going to…conferences, and then I really started noticing, “Hey there [aren’t] a lot of Hispanics, or African Americans.” You know, especially in the big conferences like ACA…[my advisor] invited me to a conference, the National Latino Sociological Conference, and it was so awesome! It was so different because I went there and I was like “Oh! These people look like me!"

Poppy eventually found someone who she identified with, and then found an outlet through the conference for discussing her experience as a Hispanic female seeking an advanced degree and focusing on work.

The participants in this study used the opportunity to share their experiences with voice, being able or unable to speak their minds, appreciating the significance of the research, and finding people who looked like them and shared their culture. Much work needs to happen in counselor education programs to examine more closely the problems the participants presented here.

4.10 Talk the Talk, Walk the Walk

This theme emerged when participants shared ambiguous situations or events that were definitely not adhering to the multicultural competencies or professional message of welcoming diversity. However, several students assessed their faculty as competent. In 2002, Bradley and Holcomb-McCoy examined counselor education programs and minority faculty experiences. They found that racial/ethnic minority faculty members were often given tasks that were deemed “multicultural”; and the service requirements
were so much that their tenure process suffered. Protivnak and Foss (2009) found that minorities often had to negotiate their personal and professional values in order to feel part of the department. They also determined that department culture in general factored greatly into both students’ and faculty experience. Within this theme are the two subthemes of faculty behaviors, which considers what actually happens when encountering multicultural issues, and ambiguous situations, which speaks for itself.

4.10.1 Faculty Behaviors.

More than eight participants shared their opinions on how competent their faculty members were when it came to practicing multicultural competence; three participants reported failure while three witnessed success on the part of their faculty. Two of these participants saw both positive and negative behaviors from their department. Endine’s (44, Black/Afro-Caribbean, 2nd year) overall experience was fairly negative. Her perception of the faculty’s actual competence with different racial/ethnic backgrounds was low, as she stated:

I’d say with regard to faculty, even though faculty talk about the whole multicultural thing, talk about difficulties about people of color getting in the program, participating in seminars, do presentations, that’s a different ball game than practice. So awareness…doesn’t include implementation.

She had encountered professors who had told her to modify her speech because it was not acceptable in its natural patterns. Fir (30, Black, 2nd year) determined his program did not practice multiculturalism after the incident in which a professor refused to hear his point of view in a multicultural discussion: “[Afterward] I was more upset because this is coming from a Caucasian female who claims to be so multicultural and love so many cultures….truthfully I don’t see it because I felt like she was constantly shutting me
down.” When probed later about his perceptions of the faculty, Fir stated: “Do I feel like they’re walking the walk when it comes to multicultural? No, I feel like they’re not.”

Oak (35, African American, ABD) was amazed at the discrepancy between what his faculty claimed to be and what they actually exhibited. He extrapolated it to the entire profession and its claim of multicultural competence when he said:

There’s this big thing in the profession now about being social justice advocates. Well how in the world are you supposed to be a social justice advocate if you can’t even talk about the human race within the context of a counseling classroom?

His point was made that as a field we needed to examine ourselves to see if we were practicing what we taught.

Daisy (29, African American, 2nd year) experienced incompetence when her advisor failed to help her find funding, despite being targeted by the dean. Her advisor missed the deadline for the application, so she missed out on the opportunity. She explained her frustration as such:

So I just don’t think they do a good job staying in the loop for these opportunities that could arise for minority students. Then I found out about all these other awards that faculty could have nominated minority students for throughout the school year, and so that just feels kind of yucky.

Aside from the funding incident, Daisy perceived her faculty to be very welcoming of diversity. They talked the talk as far as teaching competence, but they failed to model appropriate behaviors when a conflict arose. She stated the following as an example:

So with the faculty, I think they have a handle on it. They’re culturally empathetic and all those things that we should all strive to be….But I don’t think they do a good job with modeling how else to be…they don’t provide alternatives [for handling multicultural conflict].
Aspen (28, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, comprehensive examinations) also had good and bad observations of the competence of his program faculty. He talked about the lengths the program had gone through to practice multiculturalism:

We’re the first program…to fully endorse the multicultural model, where multicultural competencies are completely part of our entire mission or our program….and in fact, for a doctoral program…every student has to take two full three-credit classes of multiculturalism.

However, when it came to his supervisors in his clinical internship, Aspen experienced cultural incompetence. He made a point to broach differences in the counseling relationship so that the session could be most helpful to the client. His supervisors did not approve of this, and instead they wanted Aspen to simply ask the formulaic questions to conduct the needs assessment. When he discussed his reasoning for his actions, the supervisors diminished the importance of diversity. Aspen explained:

They’re like ‘Oh, you’re making a bigger deal than it is.’…So in other words, you’re making it a smaller deal than it really is. In other words, you look at me and you don’t see me as different. You ignore me, and you look at me and you don’t think I bring something unique.

Their lack of awareness and willingness to learn another’s worldview countered the multicultural competencies.

Not all participants reported inept faculty when it came to diversity issues. Begonia (29, African American, ABD) praised her program: “I will add that my program…was really open to talking about race and ethnicity in classes, and its relevance to the work that we’re going to be doing.” She later recommended that the faculty would do more “debriefing” with students when the intense discussions occurred. She did not like how students were left to process by themselves. Camellia (32, Black, 3rd year) also
praised her faculty’s cultural capabilities: “I think the faculty treat us, I haven’t seen any major differences. I think the faculty are open and helpful regardless of our background.”

Olive and Poppy also celebrated their faculty’s cultural competence; they both believed their faculty walked the walk with diversity issues. Olive (32, African American, 1st year) shared this: “Most of the faculty, not all of them, seems to have had more cultural experience and lived in other places and going to other places, so they are used to seeing African Americans who are intelligent.” Likewise, Poppy (29, Hispanic, ABD) appreciated her campus for its acceptance of everyone: “Even though there are Caucasian faculty, they are so multiculturally competent that they’re just so welcoming to everybody.”

There remains work to be done to enhance the profession of counseling for all of its members and for the clientele that we serve. Faculty members must examine their own awareness as well as the program climate regarding racial/ethnic minorities.

4.10.2 Ambiguous Situations.

Feagin (1992) studied the experiences of minorities at PWIs and found that they were subjected to explicit and implicit acts of racism. Sometimes it was blatant name-calling while other times it was being refused an opportunity for unspecific reasons. The participants here reported instances in which they could not really tell what was happening, but it was affecting only them, and it felt negative.

Feedback was one area where ambiguity flourished. Amaryllis (34, African American, ABD) experienced this first-hand when she worked on a group project and the three group members received different grades. One person served as the editor for the group, smoothing the final document and blending the writing. Amaryllis and the other
minority member of the group were written up for their part on the project while the
White editor was not. Amaryllis described her perceptions below:

> The [White] editor was really sorry about the situation and couldn’t really explain, but it wasn’t for her to explain….and there’s emotions associated with it, but it doesn’t help them help you….but we did express some concern and discontent about the fact that it didn’t make sense that we would be isolated…in that particular instance…when we presented that as an issue to the professor, she just glazed over it. She wouldn’t acknowledge it.

Other than that experience, Amaryllis reported a generally positive experience.

> The first year was stressful for Endine (44, Black, Afro-Caribbean, 2\textsuperscript{nd} year), who could not figure out how she was being evaluated. Her performance goals were moving targets, and she stated the following as an example:

> I was uncertain what criteria I was being assessed on, so I didn’t know if it was [that] I need to improve my writing…I know what professors needed for me to succeed more in his class, but in general I had no idea what this additional assessment of me.

Rose (45, African American, ABD) never really understood the assessment system for her doctoral program either. For example, she stated: “When I got collective feedback it seemed to be judgmental, not very clear,…just mostly judgmental, and it really impacted me, and really made me question whether or not I even wanted to continue.” Myrtle’s (31, African American, 3\textsuperscript{rd} year) faculty and peers created ambiguity for her as well. She stated:

> If I would do something well, [it was] more of a sense of surprise…and if another student were to do something that wasn’t good, no surprise. I have felt that before. And then sometimes, when we’re in like multicultural class, some of the comments that are made are not so positive.

Holly’s (32, Panamanian, Jamaican, Irish, Cuban, comprehensive examinations) perception was that the professors were more critical of her than her peers. She worked
full-time outside of the program to support her education, but she was always punctual and performed to a high standard. However, she felt like the faculty perceived her negatively, as she stated:

It’s like they would complain that “you need to be here on time” but the person that lived down the street would come literally late. I’m on time, and they’re like “make sure you’re not late for class” and I’m like “OK, no problem, you know I work full time, drive, I’ll be here.” But it’s like I drive in traffic over there and then I get a pep-talk. That’s not fair.

When it came to working with their advisor or other opportunities, sometimes the situation was quite ambiguous. Begonia (29, African American, ABD) sought help for revising a manuscript that had been tentatively accepted for publication in a major journal. The faculty member who she contacted was unenthusiastic and deferred to Begonia’s advisor, so she never actually received any help. Further, her department was split with regard to racial climate. The African American and White faculty members were divided, per Begonia’s observation. This led to ambiguous ideas about advising. She provided an example:

I think it’s like my White peers, because in talking to one of them, she brought up the fact how people don’t even really consider the possibility of going with them choosing one of the African Americans as their chair….people make assumptions about who we’ll want to work with because of our race.

Forsythia (33, African American, comprehensive examinations) felt confused about how she was paired with her advisor. She hypothesized that advisor assignments were based on race when she stated:

I think they kind of threw me with her, and I want to say this is true, I don’t know if it is or not, that I’m an African American female and they put me with her. And the other two, two of the other African American females who are almost done, she is also their advisor.
Fir and Oak faced ambiguity with their situations and interactions with the faculty in general. Fir (30, Black, 2\textsuperscript{nd} year) oscillated between speaking out in class, and remaining silent because the faculty had told him he spoke too much. Eventually, the department had to convene to address the inconsistent messages that they were sending to Fir. He told the story:

Then that became the issue of I’m speaking too much, that it was just too much or they weren’t necessarily liking what I was saying. So my advisor said “You all have to make up your mind. Do you want him to speak or do you want him to be quiet, which is it?” But in my mind, “Is anyone else getting this? Is anyone else from my cohort getting these types of meetings and having to hear this and listen to all of this?”

Oak (35, African American, ABD) talked about how he felt excluded from opportunities, despite being active in his pursuit of collaboration. What he observed was that the White students seemed to learn about such opportunities faster and more often than he did. He explained:

It was really disturbing because there were some individuals in my cohort who…I’m going to be brutally honest, they were blond-haired, blue-eyed females who were extended opportunities right out of the door, who had no professional experience or didn’t have a wealth of even personal experiences.

On top of the standard stressors that are present in the pursuit of a doctoral degree, these participants faced ambiguity based on their race/ethnicity as an additional challenge.
Ch. 5 Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

5.1 Overview of the Study

This qualitative study used a CRT lens to examine the perceptions of self-identified racial/ethnic minority doctoral students about their counselor education programs. Due to the self-proclaimed cultural competence of the counseling field (ACA 2003, 2005; CACREP 2009), it was important to ask students of color about their experiences in counselor education doctoral study to determine if the field is practicing what it professes. CRT emphasizes the use of “counter-storytelling” to challenge dominant discourses (Delgado, 1995a); this study employed that idea through the use of experience narratives and CRM (Thomas, 2003; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). More specifically, semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with nineteen participants who self-identified as non-White and who were recruited through two national counseling listservs and via snowball sampling. Confidentiality was obtained per IRB standards; participants were free to withdraw without penalty at anytime and received a pro-rated incentive based on their level of completion.

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using open and axial coding by three research team members (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Upon convening as a research team after independently analyzing the data, six major themes emerged with numerous subthemes under each: (a) intersectionality, (b) playing the game, (c) individual characteristics and attributes, (d) support, (e) voice, and (f) talk the talk, walk the walk.
The themes were applied to the research questions to better understand the perceptions and experiences of students of color in counselor education doctoral programs.

5.1.1 Research Question 1.

*How do full time equivalent (FTE) racial/ethnic minority counselor education doctoral students at PWIs experience their programs, according to Lovitts’ (2001) themes of attrition?*

Lovitts (2001) explored reasons for discontinuing doctoral study, claiming that students were rarely inept or unable to keep up with the demands of the degree. She identified four themes that accounted for students’ departure from doctoral study, which correspond to the sub-questions of Research Question 1: (a) disappointment with the learning experience, (b) lack of information about doctoral study, (c) absence of community, and (d) negative advisor-advisee relationships. The participants expressed concerns with the learning experience in that they desired more rigor and challenge in the curriculum and activities. Oak and Daisy felt challenged throughout their program, but believed that the intensity and intellectual rigor could be increased. Further, Oak, Forsythia, Aspen, Olive, Fir, and Hickory all indicated that collaborative opportunities were based on inner drive and self-motivation or whether you were liked or not. Aspen was told by his advisor that opportunity would not come knocking, but rather, Aspen must seek it. Overall, the participants did not have great dissatisfaction with their learning experiences. They believed areas could be improved, and that their academic expectations were mostly met.

Lack of information affected the participants during their programs. This related to the “hidden rules” of opportunity, as Forsythia described, that were not made clear to
the students from the beginning. This cost the students time in becoming involved with scholarly activities and networking. Further, several participants expressed some frustration with funding. For example, Poppy did not understand why some students had extended assistantships when others were not given anything:

Well, for example, you’re only allowed to have a 20-hour TA-ship….By your second year you’re only allowed to have five hours, and your third year you’re not allowed to have any. And we have people who are third-year and they have 20 hours. We have a person who has 40 hours, and that’s not allowed in general.

Forsythia and Daisy also experienced confusion over funding for their programs. More specifically, Forsythia was not informed of how financial assistance works for students who are full-time versus those who are part-time. She believed that if she knew the policy behind this before starting the program, her experience would have been much different. Daisy, too, described how her department’s funding practices were “a big mess.” Students who qualified one year did not get the funding the next year; other students would get funding the second year, but had to find their own funding source their first year. The participants lacked the information necessary to maximize their doctoral experience. Race and ethnicity factored ambiguously into these incidents, according to the participants.

All nineteen participants expressed the significant influence of peers in their doctoral experience. Through their cohorts or student groups, participants were able to feel a sense of community, which Lovitts (2001) claims as vital for success. Many participants likened their cohorts to families, complete with conflict, disagreement, drama, and love. Some, like Aspen, felt a sense of community with his faculty, too. He said he was able to joke with the faculty and talk about subjects unrelated to counselor
education: “[I have] good sarcastic relationships with my faculty.” Likewise, many participants experienced positive relationships with their advisors, while some others did not. Therefore, the influence of the advisor is important to consider in the success of a doctoral student.

a. Are the academic experiences presented differently for racial/ethnic minority students than for other student populations?

Academic opportunity was appraised quite differently by the participants. While many felt like the opportunities were there if you sought them, others who attempted to integrate themselves into projects were turned away. Sometimes race was perceived as affecting opportunity, but at other times personality was the determining factor, per participants’ reports. The themes of intersectionality, playing the game, and individual characteristics and attributes answered the question about academic experiences being presented differently for students of color versus White students.

As explained earlier, intersectionality involved the coming together of various descriptors of being human. A person is not only African American, for example, but male or female, hetero- or homo-sexual, typically or differently able-bodied, and ascribing to different religious practices. The combination of such traits yielded unique experiences and perceptions. Within-group influences, as part of the theme of intersectionality, appeared to connect with the participants’ experiences. This meant that members of their own racial/ethnic background pushed them harder or restricted access to resources or events that could have benefited the student. For example, Hickory described his experience with Hispanic professors as being like the “crab in a bucket” phenomenon. In other words, when he started to excel or thrive, the professor brought
him down verbally or by limiting his opportunities. Forsythia felt the pressure from her African American professors to do well, even better than her White counterparts. Further, Daisy was compared to another African American female in the counseling field, which illustrated how within-group dynamics affected how academic experiences were presented to students of color.

As participants told stories of playing the game of doctoral study, they referred to conforming to the dominant norms to get the same opportunity and positive experiences as their peers. Part of this was the majority privilege influence in which the dominant groups (i.e. White students at PWIs and Hispanic students at HSIs) failed to recognize their privileged status when it came to opportunity. Amaryllis shared her disjuncture with the worldview of her professors, which was individualistic and competitive, versus her own, which she described as interactive and non-competitive. Having different worldviews meant conflict with her faculty and lessened her chances of being offered collaborative opportunities. Oak, conversely, sought the chance to publish and perform the emphasized academic experiences for a job in higher education. While he was active in his efforts to find opportunity, he was often the last to know of something or excluded outright. He attributed this to race, saying the White female students received the bulk of the opportunities with professors.

There was some gray area surrounding the individual characteristics and attributes theme, and more specifically the inner drive/self-motivation and personality/attitude subthemes. Participants described opportunities as being extended to those students who were willing to say “yes” to many projects, or who were liked by their faculty members. As in Oak’s case, inner drive and self-motivation did not guarantee inclusion in various
academic experiences, but other participants stressed the importance of placing yourself in the line of opportunity. They argued that otherwise, you would be passed over for those who were taking initiative. What was unknown was how someone’s racial/ethnic identity factored into being liked or recognized for taking initiative. It is possible that the subthemes of stereotyping and voice come into this situation; racial/ethnic minority students who speak their minds and assert their needs and wants regarding academic experiences might be viewed negatively and therefore less likely to receive the opportunities.

b. What are the students’ perceptions of the academic climate regarding race?

Many of the emergent themes speak to the academic climate of counselor education programs regarding race or ethnicity. Basically, the participants described a climate in which they had to screen their cultural identity, fight stereotyping and tokenism, confront majority privilege, find outlets for their voices, and navigate ambiguous situations regarding their racial/ethnic identity. Participants felt the need to play the game when it came to their language, dress, and mannerisms. Tulip expressed her opinion that racial/ethnic minorities must follow the White model while working their way through the doctoral program. Any deviation that showcased a student’s racial/ethnic roots would be viewed as negative and the student would be perceived unfavorably. This occurrence could potentially affect student’s opportunities in the program. Olive mirrored Tulip and said the same thing. More specifically, she poised that racial/ethnic minority students should find a time and place to present their cultural heritage.
Conforming to the dominant group’s ideal represented the influence of majority privilege. Harris (1993) coined the term “Whiteness-as-property” in which the dominant racial group possesses rights that others do not. These include the right to exclude others, rights to resources for success, and general rights to declare the cultural climate. The participants in this study, by screening their cultural qualities while in the program, played the game of conforming to the majority privilege influence.

Related to expression through exhibiting cultural traits was the theme of voice. The academic climate dictated the use of voice by the participants. Some felt comfortable expressing concerns about program policies, like Aspen, Oak, Fir, and Poppy. They believed they had a right to offer suggestions to improve the program with regard to curriculum sequencing or the funding process. Others, like Endine and Begonia, felt too much oppression related to evaluation that they decided to just get through the program without drawing unnecessary attention to themselves. They talked about having to persevere through the program, doing what needed to be done just to complete the degree. The academic climate of their programs was quite hostile toward racial/ethnic minorities.

The other sub-theme of voice was representation. Many of the participants wished they had more faculty members or other students who represented their racial/ethnic backgrounds in the program. If there was greater presence of racial/ethnic minorities in counselor education, the participants might not have reported feeling like a token in class. Aspen spoke of how his peers would turn to him to speak on behalf of all Asians when it was the focus topic of the multicultural course. Additionally, stereotyping was voiced by the participants as something that occurred to them or as something they
aimed to avoid from the beginning. Begonia reported how the fact that she used her voice and expressed opinion labeled her as a stereotypical African American female, much like the Sapphire characterization in the media (Bryant. et. al., 2005). She was stereotyped and her voice was stifled.

On top of these more obvious examples of a negative academic climate, situational ambiguity emerged as a subtheme. Participants spoke of times in which they were given unclear feedback on their performance. Endine believed there to be some extra criteria on which she was being judged by the faculty; her dominant group peers were not subjected to the same treatment. Similarly, Amaryllis experienced what seemed like a discriminatory act when she and another African American female were deducted points on an assignment when the White group member was not. Additionally, she was encouraged to pursue a “less scholarly program” after consulting her faculty about completing a doctoral degree with ADHD. Both participants could not explicitly point to racism as the reason behind these events, but they believed it felt quite subjective and negative. The academic climate was one of ambiguous hostility.

Several participants reported positive climates in their programs regarding race and ethnicity. They believed opportunities were distributed equally, treatment in general was equal to the dominant group peers, and that they were supported by the faculty. For example, Camellia said that she really did not believe that race or ethnicity factored into most of her doctoral experiences. The most positive aspect of the doctoral program that the majority of participants talked about was the sense of community felt in their cohort. Peers provided sounding boards, support during stressful times, and outlets for relaxation and fun. Even within that, Amaryllis formed a pact with her fellow minorities to be
buffers against oppression and negativity throughout the program. Positive climates need to be available to all students in all programs.

c. *How is the learning experience perceived to be the same or different depending on race?*

This question is answered by looking at the academic climate and how academic experiences are presented to students. Participants in this study expressed frustration with being viewed as the token representative of their racial or ethnic group in class. At times, they would voluntarily use their minority status and serve as a token to encourage growth of diversity in the doctoral program. The intersection of stereotypes and dominant culture served as an unnecessary stressor for the participants. This came into the classroom, where several participants felt the need to downplay their racial/ethnic stereotypes. Some students, like Oak, refrained from speaking too much or too strongly about diversity issues in class, realizing that they might be viewed as holding resentment for historical injustices. Oak desired intellectual discussions on the subject, but none of his peers or faculty members followed suit.

When Fir tried to contribute to a class discussion on multicultural issues, his professor argued with him. She “shut him down” and denied his personal opinions and experience as a racial minority. Such faculty behaviors affect the learning experience for students, whether it is the student being shut down, or the students observing the interaction. The ambiguous evaluative criteria for students like Endine and Rose affected their academic experiences. Several of the participants said that they had to do double the work, double the quality just to be considered the same as their White counterparts.
They felt the need to prove themselves and that they deserved to be in a doctoral program.

One student, Camellia, talked about her experiences with teaching and supervising master’s students, and how the experience was loaded with tension. The students challenged her authority on the subject matter and resisted her help. She attributed it to the intersection of race and gender; she is an African American female. Rose, on the other hand, believed her African American status helped her when it came to working with the master’s students. She felt like they could get a different perspective and feel more open with their own opinions and ideas. Again, the learning experience was viewed as positive by some participants and negative by others.

*d. What are the positive and negative attributes of the advisor-advisee relationship?*

*Does race appear to factor into this relationship?*

Support was a huge theme that surfaced from the transcripts. Peers, family, and funding all factored significantly in the participants’ successful navigation of a doctoral program. However, their relationship with the faculty, and more specifically their advisors, was quite influential in their perceptions of the program. Many students (e.g., Forsythia, Rose, and Camellia) sought help and guidance elsewhere, and not from their advisor; for unspecified reasons, the advisors were unhelpful or unavailable for the participants. Some believed their advisors fulfilled expectations; Daisy and Myrtle, for example, praised their advising relationship. Likewise, Aspen spoke of his advisor as if he was an old friend, providing warmth and appropriate guidance throughout the doctoral experience.
Unfortunately, when the advising relationships were negative, the stories from participants revealed the barriers they faced throughout the program. Rose received ambiguous feedback from her advisor; it was judgmental and unspecific, and therefore not constructive. Amaryllis felt unsupported by her advisor when she was diagnosed with ADHD; he advised her to depart from doctoral study in counselor education. A later advisor purposefully alienated her from the faculty so that she could receive no help. Begonia’s advisor refused to give definitive answers to procedural questions like how to construct an appropriate internship experience. Although the negative experiences happened to racial/ethnic minorities, the participants could not declare outright that it was due to their race or ethnicity.

Both directly and indirectly, the participants revealed their expectations of advisors to be more like mentors, caring and sensitive to their needs. Advisors that offered a link to reduce isolation and help students feel connected socially and professionally were desired. Further, they longed for faculty members who looked like them and came from similar cultural backgrounds. The theme of representation spoke to this. For example, when Poppy identified a Hispanic advisor, she “clung” to him. Through him, she was exposed to professional groups of Hispanic counselors and she readily expressed her appreciation of the experience of finding people who understood her. Finally, ambiguous faculty behavior may be attributable to race. The fuzzy assessments and silencing of voices do not emulate the cultural competence the profession strives for.
5.1.2 Research Question 2.

In what other ways does race/ethnicity factor into FTE counselor education doctoral students’ experiences within their program?

The resulting themes from the participant interviews supported Lovitts’ (2001) themes of attrition (e.g., lack of information, absence of community, disappointment with the learning experience, and the advisor-advisee relationship) and generally answered the subsections of Research Question 1. The only additional ways that race/ethnicity may have affected the participants’ experiences was in relation to family influences and departments’ sensitivity to life circumstances. Further, the participants desired rigor and challenge in their programs, which may counter some stereotypes of racial/ethnic minorities as being less-than their White peers in some academic way.

Numerous participants referred to their family members or family values as motivating them to pursue doctoral study. Some had parents and grandparents who were highly educated and expected the same from the participant. Others’ families emphasized the importance of education and how it can open doors and benefit participants’ lives. One participant, however, described her Hispanic heritage as conflicting with her desire for a Ph.D. Her family did not fully understand her drive to forgo starting a family for the academic path; they constantly questioned her about her choices and asked her to return home. Thankfully, Poppy’s department was empathetic to her cultural circumstances and accommodated her needs.

Other participants were balancing family life with the demands of doctoral study. Amaryllis prioritized being a mother and wife over the doctoral program, which she observed conflicted with her professors’ wishes and priorities. Endine also stated that her
program was not as sensitive to her non-counseling life as she would have liked them to be. Most participants expected the program to demand much from them as far as time, money, sacrifice, and physically, but they also expected their programs to work with them on unforeseen needs. Students may bring a cultural heritage and different worldview to the program, and faculty members must be open to understanding the worldview and making appropriate accommodations.

5.1.3 Research Question 3.

What factors do racial/ethnic minority students identify as enhancing their counselor education experience?

a. How are these factors similar for other student populations?

b. How are these factors different for other student populations?

When asked what advice they would give to incoming students of color as compared with advice for incoming White students, the participants were split between having specialized or general advice. Several participants advised minority students to find mentors immediately, remain focused on their own goals, do more than the basic requirements to succeed, and understand funding practices in the department. Tulip advised students of color to know their worth and that they were chosen to be in the program and were wanted there. Most participants believed incoming students needed to remain true to themselves and maintain direction.

Others said that all students, no matter what racial/ethnic background, should stay focused on the degree, maintain life balance, find support in their peers, and take initiative with finding opportunities. Some participants advised White students to “keep an open mind” (Holly) and to learn about their privileged status. Endine echoed that
opinion about White students not needing much advice because the system was set up in their favor. One participant thought that faculty needed to assist with the difficult discussions surrounding race and ethnicity in American culture. Debriefing sessions to ensure all discussion participants process the information and associated emotions is also viewed as important.

Several participants wished they had been given an orientation to the program and to doctoral study. This would not seem to differ based on race. The orientation would cover funding options, professors’ research interests, social bonding among the cohort group, and pending opportunities for collaboration. One participant opined that a mandatory or strongly encouraged student support group was necessary, and would force people to relax and cope better with the stresses of doctoral study.

5.2 Conclusions

Connected to the six major themes that resulted from the interviews, six conclusions were made about the findings and uphold previous research.

1. Race/ethnicity factors into minority counselor education doctoral students’ experiences, but at an intersection with other aspects of diversity. Participants could not attribute their negative experiences exclusively to race or ethnicity; rather, their race, gender, and age factored into their interactions with others. CRT focuses on the intersectionality of components and qualities human beings use to produce unique experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Aligned with this point, Lovitts (2001) discussed the “chilly climates” in some doctoral programs, which were associated with the ambiguity and intersection of minority statuses (e.g., female, non-White, homosexual). Ellis (2001) and Turner and
Thomson (1993) found intersections of diversity to be challenging for minority students, too.

2. Racial/ethnic students often face greater challenges in their counselor education doctoral programs than their racial majority counterparts. Findings from the study suggested that racial/ethnic minority students face stereotyping, tokenism, the need to screen their cultural identity, and play the game show the added difficulties that these students face. In 1992, Feagin found that the racial/ethnic minorities at PWIs faced blatant and subtle forms of discrimination, causing greater challenges. Ibarra (2001) found the same for Hispanic students attending PWIs; they were kept outside the mainstream and their academic progress was hindered.

3. Funding was important for many counselor education doctoral students, but race/ethnicity had limited influence. Numerous studies on doctoral study suggest that funding is a major factor in the success of students (Berelson, 1960; Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Nettles, 1990; Tucker, Gottlieb, & Pease, 1964; Willie, Grady, & Hope, 1991). To this end, the participants in this study mentioned that funding was not always available to students, regardless of race/ethnicity. Further, students also indicated that race/ethnicity was not a determining factor in who received aide. Thus, a few student participants perceived that, if there was any unfairness, it was that racial/ethnic minorities had more resources than the majority students.

4. Racial/ethnic minority counselor education doctoral students desired mentors to help navigate the doctoral program, but the students maintained the desire for
academic rigor. In other words, while they wanted the support of a faculty member, participants did not believe that meant less academic rigor. Rather, they fully expected intellectual discussion and challenging coursework. Jacobi (1991) found that students desired mentors who were warm, caring, and helpful. Similarly, Bowen & Rudenstine (1992) emphasized the importance of good, involved advising.

5. The student participants believed that racial/ethnic minorities were underrepresented in counselor education. Many also indicated that they desired mentors who looked like them and possessed similar worldviews. Several studies identified similar results (Grant & Simmons, 2008; King & Chepyator-Thomson, 1996; Turner & Thomson, 1993; Willie, Grady, & Hope, 1991).

6. Integration into the department and doctoral community is important to racial/ethnic minority counselor education doctoral students. Peers played an influential role in mediating stress and were valued as such. Tinto (1975/1987) expressed the importance of students feeling like they belong to the school community, while Hoskins and Goldberg (2005) said program match is vital for success. King & Chepyator-Thomson (1996) talked about how racial minority students sometimes feel outside the group.

As a whole, counselor education doctoral programs are talking the talk of cultural competence, but not walking the walk, based on these findings. Programs can take more effort to become self-aware of policies and practices that result in kind to the findings here. The faculty has a significant role in this and must undertake such self scrutiny to ensure cultural competence.
5.3 Discussions and Implications

The participants in this study demonstrated measured enthusiasm when first speaking with me on the telephone. They put themselves in a vulnerable position by opening up to a stranger, and a White counselor education doctoral student at that. The nineteen people who volunteered their time and stories represented mostly African American women, which speaks to their need to talk about their experiences. As Ellis (2001) found, African American women feel the most isolated at PWIs. The other women were Hispanic, Jewish, Filipino, and Biracial. The four men who participated in the study represented Black, Asian, and Hispanic races/ethnicities. Due to snowball sampling, several participants came from the same program. They had slightly different stories to tell about their experiences, which was interesting, because they believed their experience to be common to the group.

A pattern that emerged during the interviews was that almost all of the participants would start by saying their doctoral experience has been good. There were versions such as “I think it’s been great,” “my experience has been fairly positive in my opinion,” “I’ve had an excellent experience,” and “it was good.” Not one participant started by saying their experience had been bad. They would perhaps say it had been “interesting and enlightening,” “the first semester was extremely stressful,” or “it’s been like an endurance contest,” but no one came right out and immediately said their experience was terrible or full of challenges. It is difficult to know exactly why the participants opened with a generally positive statement about their program, but one explanation might be that they were testing the waters, so to speak, and seeing how trustworthy the situation would be. Another explanation could be that they had not
stopped to think about the various ways in which their race/ethnicity had come into their doctoral experience. Being probed about various aspects of their experience may have prompted them to look more closely at their doctoral programs.

The findings of this study determine that, generally, the counselor education profession is not as competent with multiculturalism as it would like to be. Relying on assumptions that practice emulates theory is damaging to the profession, and to the racial/ethnic minority students training to be counselors or counselor educators. It neglects the mandates of the Multicultural Counseling Competencies adopted by ACA (ACA, 2003; Arrendondo et al., 1996) in the following general ways:

1. The field of counseling is not making effort to be self-aware. What does it mean for us to look and act culturally competent? Are we practicing what we teach?

2. Counselor education is failing to take into account others’ worldviews, as evidenced by the participants’ reports of insensitivity to life circumstances.

3. If we are not performing self-awareness checks and we are failing to embrace others’ worldviews, then we can not possess the skills needed to work with diverse clients or students.

The implications for counselor education include continued underrepresentation of racial/ethnic minorities, and continued discrepancies between what we claim to be as a profession and what we actually do. Further, faculty and policy-makers will need to look at how programs are managed and what changes need to be made to be more welcoming of diversity. Recruitment and retention programs must be readdressed and modified, with input from minority students, to ensure they fulfill their mission.
5.4 Recommendations

Due to the conclusion that the field of counseling is talking the talk, but not walking the walk, the following are some recommendations for prospective and current students, faculty members and departments, and for recruitment and retention.

5.4.1 Racial/Ethnic Minority Doctoral Students.

The participants suggested numerous modifications or improvements to their programs that translate into greater success for students, especially minorities. Prospective students should take time to self-reflect and identify their needs and wants in a graduate program. What is it that they will need to have to be successful? Then, they must do their research and find out as much information they can about program structure, specific and non-specific requirements, faculty interests and demeanors, department politics, and the entering cohort. Lovitts (2001) calls this a cognitive map and encourages students to have a solid plan for doctoral study prior to beginning. Obtaining this information may mean meeting with faculty at various programs to interview them, not only for explicit information like research interests, but for implicit information such as mannerisms and attitudes. Further, spending time on campus and in the department, perhaps attending a class, could yield invaluable insight into the climate of the program. In addition, finding mentors who understand your perspective and share experiences of being a minority is suggested. Attending all orientation-type meetings to ensure you are prepared for the start date is imperative, as is making sure you have ready a support system and strategies for self-care. Finally, determine how you will fund your education. If you require assistance from the program, make sure it is available and that you know how to secure it.
Current students need to follow the same recommendations as prospective students, even it means maintaining support networks, seeking mentors, and gaining as much information as possible along the way. Racial/ethnic minority doctoral students should find outlets to process their experiences, especially if ambiguity occurs surrounding their minority status. Participants advised students to remain focused on their goals and to stay true to their own values. Using voice to confront inadequacies in the program was also emphasized. Finally, current students should serve as mentors to incoming groups.

5.4.2 Faculty Members and Departments.

First and foremost, counselor education faculty and programs must conduct self-assessments to determine areas for growth related to multicultural competence. Faculty should examine ways in which they are privileged and oppressed, and how such concepts enter into their professional lives. Growth might mean greater interaction with peers or students from diverse backgrounds, or journaling to assess biases and stereotypes that might emerge when encountering racial/ethnic minority students.

Following self-assessments, considerations of faculty and departments should include how to best orient new students, of all races/ethnicities, to the doctoral program. This could mean providing an orientation at the beginning of each academic year that presents the “hidden rules” of the program. In other words, how should doctoral students proceed when desiring collaborative opportunities or if they want to dispute something? Presenting research interests of each faculty member, in addition to the faculty member’s work style, could help students know who and how to connect with varying opportunities. Provide the incoming students with information about the general
expectations and culture of the program. If students are encouraged to seek opportunities and take initiative for themselves, then they should be told this information at the beginning of the program. Link incoming students to successful student mentors, preferably representing diversity.

As advisors or mentors, be not only open to student interaction, but make an effort to contact your advisees periodically for check-ins. Connection with faculty or peers was influential in the participants’ experiences; offer warmth and caring attitudes to doctoral students, who may feel isolated and overwhelmed. Encourage and foster collaborative opportunities or direct students to external activities or sources of funding. Model the culturally competent behaviors you expect of students; if conflict arises, be open to initiating a discussion about it. Participants felt tension among and between faculty in their departments, and they believed much of the tension was attributable to racial/ethnic conflicts. Most importantly, be sensitive to the cultural lives, traditions, and worldviews that your students bring with them. Family culture may be highly influential to the student, and their worldview may be less competitive and individualistic than what academia requires, which could affect their performance or availability. Finally, maintain open communication with your advisees, and other students, so that you can broach sensitive topics as they arise.

**5.4.3 Recruitment and Retention.**

Per participants’ experiences, having a personal connection to someone in a doctoral program or a faculty member who can serve as a mentor was extremely important. Meeting students at conferences, or in the community, can plant seeds of interest about doctoral study. This could take several forms. Faculty members could
reach out and hold interest sessions or approach students in-between conference presentations. Likewise, current doctoral students could reach out to people they know might be interest in furthering their education. Maintaining communication with past master’s students represents a common sense way of recruiting doctoral students. When people reached out to the participants and guided them through the doctoral process, they appreciated it immensely.

Once potential students have successfully entered a program, it would be helpful to link them to other mentor students, especially if you can link racial/ethnic minority students with other minorities. That connection proved invaluable to the racial/ethnic minority students in this study, who, at times, felt isolated or misunderstood. Sponsoring and encouraging social gatherings illustrates self-care and balance, and it creates space for building community. Likewise, increase representation of racial/ethnic minorities in faculty or leadership positions. Many participants desired representation of their racial/ethnic culture in the faculty. Seeing people who looked like themselves influenced professional identity and their commitment to the degree. Perhaps most importantly, ensure funding for the students or provide adequate resources and options for where students can secure financial support for their education.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. First, the resulting themes are not to be generalized to all counselor education programs; they simply provide fodder for discussion and for use in programs conducting self-examinations. The nature of qualitative research prevents the generalization that quantitative research permits (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Further, readers can determine if the findings apply to their
own situations or not. Also, there is no White student comparison included in the data. It is likely that White students have some of the same broad experiences in doctoral study, but it is unknown for this study. The White racial status of the researcher signals a potential limitation due to the power difference and subject matter of the study. Minorities were probed to reveal their experiences to a White person who would then hold power of interpretation. This arrangement likely altered the findings, perhaps restricting complete open expression by the participants.

The use of telephone interviews provided convenience. While the findings are substantial, more could be gained from face to face interviews or department observations. Body language and department practices could shed light on different dimensions of the students’ perceptions.

5.6 Suggestions for Future Research

This qualitative study merely set the stage for future research regarding multicultural competence in counseling and the experiences of racial/ethnic minority students. Future research should focus on specific populations, such as African American females or first year minority students. Noting that doctoral students must have completed a master’s and bachelor’s degree, exploring their experiences at those stages of higher education is important, too. This study looked at many parts of doctoral study (e.g., funding, relationships, expectations, academic opportunities), but future research might narrow the focus to just one component of the doctoral experience.

Stewart (2009) examined Black racial identity and acculturative stress of African Americans in PWI counselor education programs. She used a quantitative method to evaluate how racial identity affects the acculturation process at PWIs. For the purposes
of her study, she created the Counselor Education Climate Survey (CECS) which could be used to assess various aspects of racial/ethnic minority students’ experiences. Such a quantitative approach would complement the qualitative designs.

5.7 Final Thoughts

The strength of the participants to persist in their programs despite facing a somewhat negative academic climate is inspiring. Many participants were persevering so that they could be the voice of change once in a position of power. Through re-telling their stories and using their experiences to expose areas for growth in counselor education, I recognize my great responsibility to represent them accurately and respectfully.
References


APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT EMAIL TO LISTSERVS
RECRUITMENT EMAIL MESSAGE

Subject Line: Doctoral Students Needed/Selection Yields Incentive

Dear Counselor Education Doctoral Student,

Hello! I hope this email finds you well while making your way through the doctoral process. We understand your busy schedule!

We are conducting a study on the doctoral experiences of racial/ethnic minorities enrolled full-time in Counselor Education Programs. This qualitative study aims to shed light on positive and negative factors for racial/ethnic minorities through semi-structured, audio-recorded telephone interviews. These interviews will last between 45 and 60 minutes. The questions seek to understand your perceptions of how racial/ethnic diversity, or lack of, affects the experiences of students of color while pursuing a doctoral degree in counselor education.

To be selected, you must be a current, full-time equivalent doctoral student in a counselor education program in the United States, and you must identify as non-White. Males and females of color will be included. If selected for participation in the study, you will receive a $20 Barnes and Noble gift card upon completion of the interview and member-checking. If you complete part of the telephone interview, you will receive a $5 gift card; completion of the interview but not the member-checking results in a $10 gift card. Only the first 25 selected participants will receive gift cards in the prorated amounts as applicable to your level of participation.

Confidentiality will be protected per IRB and ethical guidelines, and you will have the right to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Caroline A. Baker privately at baker.1361@buckeyemail.osu.edu. You will then receive a screening document and a detailed information sheet. By expressing interest in this study, you are not committing to participate.

This study serves a significant purpose in understanding social justice issues pertaining to our field. For more information about the study or to participate, please contact Caroline A. Baker and/or Dr. James L. Moore, III.

We hope you choose to participate in this important study to contribute your unique story.

Sincerely,

Caroline A. Baker  
Doctoral Candidate, Researcher  
The Ohio State University  
baker.1361@buckeyemail.osu.edu

James L. Moore, III  
Doctoral Advisor  
Associate Professor, Counselor Education  
The Ohio State University  
moore.1408@osu.edu
APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT SCREENING DOCUMENT
Participant Screening Document

Instructions: Please answer the following questions to determine if you are eligible for participation in this study. You must be a full-time doctoral student in a counselor education program, and identify as a racial/ethnic minority. You must also be 18 years of age or older. When you have completed the document, submit it as an email attachment to Caroline A. Baker at baker.1361@buckeyemail.osu.edu. Please type, or print clearly. Thank you!

Name:________________________________________ Age: __________________________

Racial/Ethnic group(s) with which you identify: __________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

Enrollment status in your program (e.g., 1st year, 2nd year, ABD, candidacy exams, etc.): 
____________

Mailing Address:_____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

Telephone number: __________________________________________

Best times to conduct the interview (circle all that apply; please allow 45-60 minutes):

M   T   W   Th   F                             AM   PM

This study relies on snowball sampling in addition to the listserv as a recruitment method. Please list other racial/ethnic minority counselor education doctoral students who may like to participate. Include their name and email address. They will only be told that you referred them; no other information about your participation will be shared. You are not required to list anyone to remain eligible to participate in this study.

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</table>

Thank you! The researcher will contact you soon at the time preference above. Before the data collection portion of the telephone interview, you will have an opportunity to ask questions and consent to participation in the study. If you have questions before then, please contact Caroline A. Baker (Co-Investigator) at baker.1361@buckeyemail.osu.edu.
**Demographic Portion of the Telephone Interview**

With which racial/ethnic group do you identify?

What is your age? Gender?

How would you describe your socioeconomic status?

Do you have a disability that the program is aware of? If so, would you share what it is?

At what stage of doctoral study are you?

Have you attended your program continuously? If no, what has been your timeline?

What were your GRE scores? ACT/SAT scores?

How would you describe your advisor’s race/ethnicity? Gender?

What is your advisor’s status (e.g., Assistant  Associate  Full)?

Is your program CACREP-accredited?

Is your program in an HBCU or PWI?***

What was your undergraduate G.P.A.? Graduate G.P.A.?

What is your primary language?

**Perceptual Interview Protocol**

1. Who or what influenced your decision to pursue a doctorate?

2. How did you come to choose the program at your University?
   - Before you started your doctoral program, what were your expectations?

3. Tell me about your experience in your doctoral program.
   - What kinds of relationships have you had with the faculty in your program?
   - What kinds of relationships have you had with your peers in the program?
   - What kinds of academic experiences or opportunities have you had?
   - How has your race/ethnicity affected these experiences?

4. How do students in your program choose advisors?
• How has your experience of choosing an advisor been like or unlike your White peer doctoral students’ experiences?
• How has this experience been like or unlike those of other doctoral students of color?

5. How are students in your program extended collaborative opportunities with faculty and/or peers?
   • How has this experience been like or unlike your White peer doctoral students’ experiences?
   • How has your experience been like or unlike those of other doctoral students of color?

6. How do students in your program receive funding opportunities, such as fellowships or assistantships?
   • How has your experience with this been like or unlike your White peer doctoral students’ experiences?
   • How has your experience been like or unlike those of other doctoral students of color?

7. How do you think you are perceived as a student in your doctoral program?
   • How do faculty members perceive your abilities?
   • How do peers perceive your abilities?
   • How does race/ethnicity factor into these perceptions?

8. How have you been involved with admissions and recruiting for your doctoral program?
   • What advice would you give to another student of color entering your doctoral program?
   • How would this advice differ for a White doctoral student?

9. Have you ever considered leaving doctoral study? Why or why not?

10. Based on what you know about this study, is there anything else you would like to share regarding your doctoral experience?
APPENDIX D

IRB APPROVAL
May 24, 2010

Protocol Number: 2010B0113
Protocol Title: RACIAL/ETHNIC MINORITY DOCTORAL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM. James Moore, Caroline Baker, Counselor Education, Rehabilitation Services, and School Psychology
Type of Review: Initial Review—Expedited
IRB Staff Contact: Jacob R. Stoddard
Phone: 614-292-0526
Email: stoddard.13@osu.edu

Dear Dr. Moore,

The Behavioral and Social Sciences IRB APPROVED BY EXPEDITED REVIEW the above referenced research. The Board was able to provide expedited approval under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) because the research presents minimal risk to subjects and qualifies under the expedited review category listed below.

Date of IRB Approval: May 24, 2010
Date of IRB Approval Expiration: May 20, 2011
Expedited Review Category: 7

In addition, the protocol has been approved for a waiver of documentation of the consent process.

If applicable, informed consent (and HIPAA research authorization) must be obtained from subjects or their legally authorized representatives and documented prior to research involvement. The IRB-approved consent form and process must be used. Changes in the research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, enrolment numbers, etc.) or informed consent process must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented (except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects).

This approval is valid for one year from the date of IRB review when approval is granted or modifications are required. The approval will no longer be in effect on the date listed above as the IRB expiration date. A Continuing Review application must be approved within this interval to avoid expiration of IRB approval and cessation of all research activities. A final report must be provided to the IRB and all records relating to the research (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for at least 3 years after the research has ended.

It is the responsibility of all investigators and research staff to promptly report to the IRB any serious, unexpected and related adverse events and potential unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This approval is issued under The Ohio State University’s OHRP Federally-Required Assurance #00006378.

All forms and procedures can be found on the OHRP website — www.oerp.osu.edu. Please feel free to contact the IRB staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Jeanne A. Clement, EdD, Chair
Behavioral and Social Sciences Institutional Review Board
APPENDIX E

STUDY INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS
STUDY INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Background
A review of statistics regarding racial/ethnic minorities’ presence in higher education reveals disproportion to the dominant White group (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008; National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Counselor education emphasizes multicultural competence through the development of related competencies (Arredondo, et al. 1996), standards (CACREP, 2009), and professional organizations such as the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD), yet there persists a lack of racially/ethnically diverse counselor educators in relation to their White counterparts (ACA, 2009). Critical Race Theory (CRT) claims that racism is an ordinary and common occurrence for racial/ethnic minorities, and is seen in institutions such as in higher education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). For these reasons, it is important to understand racial/ethnic minority students’ experiences in their doctoral programs. This research study, “Racial/Ethnic Minority Doctoral Students’ Perceptions of Counselor Education Programs,” aims to understand racial/ethnic doctoral students’ experiences in counselor education programs.

Participation
Participation is voluntary and based on the screening criteria you submitted. You are free to withdraw at any time without penalty, and can do so by contacting either the Principal Investigator (PI; James L. Moore, III) or the Co-Investigator (Co-I; Caroline A. Baker) using the information at the end of this document. Verbal informed consent will be obtained prior to recording the telephone interview.

Incentives
For completion of the screening document, telephone interview, and member-checking you will receive a $20 Barnes and Noble gift card. If you choose to withdraw during the telephone interview, you will receive a $5 Barnes and Noble gift card. If you withdraw after completing the telephone interview, but before the member-checking, you will receive a $10 Barnes and Noble gift card.

Confidentiality and Privacy
You will be assigned a code that will be used in place of your name on all transcripts and documentation from this point forward. Only the PI and the Co-I will have access to the linked names and codes. Any identifiable information in the transcripts will be removed or replaced. All data will be stored in a secure location and destroyed after the minimum IRB record keeping requirement of 3 years.

Time Requirements
Your participation will require about two hours of your time in total; this breaks down as 15 minutes to complete the screening document, 15 minutes for verbal informed consent, 15 minutes for the demographic portion of the interview, 45 minutes for the perceptual
portion of the interview, and 30 minutes for member-checking once aggregate themes are identified.

Data Collection
Upon submission of the screening document, you will be determined to be eligible or not (and contacted either way). If eligible, you will be contacted at the designated time to obtain verbal informed consent, demographic data, and to conduct the interview regarding your experiences. Interview questions are semi-structured and open-ended.

Data Analysis
Analysis common to qualitative research will involve line by line coding for themes across interviews. A research team consisting of female doctoral students in counselor education with various racial/ethnic identities will also analyze the transcripts. Once aggregate themes are found, they will be sent back to you for member-checking purposes.

Potential Risks and Benefits
No more than minimal risk is expected. Participants may disclose negative experiences which could cause discomfort. If extreme discomfort occurs, the participant is able to withdraw from the study or suspend the interview until a later time. Confidentiality will only be broken if a participant threatens harm to another individual, harm to themselves, or is being physically harmed by someone else.

Benefits include the expression of experience, revealed common and supportive themes, and implications for counselor education doctoral program policy, practice, and implementation.

Disclosure
The PI (James L. Moore, III) is an Associate professor at The Ohio State University and Director of the Todd Anthony Bell National Resource Center on the African American Male on campus. He is serving as doctoral advisor to the Co-I (Caroline A. Baker) who is currently a doctoral candidate in Counselor Education at The Ohio State University; this study serves as her dissertation. She identifies as belonging to the White racial/ethnic group and appreciates diversity in the field of counseling. She hopes to reveal areas for improvement in Counselor Education doctoral programs to facilitate success for underrepresented students. The results will be used for journal articles and presentations and direct quotes may be used to support the findings; confidentiality will always be upheld.

Office of Responsible Research Practices
An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The Ohio State University reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research. For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.
Thank you for your participation!

Sincerely,

Caroline A. Baker
Doctoral Candidate, Co-Investigator
The Ohio State University
baker.1361@buckeyemail.osu.edu

James L. Moore, III
Doctoral Advisor, Principal Investigator
Professor, Counselor Education
The Ohio State University
moore.1408@osu.edu
APPENDIX F

VERBAL INFORMED CONSENT SCRIPT
VERBAL INFORMED CONSENT SCRIPT
You have indicated an interest in participating in the study titled Racial/Ethnic Minority Doctoral Students’ Perceptions of Counselor Education Programs. Your returned screening document determines that you are eligible for participation in this qualitative research. Please retrieve the information sheet sent to you with the screening document and again when we arranged the interview time. If you do not have access to it at this time, I will read portions of the text to you to ensure you fully understand the purposes, procedures, and details of this study.

As your information sheet discloses, this research aims at shedding light on the potential barriers for racial/ethnic minority students pursuing a doctoral degree in Counselor Education. Our profession claims multicultural competence yet remains mostly representative of the dominant White racial group. Do you have any questions about the purpose of this research study?

Your participation will require about two hours of your time in total; this breaks down as 15 minutes to complete the screening document, 15 minutes for verbal informed consent, 15 minutes for the demographic portion of the interview, 45 minutes for the perceptual portion of the interview, and 30 minutes for member-checking once aggregate themes are identified. Do you have any questions about the time requirements of this study? Do you have time now to complete the verbal informed consent, demographic and perceptual portions of the study?

Interview questions are semi-structured and open-ended; you may respond with as much or as little information as you wish. I will audio-tape our conversation and then transcribe it for analysis. Analysis common to qualitative research will involve line by line coding for themes across interviews. A research team consisting of female doctoral students in counselor education with various racial/ethnic identities will also analyze the transcripts. Once aggregate themes are found, they will be sent back to you for member-checking.
purposes; this simply means that you will read over the identified themes and determine
if you believe they are accurate or not. There is no experimental design in this study.

You have been assigned a code that will be used in place of your name on all transcripts
and documentation from this point forward. Only the PI and the Co-I will have access to
the linked names and codes. Any identifiable information in the transcripts will be
removed or replaced. All data will be stored in a secure location and destroyed after the
minimum IRB record keeping requirement of 3 years. Do you have any questions about
the procedures of this study?

No more than minimal risk is expected. You may disclose negative experiences which
could cause discomfort. If extreme discomfort occurs, you are able to withdraw from the
study or suspend the interview until a later time. No other alternative methods are
available for this study. Confidentiality will only be broken if you threaten harm to
another individual, harm to yourself, or you are being physically harmed by someone
else. Benefits include the expression of experience, revealed common and supportive
themes, and implications for counselor education doctoral program policy, practice, and
implementation.

For completion of the screening document, telephone interview, and member-checking
you will receive a $20 Barnes and Noble gift card. If you choose to withdraw during the
telephone interview, you will receive a $5 Barnes and Noble gift card. If you withdraw
after completing the telephone interview, but before the member-checking, you will
receive a $10 Barnes and Noble gift card. Do you have any question about the potential
risks and benefits of the study?

Your information sheet contains details of who and how to contact the appropriate people
should you have questions or concerns about this study, or if you wish to withdraw at any
time. An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The
Ohio State University reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable,
according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research. For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns, complaints, or injuries with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251. You may also contact either me or the Principal Investigator, Dr. James L. Moore III, Professor of Counselor Education at the Ohio State University and Director of the Todd Anthony Bell National Resource Center on the African American Male on campus.

I am currently a doctoral candidate in Counselor Education at The Ohio State University; this study serves as my dissertation. I identify as belonging to the White racial/ethnic group and appreciate diversity in the field of counseling. The results of this research will be used for journal articles and presentations and direct quotes may be used to support the findings; confidentiality will always be upheld.

I want to highlight your right to decline participation or to withdraw at any time without penalty, or the possibility to suspend the telephone interview until a later time if extreme discomfort occurs. Do you have any questions or concerns about the study at this time?

Do you freely give informed consent to participate in this study?

Let’s begin. I will first ask you some straightforward demographic questions, and then we will move into the semi-structured portion of the interview about your experiences.
APPENDIX G

RESEARCH TEAM DESCRIPTION
Description of Research Team Members

**Researcher: Caroline A. Baker**

The researcher in this study is a White female, 32 years old, and currently in the Counselor Education doctoral program at The Ohio State University. She gained her Master’s degree in School Counseling from the University of Tennessee and worked as a school counselor for two years before returning to school. During the doctoral program, the researcher co-taught internship, practicum, and the multicultural counseling courses. She has taken a qualitative research course series and participated in numerous qualitative research studies.

**Research Team Member #1:**

Research Team Member 1 is a Caucasian Jewish female, 53 years old, and in her 3rd year of the doctoral program. She identifies her socioeconomic status as middle class. This research team member has taken numerous qualitative research courses and has served as co-researcher on several qualitative research studies.

**Research Team Member #2:**

Research Team Member #2 is a White Hispanic female, 27 years old, and with ABD status. She identifies her socioeconomic status as middle class. This research team member has a clinical counseling focus and has worked in the field. She has taken qualitative research courses and has participated in several qualitative research studies throughout her educational career.
APPENDIX H

RESEARCH TEAM ANALYSIS INSTRUCTIONS
ANALYSIS INSTRUCTIONS:

My Research Questions:

2. How do full time equivalent (FTE) racial/ethnic minority counselor education doctoral students at PWIs experience their programs, according to Lovitts’ (2001) themes of attrition?
   a. Are the academic experiences presented differently for racial/ethnic minority students than for other student populations?
   b. What are the students’ perceptions of the academic climate regarding race?
   c. How is the learning experience perceived to be the same or different depending on race?
   d. What are the positive and negative attributes of the advisor-advisee relationship? Does race appear to factor into this relationship?

3. In what other ways does race/ethnicity factor into FTE counselor education doctoral students’ experiences within their program?

4. What factors do racial/ethnic minority students identify as enhancing their counselor education experience?
   a. How are these factors similar for other student populations?
   b. How are these factors different for other student populations?

1. Read through the transcripts once, noting open codes. These are anything and everything you think are significant in a transcript, whatever that participant seems to focus on.
2. Once open codes are found on each transcript, start to cluster the codes around axial codes. These will likely partially follow my research question “codes” above, but there may be additional ones and not all of my research questions may be addressed.

3. Once you’ve settled on the axial codes, look for disconfirming evidence. Are there participants who openly state something contrary to your code?

4. Then, look at the coding by group: AA vs. Hispanic vs. Asian. Are there any thematic differences by group? By gender?
APPENDIX I

CODEBOOK
Emerging Themes: Categories and Subtheme Definitions

**Intersectionality (INTER)**
The coming together and overlapping of aspects of diversity

- Ambiguity-attributable (AMB-ATT)
- Stereotypes (STEREO)
- Tokenism (TOKEN)
- Within-between racial/ethnic groups (WITH-BET)

**Playing the Game (PTG)**
Participants’ feelings of needing to conform to the dominant culture to succeed.

- Screening dress, language, behavior (SDLB)
- Majority privilege influence (MPI)
- Proving yourself (PY)

**Individual Characteristics/Attributes (ICA)**
Aspects of a participant’s being that promote or inhibit success.

- Inner-drive/self-motivation (ID/SM)
- Personality/attitude- being liked (P/A-LIKE)
- Desiring rigor/challenge (R/C)
- Perseverance in the face of setbacks (PERSEVERE)

**Support (SUP)**
Various methods (present or absent) of assistance for participants.

- Peer support (PEER)
- Isolation/Connection (CONNECT)
- Faculty/advisor/mentor relationships (FAC/ADV/MENT)
- Family influence (FAM)
- Funding (FUND)

**Voice (VOICE)**
The ability to speak up in the program, and the appreciation of this study.

- Study support (SS)
- Student expression (SE)
- Representation (REP)

**Talk the Talk, Walk the Walk (TALK-WALK)**
Counselor Education living up to claims of multicultural competence

- Faculty behavior (FB)
- Ambiguity-situational (AMB-SIT)
APPENDIX J

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA
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Table 1. Participant Demographic Data