Unmasking Whiteness: A Framework for Understanding Inclusive Leadership at a Predominately White Institution

Nicole Marie Latino
University of Denver

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UNMASKING WHITENESS: A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING
INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP AT A PREDOMINATELY WHITE INSTITUTION

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by
Nicole Marie Latino
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Advisor: Dr. Franklin A. Tuitt
Abstract

This study explored the personal journey of 11 White college administrators who were identified as inclusive leaders at a predominately White institution (PWI), recognized nationally for its work on partnering diversity and excellence. One overall question guided this study: How do White college administrators describe their journey to becoming successful inclusive leaders at a predominately White institution? This question was explored from the perspective of critical race theory (CRT), that is, inclusive leadership for White administrators could be achieved by intentionally examining their construction of Whiteness and their personal racial identity.

Narrative inquiry was used to co-construct a developmental framework on inclusive leadership based on three face-to-face interviews and two group interviews; 7 participants identified as female, 4 as male; 6 were senior-level administrators, and 5 were middle-level administrators. Findings were represented through narrative and fictional narrative. An inclusive leadership framework emerged that included three overarching categories of (a) four developmental phases, (b) four processes that contributed to the transition between the phases, and (c) transformative life experiences that influenced the personal growth between phases. Sub-phases on the construction of Whiteness and racial privilege emerged as part of each phase. Findings suggested that purposeful commitment to examining personal identities contributed to professional roles as inclusive leaders at a PWI.
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Chapter One: Introduction

Preface

Unmasking My White Identity

My journey to unmask my White racial identity began 16 years ago when I was being labeled by others as non-White. My great-grandparents were from southern Italy and Sicily and I identified as Italian-American. The last name Latino has caused some confusion in the way others perceive me. Depending on my geographic location, I am identified as Latina, Hispanic, Mexican, or Italian. While I would be honored to be part of any of these communities, I am proud of my Italian heritage and want people to trust me for who I am, not who they perceive me to be.

Growing up I never thought about race or my racial identity because I was accepted by my peers. I learned to treat everyone with respect and to appreciate their diverse backgrounds. I never thought to question the issue of racial discrimination because, like many Whites, I did not want to believe that I was part of the problem. I did not realize that when people perceived me to be White, or learned of my Italian ethnicity, I automatically received the privilege that is attached to the construction of Whiteness in the United States.

I use the word *construction* because my great-grandparents were first identified as non-White, then later as White, when they immigrated to the United States. Many cultures have experienced the fluid boundaries and systems of Whiteness and White
racial identity. Without naming the construction of Whiteness, this race continues to serve as the unquestioned norm. I deliberately selected my graduate program to continue investigating my racial identity and its impact on my professional role as an administrator/researcher at a PWI.

Due to my personal experience of being identified as non-White and my educational experiences, my mind and heart have been opened in new ways. I recognize the importance in continuing to examine my personal historical context and life history to deconstruct the exclusive messages that were part of my socialization. Our personal identities significantly influence our professional roles and our participation in organizational structures. As I have awakened to issues of privilege and oppression, I work to identify personal biases and prejudices that may still intentionally or unintentionally manifest in my current context.

It is painful to acknowledge my role in perpetuating systems of racial discrimination and this is a critical part of my life-journey. I know that I will continue to make mistakes and I cannot let fear of those mistakes prevent me from taking the risk to become more inclusive, both personally and professionally. Through this journey, my mind and heart are entwined as I strive to participate in identifying and eliminating discrimination. There is much learning still to come and I am glad I am not alone. We cannot change a history that was founded in exclusion. Yet, we all have a responsibility to transform the present and the future so no one experiences being perceived as an outsider because of their identities.
I am grateful to all the scholars, mentors, and role models who have contributed to my growth and learning. You inspired me to dedicate my life to becoming a more inclusive person and professional. This dissertation was another step in my journey.

**Shifting the Responsibility for Diversity and Excellence**

American colleges and universities are challenged to create campus environments that are inclusive of many individual and group identities in an effort to achieve Inclusive Excellence (Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005). Inclusive Excellence is a relatively new concept that encourages inclusive learning environments that infuse diversity and excellence into every aspect of an institution including: mission, policies and procedures, hiring practices, curriculum, and research (Milem, et al.). Stated differently, inclusive environments are defined as those that embed diversity and excellence into every component of the campus community (Milem, et al.).

Although all identities are important to the rich mixture that constitutes a diverse campus community, this study focuses on race and ethnicity because, as a nation, we continue to experience divisiveness and polarization in higher education based on these elements of our humanness (Altbach, Lomotey, & Rivers, 2002; Hurtado, 1992; Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey, 2002). Creating inclusive institutions is of paramount importance because researchers are predicting a dramatic shift in campus diversity, in particular, the racial demographics of college students (Altbach, et al.; Banks, 2005; Smith, et al.). This phenomenon challenges all college administrators to create inclusive environments for every student (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen & Allen, 1999).
Historically, leaders of color have shouldered the responsibility for transforming PWIs to be more inclusive. It is appropriate to focus only on White college administrators for a study of inclusive leadership at PWIs, because the unwavering commitment, perseverance, and leadership by administrators of color has already been profound. Under their leadership, significant progress has been made to advance issues of diversity and inclusiveness in higher education, particularly at PWIs (Valverde, 2003). They have been forced to navigate through exclusive practices and racist climates, and many administrators of color still experience these harsh climates (Valverde). Yet, these leaders remain steadfast in their quest to create more inclusive environments that welcome and value all identities in campus communities originally founded to exclude individuals who are not perceived as White (Hurtado, et al., 1999; Zinn, 2003).

The consequences of White privilege—privilege assigned due to a perceived membership in the dominant race—for administrators and faculty of color at PWIs, includes limited opportunity for promotion and issues of tokenism (Valverde, 2003). The rationale to focus exclusively on White college administrators in this study is to shift the responsibility for diversity and excellence from administrators of color to everyone on campus. The ultimate goal is to dismantle the White privilege that is still embedded in PWIs through multicultural alliances. While there has been some progress in hiring administrators of color at colleges and universities, the majority of administrators at PWIs are White (Danowitz Sagaria, 2002).

The creation of inclusive campus environments by White college administrators is made more difficult because “Whiteness as a set of normative cultural practices is visible
most clearly to those it definitely excludes . . . those who are securely housed within its borders usually do not examine it” (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 228-229). It may be difficult for White college administrators to acknowledge and understand their racial privilege and the barriers it poses when creating inclusive environments. Research specific to the personal journey of White college administrators (identified as inclusive leaders) at a PWI recognized nationally for working to achieve Inclusive Excellence is critical to shift the responsibility of diversity and excellence to everyone on campus.

In this study, White inclusive leaders (WILs) are identified because of their perceived commitment to advancing the diversity and Inclusive Excellence agenda at a PWI. These WILs are recommended for this study because others view them as committed to unmasking the impact of their racial privilege on their professional roles at a PWI. This study proposes to fill a gap in the literature by exploring how WILs understand their personal construction of Whiteness and how their racial identity influences their ability and/or inability to participate in inclusive leadership at a PWI.

**Making the Construction of Whiteness Visible**

Capitalizing the word *White* is an intentional choice to ensure visibility as Whiteness is investigated and deconstructed throughout this study. Many White individuals continue to believe that intentional racist practices no longer exist (Feagin, Vera, & Batur, 2000). This is one example of a multiplicity of barriers tied to the construction of Whiteness that poses challenges to developing as a WIL. These barriers are overcome by consciously examining the social construction of Whiteness, which “shakes the foundations of racism” (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 24). WILs are
challenged to discover the significance of the privilege attached to their Whiteness, both
personally and professionally. A critical examination of the construction of Whiteness
provides the foundation for them to understand that unchallenged racism results in the
loss of human potential (Tatum, 1997).

White individuals have a responsibility to understand campus race relations
because ignoring race maintains the status quo of White privilege (Smith, et al., 2002).
Those who lead through a color-blind lens (i.e., the belief that race has no role in
everyday life) benefit from a system that operates under dominant norms and structures—
where systemic privilege and power remain invisible—because Whiteness is not part of
the race discourse (Wildman & Smith, 1996). Using a color-blind perspective may
perpetuate a belief that the problems of race are myths that should not be made real
(Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003). One of the myths that is contradicted is that racism only
happens in individual acts, rather than through systems of racial privilege (McIntosh,
1998). This type of awareness can be accomplished by making systemic White privilege
visible (Frankenberg, 1993; McIntosh, 1998; McIntyre, 1997; Johnson, 2001; Kendall
2006).

Color-blind racism perpetuates exclusive campus environments that generate a
host of issues, for example, the need for students of color to assimilate into the dominant
racial culture at PWIs to be successful (Nebeker, 1998). White college administrators
who have not developed a critical race consciousness about their racial identity may
continue “to reinforce the social, political, and emotional realities” (Brieschke, 1998,
p. 68) that maintain inequitable practices and White racial privilege (Doane & Bonilla-
Silva, 2003). On the other hand, White individuals who have engaged in exploring their racial privilege may develop a critical race consciousness and actively participate in eliminating racism at PWIs.

**Developing a Critical Race Consciousness**

White racial consciousness calls for leaders to recognize the guaranteed, but unearned privileges that accompany their Whiteness (McIntosh, 1998). Freire (1993) believed that leaders who were authentically committed to transformation must continuously re-examine themselves in an effort to develop a critical consciousness of racial discrimination. Freire coined the term *conscientization* to explain an individual’s ability to “perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (p. 17). Landreman, Rasmussen, King, and Jiang (2007) found that college educators who developed a critical consciousness facilitated an environment in which students developed the necessary skills, knowledge, and education to effectively participate in a multicultural society.

Achieving a critical race consciousness may provide the opportunity for White leaders to recognize their shared participation in creating a more inclusive campus community that respects diverse racial and ethnic groups. Through multicultural alliances, WILs can engage in eliminating systems of racism. An environment that is oppressive to anyone, negatively impacts everyone (Feagin, et al., 2000).

**Problem Statement and Rationale**

Most White college administrators often focus solely on compositional diversity (i.e., the numerical representation of racial and ethnic groups) to demonstrate a
commitment to diversity\(^1\) (Milem, et al., 2005). Although an increase in compositional diversity is a valuable part of a campus diversity agenda, and has important benefits, such as cross-racial and ethnic interaction and diversity in decision-making, it is clear from the research that diversity must be embedded throughout the institution to create equitable treatment and just practices for all members of the campus community (Chesler, 2004; Milem, et al.). In addition to increasing representation of racial and ethnic groups, an increased focus to identify and eliminate systems of racial discrimination to achieve acceptance and retention of a diverse campus community is needed (Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, et al., 1999). Transforming colleges and universities by creating inclusive environments in the United States requires that responsibility for diversity be disseminated to everyone at the institution (Milem, et al.).

Over the past several decades, the creation of offices of multicultural affairs, ethnic-cultural centers, or equity centers has demonstrated tremendous progress in addressing the needs of students of color at PWIs (Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002). The challenge is that campus officials tend to refer issues of diversity and excellence only to the staff at these centers, when they exist, rather than expecting each area to take shared responsibility (Garcia, 1999).

Embedding diversity throughout the campus can lead to the transformation of an institution into an inclusive environment grounded in excellence, with diversity as a central component of the learning process (Clayton-Pederson & McTighe Musil, 2005; Tuitt, 2003). As PWIs continue to face challenges related to diversity, coupled with

\(^1\) For this study I define diversity as intentional engagement across racial and ethnic lines (Milem, et al., 2005).
changing racial and ethnic demographics, college administrators must develop skills to implement Inclusive Excellence (Milem, et al, 2005). To meet the challenge of racial and ethnic inclusive campus environments, this study explores WILs’ context and life histories that have shaped their personal racial and ethnic identities, to understand how their construction of Whiteness and their racial privilege has influenced their ability or inability to engage in inclusive leadership at a PWI.

**Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to explore the personal journeys of White college administrators—identified as inclusive leaders—at a PWI recognized nationally for working to achieve Inclusive Excellence. It is important to note that, without the leadership of administrators and faculty of color at this PWI, particularly the chief diversity officer (CDO), this predominately White campus would not have been recognized nationally for its progress in partnering diversity and excellence.

A number of White administrators were identified as inclusive leaders at this PWI by their active participation in transforming Inclusive Excellence from rhetoric to practice. This research may serve as a resource for other White leaders to examine their personal construction of Whiteness. To this end, the present study explored the following research questions:

How did White college administrators describe their journey to becoming a successful, inclusive leader at a PWI?

1. What life experiences contributed to their success as WILs?
2. How, if at all, did WILs make meaning of the impact of their racial identity in their current role at a PWI?

3. How, if at all, did White college administrators describe and understand the roles and responsibilities of WILs at a PWI?

4. What strategies did WILs use to promote Inclusive Excellence in their work?

The following section explains the conceptual model that guided the review of the relevant literature for this study.

**Inclusive Leadership Conceptual Model**

While a multiplicity of leadership theories exists in the literature, there was no model addressing the concept of inclusive leadership specifically for White college administrators. However, Brown (2004) did develop a model to address social justice leadership in primary and secondary school environments—the leadership model for principal preparation programs—that combine adult learning theory, transformational learning theory, and critical social theory, with critical reflection, rationale discourse, and policy praxis. Borrowing from Brown’s model, a new inclusive leadership conceptual model was created and used to review the literature on critical race theory (CRT), the construction of Whiteness, Inclusive Excellence, transformational learning theory, and higher education leadership for this study. The literature review includes components that may provide a more comprehensive understanding of inclusive leadership for White college administrators. This model on inclusive leadership (see Figure 1) serves as the conceptual perspective and informs each chapter of this study.
This conceptual model illustrates how the relevant literature for this study is identified. First, an inference is made that White leaders who work to eliminate racial discrimination have acquired the knowledge and skills that contribute to transformation through a critical investigation of their personal historical context and life history. Then, three components for developing WILship are recognized: (a) the construction of Whiteness through a (CRT) epistemological (racial knowledge) and ontological (racial reality) perspective, (b) Inclusive Excellence and transformational learning theory, and (c) literature on inclusive leadership and higher education leadership. These categories of literature are explored to demonstrate how CRT informs inclusive leadership in higher education.

Positioning CRT as the epistemological (racial knowledge) and ontological (racial reality) perspective, the goal was to critically analyze the aforementioned bodies of literature. The conceptual model for WILship also represented the researcher’s personal journey to explore her own construction of Whiteness and the impact of her role as a leader/researcher in higher education. Finally, the goal of this conceptual model was to illustrate how each circle was interconnected and could serve as a visual map for understanding the bodies of literature that contributed to inclusive leadership for White college administrators.
Description of the Inclusive Leadership conceptual model.

The outer circle of the inclusive leadership conceptual model (see Figure 1) represents the components of the personal journey in investigating how White college administrators experience race and their personal racial identity. Each element contributes to racial knowledge, racial reality, and racial identity for White leaders. The first inner circle includes components that made the construction of Whiteness—personal racial and ethnic identity and racial privilege—visible. Inclusive Excellence offers a comprehensive plan to partner diversity and excellence throughout PWIs and provides a rationale for shifting this responsibility to everyone on campus. Transformational
learning theory is used to identify how individuals made new meaning of their context and life history.

Transformational learning challenges and transforms exclusive perceptions and behaviors through reflection and emotional connection (Mezirow, 2003). The second inner circle integrates CRT in discourse, reflection, consciousness, and praxis (reflection and action). These components are the analytical methods employed to critically examine how personal identities (sense of self) influence professional roles. The center of the model is inclusive leadership, the ultimate goal. The arrows illustrate the fluidity of each circle because each builds upon the other to develop a conceptual understanding of inclusive leadership for White college administrators.

Using CRT, this conceptual model provided an opportunity to investigate issues of race and racism by exploring how White individuals create their racial reality (ontological) and racial knowledge (epistemological) about the construction of Whiteness and their personal racial identity. Lynn, Yosso, Solorzano, and Parker (2002) explored CRT as an epistemological and ontological perspective in analyzing race in research. These racial “systems of knowing” (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 258) were connected to the context and life history, personal identity (sense of self), and worldview for White college administrators. Redefining race epistemology and ontology enabled individuals to achieve “intercultural maturity” (King & Baxter-Magolda, 2005, p. 576). Ontological lenses were challenged through critical examination of the construction of Whiteness and one’s own racial identity, because “the social ontology of Whiteness is a species of racism” (Yancy, 2004, p. 14). Yancy explained that “whether racism is in the heart or
necessarily consisting of a set of racist beliefs, Whiteness continues to be a living, breathing historical construction, a social ontological performance that has profound, pervasive, and systemic oppressive consequences for nonwhite people” (p. 14).

Kirshman (2005) suggested the underlying assumption was that Whites were capable of unlearning dominant race epistemology and ontology. Through critically exploring the historical context and life histories that shaped their racial worldview, Whites could dismantle “Eurocentric epistemologies and dominant ideologies such as meritocracy, objectivity, and neutrality” (Banks & Banks, 2004, p. 475). Tisdell (2003) identified the importance for individuals to spiral back to their earlier context and life history in an effort to make new meaning of their current context. According to Cole and Knowles (2001), as research participants narrated their life history, they disclosed aspects of their personal identities. These personal narratives located the context to understand personal identity (sense of self) and how they hoped to be perceived by others (Cole & Knowles).

An inference is made that exploring personal identity (sense of self) is critical since the personal and professional are interconnected. Personal identity is how people conceptualized who they are, and is constantly evolving based on context and experience (Hilton, 2003). To develop a more inclusive personal identity (sense of self), White individuals need to explore their racial identity to deconstruct how Whiteness is the unquestioned norm (McIntyre, 1997). Hilton (2003) and others found that social influences contributed to a person’s sense of self.
Transformational learning theory is a factor in the learning of White college administrators in two ways. First, transformational learning is defined as the ability to form meaning based on critical self-reflection (Kegan, 1994). Critical self-reflection is a way for White college administrators to reform how they make meaning of their experiences in an effort to change how their racial epistemology and racial ontology are influenced by the biases of others (Kegan). Second, critical awareness of racial discrimination may prepare White individuals to actively engage in critical race praxis.

Freire (1993) defined praxis as “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (p. 33). Mezirow (1991) concurred that action is a critical component of transformation. McIntrye (1997) further argued that without critical race reflection, Whites were able to distance themselves from exploring how Whiteness perpetuated individual and systemic racism. In order to achieve inclusive leadership it was critical for White college administrators to understand their own personal racial identities and the interconnectedness of these identities with their professional roles at PWIs.

CRT allowed for fictional narratives as a catalyst to transform meaning perspectives since imagination was considered a powerful method to illustrate the unknown. Mezirow (2000) explained “imagination is central to understanding the unknown . . . it is the way we examine alternative interpretations of our experiences by trying on another’s point of view” (p. 20). Fictional representations also provided an opportunity to develop insights and connections into the human experience (Cole & Knowles, 2001).
Summary

Investigating the historical context and life history that has shaped a WIL’s racial worldview is critical to addressing the challenges of creating inclusive environments at PWIs. Making the construction of Whiteness visible exposes racial domination that maintains systems of White privilege (Wander, Martin, & Nakayama, 1999). Sustainable transformation involves WILs and other White individuals intentionally exploring their personal role and shared participation in eliminating systems of racial discrimination by making these issues visible both personally and professionally. A critical component to building multicultural alliances is for WILs to make new meaning of their personal racial identities, both in a historical context as well as a contemporary context in their roles at a PWI. The purpose of this study is to explore the personal journey of White college administrators who have been identified as WILs at a PWI recognized nationally for working to achieve Inclusive Excellence.

In chapter one, the research problem and rationale were outlined, research questions were presented, the historical legacy of progress established, the current context of shifting the responsibility for diversity and excellence from only administrators of color to everyone at PWIs was described, and a conceptual model that emerged from the literature review to explore inclusive leadership for White college administrators was provided.

In chapter two, using the inclusive leadership conceptual model, the relevant literature is critiqued through a critical race epistemological (racial knowledge) and ontological (racial reality) perspective. This perspective establishes a foundation to
explore how WILs’ personal racial identity is interconnected with their professional roles at PWIs.

In chapter three, the qualitative narrative research design is presented as a method to co-construct with the research participants a developmental framework for understanding inclusive leadership at a PWI. Using Crotty’s (1998) outline for a research design, the epistemological and conceptual perspectives, methodology, and methods for this study are discussed.

In chapter four, the three overarching categories that materialized through the findings of this study are presented, with specific detail to Phase One: Normalizing Inclusiveness, and Phase Two: Performing Inclusiveness of the inclusive leadership framework. The first two phases of inclusive leadership are intellectual/political/professional.

In chapter five the final two phases of the inclusive leadership framework are presented. These connect the mind with the heart when working to achieve Inclusive Excellence. Phase Three: Embracing Inclusiveness, and Phase Four: Living Inclusiveness demonstrate how WILs develop an emotional/personal connection when working toward inclusive leadership. Each phase in chapters four and five concludes with a narrative representation of the experience through a composite voice of the WILs and is followed by a discussion and analysis section.

Finally, chapter six summarizes the dissertation through a fictional narrative experience to further connect the mind with the heart to achieve inclusive leadership.
Theory is then bridged with practice through tangible recommendations outlining how to implement the inclusive leadership framework.
Chapter Two: Review of the Discourse

As long as race is something only applied to nonwhite people, as long as White people are not racially seen and named, they function as a human norm. Other people are raced, we [White people] are just people. (Dyer, 1997, p. 1)

The research on inclusive leadership was limited as it related to higher education administrators. Most of the available research focused on primary and secondary institutions of education rather than colleges and universities. Since the purpose of the present study was to critically explore the personal journey by which WILs unmasked their construction of Whiteness and the subsequent impact on their roles at PWIs, this literature review was organized as follows:

First, the literature on CRT was presented as the central component of the inclusive leadership conceptual model. Next, literature about the construction of Whiteness (White racial and ethnic identity development and White privilege), Inclusive Excellence, and transformational learning were reviewed to provide contexts and life history that framed a racial worldview for White individuals. The final section examined the few studies about inclusive leadership as well as the larger body of literature about higher education leadership.

Introduction to Critical Race Theory (CRT)

CRT developed as a response to critical legal studies. During the mid-1980s, a group of legal scholars questioned how the laws in the United States continued to favor people from upper social classes, and disregarded the rights of people from lower social
classes (Lynn & Parker, 2006). Critical legal studies developed into a movement to continue the investigation into the role of law in the United States as it addressed issues of social class inequality (Lynn & Parker). Although the focus of the critical legal studies movement was to re-examine the impact of the law on the less powerful in the United States, critical race scholars argued that the critical legal studies movement did not sufficiently challenge racism within the law and the negative consequences for people of color (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn & Parker). These critical race scholars responded by making the racism that parallels social class inequities in the law visible (Lynn & Parker). Critical race scholars adapted the central philosophy of the critical legal studies to show that issues of racism were endemic in the United States, including within our educational systems (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ladson-Billings; Ladson-Billings & Tate; Lynn & Parker).

CRT founders, including Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, Mari Matsuda, Richard Delgado, Kimberle Crenshaw, and others, established the foundational concepts of CRT by outlining the central tenets of race and racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Lynn & Parker, 2006). Delgado and Stefancic summarized the central themes of CRT to provide a context for this scholarly movement as follows:

1. CRT theorists believed that race was an ordinary experience for people of color. Race was difficult to address since color-blind notions of fairness and equal treatment tended to covertly perpetuate racism.
2. *Interest convergence* was a term coined by Derrick Bell to define a situation in which issues for people of color were advanced when there was a benefit to White individuals.

3. Race was a social construction that society “invents, manipulates, and retires when convenient” (p. 8).

4. Minority groups may be racialized at different times in order to address the changing needs in society.

5. Since each race had its own evolving history it was critical to recognize the impact of intersections on social identities.

6. Storytelling, narratives, and counter-narratives provided an opportunity for people of color to express a unique voice about their experience with race and racism in the United States culture.

Although critical race theorists defined counter-narratives as a method to increase the invisibility of marginalized people whose stories were not often shared, these stories were also meant to expose, critically examine, and challenge the social construction of the dominant racial narrative (Delgado, 1989; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). To this end, the central theme of the social construction of race was used to critically examine, expose, and challenge the historical contexts and life histories that have shaped the dominant racial narratives for WILs. The social construction of race meant that “racial difference is a human creation. . . .and is subject to change” (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p. 8). Yet, race was also a social reality with real consequences (i.e., job promotion, housing, profiling) for
individuals who did not fall within the fluid boundaries of Whiteness (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Kivel, 2002). According to Gillborn (2005):

One of the most powerful and dangerous aspects of Whiteness is that many (possibly the majority) of White people have no awareness of Whiteness as a social construction, let alone their own role in sustaining and playing out the inequities as the heart of Whiteness. (p. 490)

Additional issues of these themes that were found to perpetuate race and racism included color-blindness and interest convergence (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Research suggested that contemporary color-blindness was a covert form of racism in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Carr, 1997; Delgado & Stefancic). For example, many White individuals and others may have employed color-blindness as the solution to the problem of race in today’s society with comments such as “I don’t see race, I only see people” or “Why can’t we just move past race to become a post-racial society?” The notion of color-blindness was used mostly by White individuals who insisted that everyone was treated the same in response to the misperceptions of affirmative action (Delgado & Stefancic). Although there may have been good intentions with such comments, the impact was negative because race did matter and racism was still present in the contemporary United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Carr, 1997; West, 1993).

Similarly, Derek Bell (1980) used the term interest convergence to describe the ways in which issues of diversity were only advanced when White individuals identified a personal benefit. In other words, when the interests of people of color and White people converged, they collaborated to create more inclusive environments. Apple (1998) encouraged researchers to put the construction of Whiteness in the foreground of studies,
as a way to unmask the consequences of unchallenged dominant racial stories. If White individuals engaged in CRT, they may have promoted their own interests while claiming to represent the issues of people of color (Aldous Bergerson, 2003). Sleeter (1994) warned that Whites needed to resist their tendency to intervene. These concerns were warranted and were therefore addressed in an effort to demonstrate a critical race consciousness throughout this literature review.

**Construction of Whiteness and CRT**

The CRT epistemology (racial knowledge) and ontology (racial reality) provided a framework of White racism with which White college administrators would be able to further investigate the construction of Whiteness to identify and eliminate exclusive practices at PWIs. Sleeter (1994) defined White racism as a “system of rules, procedures, and tacit beliefs that result in Whites collectively maintaining control of wealth and power” (p. 6). According to Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998), the critical component to a positive White racial identity was to unlearn White racism. White individuals who engaged in a critical race discourse in reference to the construction of Whiteness would then be able to begin to dismantle White racism (Sleeter, 1994). Many White people were not conscious of their role in perpetuating racism which made it more difficult to recognize how Whiteness was a social construction that provided advantages to some while disadvantaging others (Bush, 2004; Gillborn, 2005). Using CRT to make the construction of Whiteness and subsequent racial privilege visible provided an opportunity to educate Whites about our responsibility to disrupt racist practices. White individuals who investigated Whiteness through a critical race perspective learned to identify White
racism in systems and in their personal lives (Marx & Pennington, 2003). Delgado (1997) argued that the role of Whites in deconstructing the “yokes of oppression that burden both them and us” (p. 616) was to assist other Whites in understanding the socially constructed role of White racism.

The goal of the current study was not for Whites to take over the space created by CRT for voices that were normally silenced, but to intentionally and critically explore the construction of Whiteness in an effort to authentically engage in multicultural alliances that worked to eliminate racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Manglitz, 2003; Pascale, 2008). Focus on these issues would serve to assist Whites in identifying and eliminating our own role in perpetuating racial discrimination as we strove to become inclusive leaders. Bell (1995) explained that White individuals who used CRT have made the consequences of Whiteness visible and are “committed to the overthrow of their racial privilege” (p. 888). In their study with White educators, Manglitz, Johnson-Bailey, and Cervero (2005) found that the critical analysis of one’s historical context was essential to becoming more inclusive change agents and leaders.

The inability for White individuals to view Whiteness as a race perpetuated racism through color-blindness. White narratives grounded in inclusiveness would counter the dominant White racial reality to make the social construction of Whiteness visible to other White leaders. Manglitz, et al., (2005) argued the importance of critically investigating and reconstructing Whiteness, since White researchers and White educators ignored many issues of White racism. Traditional narratives on race and racism were derived from an exclusive legacy that perpetuated the myth that White privilege was
natural in the United States (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Re-constructed White narratives focused on inclusiveness could counter the racial reality that kept Whiteness—as a race—invisible. These narratives were important to this research, as White college administrators, identified as inclusive leaders, understood how their racial identity impacted their professional role at PWIs.

**Construction of Whiteness**

Typically, research focused on Whiteness represented race as a biological fact or as a human creation (Allen, 1994; Andersen, 2003; Hernstein & Murray, 1994; Winant, 1997). The researchers who viewed race as a biological fact used this argument as an attempt to justify that Whites were superior in the United States (Hernstein & Murray). Solorzano and Yosso (2002) argued that White privilege played a significant role in creating narratives about race and a biological justification for racial discrimination.

The literature that suggested Whiteness was a social construction created by humans also recognized the real consequences of White racism, including the inequitable distribution of power and resources that were maintained through systems of racial privilege (Allen, 1994; Andersen, 2003; Brodkin, 1998; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Frankenberg, 1993; Ignatiev, 1995; Kendall, 2006; McIntosh, 1989; McIntyre, 1997; Roediger, 1994, and others). The superiority of the White race was seen to be a fictional invention that simultaneously perpetuated the real consequences of White racism through systems of racial privilege (Allen).

White leaders who were unable to conceptualize the construction of Whiteness may have failed to identify their social advantages (i.e., promotion, networks, and
resources) at PWIs. Many Whites were now concerned—due to the changing demographics—that they were the new victims of racism since they would no longer represent the clear numerical majority in the United States (Gallagher, 1997). Using CRT to explore the construction of Whiteness at PWIs, provided an opportunity for inclusive leaders and other White administrators to investigate the maintenance of their racial privilege (Rodriguez, 1998). Leonardo (2004) defined racial privilege as the belief that White individuals gained advantages by “virtue of being constructed as White” (p. 137). Through her personal historical context and experiences, McIntosh (1998) explored how she accepted White privilege as normal and understood race as an isolated problem for those individuals considered to be the racial other.

To disrupt the continuous dominant racial narrative requires that White individuals continue to take responsibility for re-examining the historical context and life histories that shape their racial worldview. The following section discusses the relevant identity development models that influence the construction of Whiteness.

**Identity Development Models**

The purpose of including a discussion on racial and ethnic identity development models was to demonstrate how critical analysis of Whites’ historical context and life histories provided insight into the ways in which their personal racial identity (sense of self) was constructed. These models provided a framework to understand how White people may have learned to see themselves as racialized beings.

Racial and ethnic identity models were conceptualized as developmental stages through which individuals transitioned as their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs
changed. These developmental stages were considered important to achieve a healthy identity (Rowe Bennett & Atkinson, 1994). The first stage generally described a state of naïve consciousness, color-blindness, and acceptance of the dominant stereotypes in society. The next stage was marked by disorientation in which the individual began to question previously held beliefs of dominant stereotypes (Rowe, et al.). The third stage consisted of an immersion into the dominant values and the rejection of other racial groups. In the fourth and final stage, individuals developed a positive sense of a racial self while accepting the importance of other cultures (Rowe, Behrens, & Leach, 1995).

**White racial identity development.**

Exploring White racial identity development was critical to this research to help explain how White individuals developed a personal identity (sense of self) about their racial identity and their subsequent racial privilege (Hardiman, 1982; Hardiman & Jackson, 1992; Helms, 1984; 1990; 1995; Kendall, 2006; McIntosh, 1998; Tatum, 1997; Terry, 1978). Historically, White males controlled the construction of racial discourse, which resulted in Whiteness and White racial identity remaining invisible in the literature (Hardiman, 2001). The two exceptions were Caditz (1976) and Terry, who developed typologies of White individuals. Terry stated that Whites had the privileged choice to ignore their Whiteness in the United States. Kivel (2002) found that White individuals tended to ignore their racial identity by choosing to identify as other groups, including Italian, working class, or Jewish. Accordingly, critical multiculturalists urged Whites to examine their racial identity because it was a powerful lens that defined their racial
worldview in terms of perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997).

The White identity development (WID) model and the White racial identity development model (WRID) were the two most notable (Hardiman, 1982; Hardiman & Jackson, 1992; Helms 1984; 1990; 1995). Both models were conceptualized as a shift in focus from people of color to the “perpetrators and beneficiaries of racism” (Hardiman 1982, p. 3). With these models, Whites who chose to acknowledge their racial identity could recognize how they constructed their perceptions and behavior toward other racial groups (Bowser & Hunt, 1996). Using White identity development models as a framework allowed individuals to achieve a deeper understanding of their personal racial identity, racial worldview, and their role in perpetuating racism (Bower & Hunt, 1981; 1996). The WID and WRID models were created to address the progress of racism in the United States with the understanding that a positive White identity could only be achieved through the critical exploration of the construction of Whiteness (Helms, 1995). White individuals may have resisted identifying as racially privileged, choosing instead to focus on the intersections of their identities in which they may have experienced oppression (Goodman, 2001). For a summary of White identity development models, see Appendix A.

**Intersections of social identity and CRT.**

While the focus of this study was on White race and ethnicity for reasons outlined previously, it was important to explore how the intersections of WILs’ social identities may have impacted their ability or inability to recognize their racial privilege. In the
words of Johnson (2001), “to have privilege is to be allowed to move through your life without being marked in ways that identify you as an outsider, as exceptional or ‘other’ to be excluded, or to be included but always with conditions” (p. 33).

Often, individuals focused on the identities in which they experienced oppression instead of their identities with attached privilege (Goodman, 2001). The CRT movement focused on addressing issues of race and racism while participating in the larger goal of eliminating all forms of oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Literature on how Whiteness was historically constructed for certain White ethnic groups provided insight into how the intersections of class, nationality, and religion contributed to the invention of the White race and subsequent racial privilege (Allen, 1994; Brodkin, 1998; Igatief, 1995). According to King (2006), ethnic identity was influenced by a variety of social identities including social class, gender, political affiliations, and religion. Roediger (1994) argued that White identity for many European immigrants emerged from their fear of wage class dependency. In essence, race materialized as the force that maintained social inequality and social class separation (Brodkin). White racial acceptance and White racial privilege were the “organizing principle that cuts across class, gender, and other . . . social identities” (Leonardo, 2004, p. 140).

White racial consciousness was defined as “one’s awareness of being white and what that implies in relation to those who do not share white group membership” (Rowe, et al., 1994, pp. 133-134). Individuals tended to develop their initial racial attitudes from influential sources in their lives; discrimination was connected to the way they perceived people from different races (Johnson, 2001; Rowe, et al.).
Reconstructing a White racial identity.

A growing body of literature, focused on the dialogue of Whiteness, emerged following the WID and WRID, even though a new White racial identity development model to further investigate the historical construction of Whiteness was yet to be created (Allen, 1994; Gallagher, 1997; Giroux, 1997; Ignatiev, 1995; Ignatiev & Garvey, 1996; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998; Roediger, 1994, Winant, 1997). While scholars challenged White identity development based on the social construction of race, the construction of Whiteness was still embedded throughout social and cultural structures in the United States (Allen; Ignatiev; Ignatiev & Garvey; Roediger; Rodriguez, 1998).

White people may have resisted other cultures’ commitment to their language and heritage based on what their own European ancestors gave up or lost to gain White privilege (Hardiman, 2001). The benefits granted by acceptance into the “White Club” (Hardiman, p. 123) seemed to be a fair trade for giving up the unique languages, histories, and cultures of many European immigrants. This trade created a void in identity for White Americans (Kivel, 2002).

White ethnic identity.

Since a salient ethnic identity led to a sense of community (i.e., individuals who share similar interests and knowledge), this identity tended to be stronger for people of color than for most White people (Phinney, 1996). Roediger (1994) found that many Whites born in the United States lacked a sense of community. The exceptions were Italian-Americans and Irish-Americans (Roediger). This lack of community among other White ethnic groups was problematic because sociologists identified ethnicity as a critical
component to a sense of self (King, 2006). Perry (2001) explained that White individuals regarded race and ethnicity as connected only to people of color. This resulted in a sense of White culturelessness that perpetuated racial privilege (Perry). Through the lens of culturelessness, Whites remained unaware of their positions of racial power and privilege because their racial identity was considered to be the norm (Aldous Bergerson, 2003; Perry).

Research suggested that a salient ethnic identity contributed to a deeper self-acceptance as well as higher self-esteem (Phinney, 1996). Phinney proposed three reasons to explain the psychological importance of ethnicity:

1. The shared cultural values that distinguished groups.
2. The subjectivity of ethnic identity that was central to group membership.
3. The powerlessness associated with minority status. (p. 919)

These three themes were critical to understanding the social construction of Whiteness, in particular for many European groups that were first constructed as non-White and then constructed as White in the United States (Brodkin, 1998; Ignatiev, 1995). Immigrants accepted as White in the United States were viewed as sharing the same values as their other White peers, which universalized the construction of Whiteness. Yet, ethnicities of color (e.g., Native American, Latino/a, Black or African American, and Asian) in the United States were viewed as sharing the values of their native countries (Phinney, 1996). The construction of Whiteness—including White racial identity—remained invisible because it seemed synonymous with being an American in the United States for many European immigrants (Alba, 1990). Alba found that many
White individuals were hesitant to discuss their ethnic identity because it was perceived as “contradicting their American identity” (p. 51).

The goal for many European immigrants was to attain the White American identity and to be assimilated into this new culture that afforded opportunities for social advancement (Omni & Winant, 1994). White ethnicity was a complex identity since Whites could participate in systems of White privilege while embracing their ethnic culture, however, for many European immigrants, Whiteness was achieved by aligning themselves with mainstream values and renouncing their unique histories and cultures (Brodkin, 1998; Kivel, 2002). Without an ethnic consciousness for White individuals, there remained a racial dichotomy between those who chose (and were allowed) to assimilate into the United States culture and those forced into the category of racial other (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Since White Americans in the United States came with racial privilege that led to social advancement, many ethnic identities that were first considered “not quite White” (p. 60), such as Italians, Irish and Jews, later accepted the entitlement of Whiteness by denying privilege to non-White individuals (Brodkin).

Eichstedt (2001) cautioned that some Whites may use their ethnic identity as a way to distance themselves from the privileges they received due to their racial identity. For many Whites, it was challenging to acknowledge that they had racial privilege. The privilege identity model presented in the next section provided an analytical tool to more effectively recognize the resistance to losing privilege attached to a dominant identity (e.g., White, male, heterosexual) in the United States.
Privilege identity development.

Watt (2007) developed the privilege identity exploration (PIE) model to assist individuals to develop a critical consciousness by intentionally exploring their privilege. The PIE model, which was conceptualized through psychodynamic theory, created awareness about how individuals reacted to learning about issues of diversity (Watt). Fear and entitlement were central components of the PIE model, and were used to explain the challenge for individuals to engage in critical dialogue as well as a critical exploration of their privilege (Watt). For example, a White individual may have consciously or subconsciously feared losing power if she or he worked toward dismantling systems of privilege maintained by the dominant racial identity (Feagin, et al., 2000; Goodman, 2001). White individuals may have felt a sense of entitlement to racial privilege and exhibited defensiveness when engaged in an exploration about White privilege (Watt).

Johnson (2001) proposed that people received privilege when recognized by others as belonging to certain social groups; racial privilege was not granted to individuals based on merit or personal accomplishment. Whiteness was a privileged identity in the United States, therefore people perceived by others as White were granted racial privilege (Johnson). The purpose of recognizing racial privilege was to remove the power of the construction of Whiteness in the United States (Dyer, 2003).

Recognizing privileged identity.

Watt (2007) identified three defense statuses used to avoid the recognition of a privileged identity. First, an individual may have experienced the denial status by creating arguments to defend privilege instead of recognizing the consequences of
privilege (Watt). For example, to justify racial privilege, many White people believed in the myth of meritocracy and claimed that if people of color would just work hard (like they did), they would earn the same advantages. An individual may then have assumed a *deflection status* by turning a dialogue about racism into a topic that was less threatening (Watt). Recognizing racism may have moved an individual into the *rationalization status* to avoid addressing issues of racial privilege that perpetuated injustice (Watt). Typically, individuals who experienced the rationalization status focused on the parts of their identities that experienced oppression instead of critically exploring the parts of their identities that were positioned in power and privilege (Watt).

**Contemplating privileged identity.**

Individuals who continued to think about privilege while avoiding emotional involvement experienced the *intellectualization status* in which they presented arguments in an effort to explain injustice (Watt, 2007). The avoidance of emotional connection to injustice enabled privileged individuals to remain unaware of the “depth or breadth of social oppression” (Goodman, 2001, p. 29). When individuals began to engage emotionally they experienced the *principium status* and made an argument based on personal conviction (Watt). For example, a White individual may have recognized racism and felt upset that anyone would have to experience this type of injustice; simultaneously she or he may have argued that affirmative action perpetuated unfair advantages since everyone should be treated equal (i.e., color-blindness).
Addressing privileged identity.

When individuals argued that they addressed issues of injustice by assisting individuals who were less fortunate, they experienced the benevolence status (Watt, 2007). In this defense status, individuals were unable to recognize how this behavior contributed to maintaining systems of privilege (Watt). Finally, individuals may have engaged in the minimization status by trying to find a “recipe for cross-cultural interaction” (Watt, p. 122) instead of critically questioning their participation in systems that maintained racial discrimination.

The PIE model provided a foundation to understand the behaviors that individuals representing privileged groups may have experienced as they worked to critically explore their privilege, as well as their role in maintaining systems of privilege. This model also served as a reminder that developing a critical consciousness required a continuous process of engaged transformational learning about individual roles in disrupting systems of racial power and privilege (Watt).

Transformational Learning Theory

While there was a significant amount of literature on transformational learning theory, this section explores relevant research to understand how an individual’s “meaning perspective—framed within cultural assumptions and presuppositions—directly influence the meaning an individual derives from his or her experiences” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 4). Brown (2004) explained that transformational learning assisted individuals in changing their perceptions of their personal identity—sense of self—and their worldview. Perspective transformation explored how the structures of meaning-
making were changed. Mezirow (1991) explained perspective transformation in the following way:

The process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, less discriminating, and integrative perspective; and finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings. (p. 167)

**Critical race reflection.**

Significant transformation took place when adults engaged in critical race reflection to examine the context and life history that framed their meaning and knowledge about race. Transformational learning occurred in the negotiation between personal identity, context and life history, and worldview on one side, and the construction of knowledge that was influenced by others, on the other side (Mezirow, 2000). Critical reflection was the catalyst for perspective transformation because individuals examined their worldview and the origin of their perspective (Mezirow, 1991). Through critical reflection, individuals experienced dilemmas in which they were forced to change their worldview (i.e., values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors) and epistemologies (i.e., knowledge) to become more inclusive (Mezirow, 1991). These dilemmas were events that fostered critical transformation in individuals’ meaning structures that resulted in the development of a new frame of reference (Mezirow, 1991).

Brookfield (1995) found that critical reflection was the “process by which adults come to recognize the hegemonic [power and influence] aspects of dominant cultural values” (p. 2). Self-awareness was integral to prepare inclusive leaders to identify and eliminate their role in systems that perpetuated racial discrimination (Schmidt, 1996). Accordingly, critical race reflection created space for adults to:
1. Awaken to oppression and privilege.

2. Understand their role in making change.

3. Develop the skills to implement the change (Mezirow, 1991).

Mezirow (2000) referred to two types of critical reflection that transformed current assumptions. First, *objective reframing* involved critically reflecting and challenging the assumptions of others instead of uncritically accepting their point of view. Second, *subjective reframing* was a process by which individuals engaged in critical self-reflection to question their racial assumptions. Through critical race reflection, Whites developed a more inclusive personal identity—sense of self—that was not easily influenced by others.

**Critical race discourse.**

Critics of Mezirow’s (1981) work found it necessary to critically explore other ways to construct knowledge that did not focus solely on rational discourse (Brooks, 1989; Clark, 1991; Scott, 1991; Sveinunggaard, 1993). Although Mezirow (1995) has since recognized the significance of connecting the mind with the heart in the learning process, he remained grounded in the argument that rational discourse was an essential method for adults to critically examine their assumptions and beliefs. Critical race discourse consisted of continually assessing:

1. Racial knowledge and racial reality (epistemology/ontology).

2. Context and life history.

3. Personal identity (i.e. sense of self).

4. Racial worldview (i.e. values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors).
Through critical discourse, individuals identified and eliminated misuses of power and privilege by deconstructing dominant discourse that was unchallenged (Mezirow, 1996; 2000; 2003). This type of discourse enabled individuals to transform their current meaning perspectives with a more inclusive and less discriminating worldview (Mezirow, 2003; Taylor, 1997).

Individuals dedicated to transforming through discourse were committed to disrupting the status quo approach that created opposing sides in addressing issues of discrimination (Tannen, 1998). According to Mezirow (1991), individuals should be actively engaged in constructing and reconstructing knowledge in order to reframe the meaning of their experiences. Due to lack of critical race reflection, many White individuals may not have the necessary skills to analyze the historical context and life histories that have shaped their racial worldview. Thus, dominant racial narratives remained the unquestioned norm that was embedded into every aspect of society in the United States (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). The constant balance of reflection and action (i.e., praxis) provided a framework for individuals to more effectively transform the ways in which they made meaning of their lived experiences (Freire, 1993).

Critical race praxis.

As previously mentioned, CRT created space for narratives that challenged the status quo and allowed for the development of a more comprehensive view of systems of racial discrimination. Dominant racial narratives tended to go unnoticed or unquestioned by those who perceived benefits in exchange for their silence (Delgado, 1989). Counter-narratives gave voice to experiences that were normally ignored or unheard, which
challenged the dominant experiences of White individuals who held power (Delgado, 1989). When White individuals investigated racism through narratives, they became more aware of the negative impacts caused by racial discrimination. Whites could no longer hide behind a color-blind (i.e., race is ignored) lens because they recognized differential treatment based on race (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997). This realization disturbed well-intentioned Whites who believed color-blind practices addressed the issues of racism in society (Delgado & Stefancic).

Simon (1999) argued that CRT theorists “relentlessly replace traditional scholarship with personal stories, which hardly represent common experiences. The proliferation of stories makes it difficult for others to debate” (p. 3). This critic ignored that White racial narratives influenced perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors about race (Banks & Banks, 2004). Although subjective learning may be a “threatening emotional experience” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 6), this type of experience was a critical component in authentic transformation to a more inclusive racial worldview. Individuals were challenged to acquire the knowledge, education, and skills to deconstruct oppressive systems (Brown, 2004; Hurtado, 2007; Milem, et al., 2005). For a summary of transformational learning research, see Appendix B.

**Inclusive Excellence**

The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) developed three comprehensive publications to explain the concept of Inclusive Excellence: (a) *Making Diversity Work on Campus: A Research-Based Perspective* (Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005); (b) *Achieving Equitable Educational Outcomes with All Students: The
Institution’s Roles and Responsibilities (Bauman, Bustillos, Bensimon, Brown II, & Bartee, 2005); and (c) Toward a Model of Inclusive Excellence and Change in Postsecondary Institutions (Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005). Each publication conceptualized a plan for creating campus environments that partnered diversity and excellence as the central component in the learning process and throughout the campus community.

Inclusive Excellence re-envisioned both quality and diversity and was regarded as a multi-layered process that was part of the infrastructure of an organization (Williams, 2007; Williams, et al., 2005). The AAC&U asserted that Inclusive Excellence was focused on: (a) student intellectual and social development, (b) purposeful development and use of resources, (c) attention to cultural differences, and (d) a community that welcomed and valued all identities. Accordingly, the Inclusive Excellence change model, which was proposed by the AAC&U, regarded diversity as:

. . . a key component of a comprehensive strategy for achieving institutional excellence—which includes, but is not limited to, the academic excellence of all students in attendance and concerted efforts to educate all students to succeed in a diverse society and equip them with sophisticated intercultural skills. (Williams, et al., p. 3)

This model considered environmental factors, organizational culture, and dimensions of organizational behavior that must be identified and then intentionally examined to dismantle exclusive systems.

Institutions working to achieve Inclusive Excellence were encouraged to critically explore the external environment that challenged and shaped campus transformation. The organizational culture of higher education posed challenges towards inclusion and excellence (Hurtado, et al., 1999). Historically, PWIs had not embraced the value of
diversity since excellence was defined by student inputs and required assimilation in the
dominant culture (Williams, et al., 2005). Inclusive Excellence required
acknowledgement of the institutional culture and the development of purposeful work to
shift the focus from assimilation to inclusion (Milem, et al., 2005). Diversity and
excellence were interdependent in the quest to address the changing needs of a
multicultural society. In essence, the concept of Inclusive Excellence was designed to
reconstruct a new meaning of quality education by outlining the benefits to be derived
from partnering diversity and excellence (Milem, et al.). The essence of Inclusive
Excellence was to partner diversity and excellence as the core value of the institution to
be included in the mission, vision, curriculum, and co-curricular activities (Milem, et al.,
2005). Further, Inclusive Excellence shifted the responsibility for working to partner
diversity and excellence to all leaders in transforming PWIs into more inclusive campus
communities (Milem, et al.).

The literature on Inclusive Excellence provided a comprehensive plan to create an
inclusive environment embedded in all aspects of campus culture and for shifting the
responsibility of creating inclusive environments to all leaders on campus (Milem, et al.,
2005; Williams, et al., 2005; Williams, 2007). There was also a significant amount of
literature on inclusive pedagogical practices (Banks, 1997; Bell, 1994; Calafell, 2007;
Darder, 1996; Freire, 1993; hooks, 1994; Hurtado, et al., 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1995;
Tatum, 1997; Tuitt, 2000; 2003 and others). However, there was a limited amount of
research for effective practices in inclusive leadership (Brown, 2004; Helgesen, 2005;
Owen, 2009; Ryan, 2006; Schmidt, 1996) for college administrators, in particular White college administrators.

**Inclusive Leadership**

Since leadership was a critical component to transform the college environment, it was important to explore this body of literature. While the literature on leadership in higher education was robust, there was limited research on inclusive leadership (Helgesen, 2005; Ryan, 2006; Schmidt, 1996) grounded in social justice (Brown, 2004; Brown, 1998; Rosser, 1990; Tierney, 1989). Research suggested that alternative definitions of leadership had emerged to provide a new lens to more effectively understand the essential aspects of leadership in a global society (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006; Owen, 2009; Rost, 1993). Technological advances, changes in demographics, and racial/ethnic conflict demanded that college leaders be well-skilled in addressing these challenging issues (Eddy & VanDerLinden; Rost). To understand the current state of higher education leadership, a review of relevant traditional models of leadership was needed.

**Traditional models of leadership.**

Historically, higher education leadership theories have focused on the traits and behaviors of leaders. Kouzes and Posner (1987) found that there were five traits effective leaders displayed in their organizations. First, leaders challenged the process to critically examine the status quo. Second, leaders inspired a shared vision in which each member of the organization was engaged. Third, leaders empowered by enabling others to act; and allowed everyone to have ownership within the organization. Fourth, leaders did not
ask anything of others they were unwilling to do themselves by *modeling the way*.

Finally, leaders were responsible for *encouraging the heart*, to inspire an emotional connection for individuals to continue to work through difficult obstacles.

Bensimon, Neumann, and Birnbaum (1989) identified six categories of leadership: trait theories, power and influence theories, behavior theories, contingency theories, cultural and symbolic theories, and cognitive theories. Other leadership theories have informed the literature on transactional versus transformational practices. For example, Burns (1978) explained that transactional leadership was focused on contractual relationships, whereas transformational leadership was about purposeful change to achieve organizational goals. Yukl (1989) provided additional insight about transformational leadership as “the process of influencing major changes in attitudes and assumptions of organizational members and building commitment for the organization’s mission, objectives, and strategies” (p. 24).

Although traditional theories of leadership informed the understanding of behaviors and traits, it was imperative to rethink the leadership needed to compete in a global society (Astin & Astin, 2000; Chahin, 1993; Rosser, 1990; and Rost, 1993). Tierney (1989) introduced critical leadership, which was informed by critical theory with social justice as a central component. Discourse and praxis were integral components of critical leadership used to challenge current assumptions about discriminatory practices (Tierney). Critical race discourse was essential to influencing beliefs because “discourse is the key site for the social construction of meaning” (Allan, Gordan, & Iverson, 2006, p. 45). Critical analysis of texts and conversations allowed individuals to dismantle the
dominant race discourse that was accepted in the subconscious (Allan, et al.). Dominant
discourse overpowered alternative views because of the way it was naturalized (Allan, et al.). The use of CRT as an analytical tool further assisted leaders in identifying practices
that perpetuated racial discrimination (Ladson-Billings, 1995). CRT informed critical
race discourse and critical race praxis by dismantling current racial beliefs that were
embedded throughout culture, since leadership was contextual and socially constructed
(Irving & Klenke, 2004). Leaders used their socialized power to influence the actions of
their followers (Bensimon, et al., 1989). Reconstructing dominant race discourse was an
important practice for inclusive leaders because power was embedded in discourse
(Foucault, 1980).

Leadership theories provided an understanding of the conceptualization of the
organization. For example, Bolman and Deal (2003) identified four areas required to
reframe leadership within an organization. First, structural leadership focused on the
environment, strategies, and policies of the organization. Second, human resource
leadership represented those leaders who were invested in each member of the
organization and empowered members of the organization to take ownership in their
work (Bolman & Deal). Next, political leaders focused on the distribution of power,
interests, stakeholders, and negotiation. Finally, symbolic leaders educated others about
the shared vision of the organization through stories (Bolman & Deal).

Astin and Astin (2000) described five qualities for effective leadership. First, self-
knowledge was the ability for a leader to be aware of personal beliefs, values, and
emotions that inspired change. Second, authenticity/integrity connected the leader’s
actions to their personal values and beliefs to develop trust with others. Third, *commitment* consisted of passion, energy, and persistence to motivate individuals to serve. Fourth, *empathy/understanding* was the ability to listen and attempt to understand the views of others. Finally, *competence* referred to the knowledge and skills required for effective and sustainable transformation.

According to Davis (2003), the literature on leadership was plentiful with various perceptions but did not include a “unified theory of leadership” (p. 10). There was limited focus on the relationship between leaders and followers in achieving a shared purpose (Davis; Rost, 1993). Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) developed the relational leadership model to provide insight into relationships between leaders and followers, and to explore themes of inclusion, empowerment, and purpose. This model was defined as a relational collaboration to achieve change that benefited the common good (Komives, et al.). Allen and Cherrey (2000) challenged leaders to critically reflect and practice different ways of relating, influencing change, learning, and leading. To address the diversity challenges facing institutions, leaders were challenged to continue disrupting systemic inequity rather than focusing solely on isolated incidents, because systemic racism was more subtle, making it more challenging to identify and eliminate (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Wheatley, 1999).

**Reframing inclusive leadership.**

The majority of literature on inclusion and inclusive leadership addressed the importance of integrating students with disabilities into K-12 mainstream classrooms (Ingram, 1996; Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999; Zollers, Ramanathan, & Yu, 1999) or
including everyone in the organization in the decision-making process (Helgesen, 2005; Ryan, 2006). The exception was Schmidt (1996), who introduced inclusive leadership practices and skills in higher education for student development. The premise of inclusive leadership was that everyone had a cultural identity that influenced their communication, perspectives, and treatment of others (Schmidt). Inclusive leadership consisted of skills in risk-taking, cultural self-reflection, deconstructing stereotypes, and the ability to understand different experiences based on cultural identity (Schmidt).

Critical reflection in inclusive leadership enabled leaders to identify invisible practices that caused exclusion (Ryan, 2006). Individuals committed to eliminating racial privilege and racial discrimination purposefully engaged in “lifelong learning and growth,. . . recognizing and . . . eliminating prejudice and oppression, . . . increasing awareness, . . . facilitating change, . . . and building inclusive communities” (Brown, 2004, p. 92). Inclusive leaders had the responsibility to intentionally create an inclusive environment that inherently valued every member in the campus community. For a summary of leadership theories, see Appendix C.

Summary

The inclusive leadership conceptual model (see Figure 1) provided a foundation to purposefully investigate the relevant literature that informed this study. The vast amount of literature on White racial identity, ethnic identity, and privilege identity established a foundation to further explore how inclusive leaders learned to unmask the construction of Whiteness to develop a more inclusive racial worldview. Researching White college administrators as leaders who might influence their institutions in working
toward Inclusive Excellence required investigating critical race epistemological and ontological perspectives.

There was not universal agreement on the definition of leadership and a variety of interpretations were proposed. To create learning environments that valued all identities in higher education, an inclusive leadership model was needed. However, there was limited information about inclusive leadership in educational settings, including higher education (Ryan, 2006; Schmidt, 1996). There was also a limited amount of research on leadership identity (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005).

Chapter three details the qualitative research design, including the epistemological and conceptual perspectives, and concludes with a detailed discussion outlining the methodology and methods that guided this study.
Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

The Invasion of the Identity Snatchers: Making My White Identity Visible

I celebrated my Italian culture as I was growing up. My maternal and paternal great-grandparents were from Calabria and Sicily. My Italian heritage was a salient identity, which I wore proudly. My parents taught us to be proud of our roots and respect the culture of others. I was taught to be color-blind about racial differences. Maybe my parents were trying to make me feel included, since both of my brothers were diagnosed as color-blind in the biological sense. I cannot say that we did not notice color, however color did not impact how we treated others, or so I wanted to believe. Yet, I quickly became aware that color played a role in how individuals were defined and treated. I was taught this important lesson by the Identity Snatchers.

The Identity Snatchers visited me in college and tried to make me their token of diversity because of my last name and my dark physical features. They introduced themselves as belonging to the White Club and wanted to make sure only members deemed acceptable were allowed in. I thought I was dreaming. Could these individuals not see my Italian identity? Why were they trying to place me in the Latina category? They kept insisting I would not be allowed into the White Club because I did not belong.

Then I was caught in limbo on the color line because once the Identity Snatchers learned I was Italian, they lobbied for me to gain the same unearned advantages they had
at the expense of my friends on the other side of the color line, who welcomed me with open arms into their community. As strongly as I was trying to hold on to my Italian culture, members of the Hispanic community and other communities of color were trying to hold on to their culture. However, my friends of color were not caught in limbo on the color line.

The *Identity Snatchers* understood on which side they belonged. The White Club was tempting because it came with unearned privileges and advantages. In addition, it was a prestigious club into which my ancestors worked to gain membership. They had to prove more than 90 years ago that they were not inferior, even though they were from southern Europe. They either successfully proved their case, or maybe the White Club feared the large numbers of southern European immigrants would compete for resources and privileges only afforded to its White membership, so they decided to assimilate instead of exclude them.

As I looked across to the other side of the color line, I saw familiar faces. They had welcomed me into their culture and community, even when I revealed my true identity. However, I had to prove my identity to the *Identity Snatchers* before they considered me part of their community.

I am grateful to the *Identity Snatchers* for making my White identity visible. I understand my responsibility to assist others in making their White identity, Whiteness, and White privilege, embedded in the United States culture, visible. As White individuals, our work should not be about *Identity Snatching*, but on identity reconstruction, grounded in inclusiveness, while working towards equity for all.
My interest in making the construction of Whiteness visible was critical to my own life experiences in learning to develop a more inclusive racial worldview. Before I engaged in this qualitative study, it was important to investigate my own White identity and subsequent privilege in an effort to keep these issues visible throughout the research process. This self-reflection enabled me to address the challenge that White researchers interviewing White participants needed to avoid: the temptation to get lost in “White talk—talk that serves to insulate white people from examining their/our individual and collective role(s) in the perpetuation of racism” (McIntyre, 1997, p. 45).

Stated differently, through my own self-reflection in making my White identity and subsequent privilege visible, I could more effectively assist the research participants in this study to critically explore their own construction of Whiteness. In the words of Gallagher (2000):

In order for whiteness to be demystified and stripped to its political essence, our interviews must generate counternarratives of whiteness which give the respondents the opportunity to rethink the white scripts, those “unquestioned assumptions” about race that are constantly being written, rewritten, and internalized. (p. 68)

The meaning that I have made and continue to make by focusing on the construction of Whiteness and White racial identity in my personal and professional roles has also contributed to this inquiry. Without this critical race consciousness, I risked perpetuating epistemological racism that favored the construction of Whiteness in research while it misrepresented the experiences of people of color (Scheurich & Young, 2002). These reflections influenced my ability to intentionally engage with the
“epistemological heart” (Scheurich & Young, p. 237) of this study by exploring the lived experiences of White college administrators identified as inclusive leaders at a PWI.

The fact that I was a White researcher studying White administrators at a PWI was relevant to this study. As Ely (1991) suggested, familiarity may allow the researcher to “delve deeply into the research without having to do the preliminary work, such as learning new lingo, becoming acquainted with the norms, and developing a level of comfort within the environment being studied” (p. 124). Although there may be a concern that I am too connected to the research, my racial identity and my experience have strengthened my awareness of this subject.

While I focused on co-constructing, with the research participants, a developmental framework for inclusive leadership, I recognized the ethical issues tied to my role as researcher. First, I asked personal questions about a potentially sensitive subject, which could have made the participants feel vulnerable. To ensure that this did not compromise the study, I have used pseudonyms to protect the identity of the research participants in both the data collection and data analysis. The use of the fictional narrative method illustrated in the opening of this chapter and discussed in more detail later, also served to protect both the identity and confidentiality of the participants while maintaining the critical contributions of the study.

The present study was intended to explore the journey of White college administrators who have been identified as inclusive leaders at a PWI that was nationally recognized for its work in Inclusive Excellence. Through the narration of their historical context and life histories, WILs had an opportunity to engage in critical race discourse as
they made meaning of how their personal racial identity was interconnected to their professional role at a PWI.

The following sections detail the four elements Crotty (1998) outlined as critical to a research design: epistemology, conceptual perspective, methodology, and methods. Each element builds upon the previous elements as illustrated in Figure 2 and serves as a comprehensive guide for the research in this study.

![Figure 2. Four elements of research design (Crotty, 1998)](image)

**Epistemology: Critical Race Theory**

Researchers have made and continue to make the construction of Whiteness invisible in research by focusing issues of race only on the victims of racism instead of on the beneficiaries of racism (Hardiman, 2001; Scheurich & Young, 2002). The epistemological (racial knowledge) perspective of CRT informed this study. According to Solorzano and Yosso (2002), CRT “foregrounds race and racism in all aspects of the research” (p. 24). CRT also provided the opportunity to discuss the impact that the intersections of identity, such as class and gender, had on an individual’s experience. CRT created an opportunity to challenge the dominant narrative about race in an attempt to promote racial justice and to critically explore the construction of Whiteness throughout this research inquiry (Solorzano & Yosso).

The tenets of narratives and the social construction of race were used to educate White leaders by making the construction of Whiteness and subsequent privilege visible...
at PWIs. Accordingly, the goal of this dissertation was to explore how White college administrators learned to become successful inclusive leaders at a PWI. Success was defined by peers and students through a recommendation method discussed later in this chapter. The goal of this research was to identify the ways in which WILs examined their personal racial identity in an effort to recognize and eliminate issues of race and racism at a PWI (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Positioning CRT as the epistemological perspective of this study enabled White individuals to:

1. Critically explore and make new meaning of the historical context and life history that contributed to their construction of Whiteness and the understanding of their personal racial identity.

2. Engage the imagination as a means to connect the mind with the heart to become more inclusive personally and professionally.

3. Co-construct a framework for understanding inclusive leadership.

The White narratives were intended to contradict status quo racial storytelling embedded in educational institutions by addressing issues of unearned White privilege. White narratives that were reconstructed through a more inclusive racial worldview made the consequences of racism visible to other White individuals (McIntyre, 1997). Experiences were identified in WILs’ lives that had transformed their racial worldview as a means to co-construct narratives that countered the history of exclusion established and maintained by the invisibility of Whiteness at PWIs. Co-constructing White narratives, that countered the belief that racism was a problem of the past, created the opportunity for WILs and other White individuals to critically examine the context(s) that
significantly influenced their racial worldviews. Positioning their experiences within a context provided an opportunity to make new meaning of the experiences that had shaped their racial ways of knowing (Ladson-Billings, 2000). This type of investigation may have assisted WILs toward building multicultural alliances that “make visible what hegemonic [dominant group power and influence] discourses conceal” (Pascale, 2008, p. 736).

**Conceptual Perspective: Inclusive Leadership Conceptual Model**

CRT was integrated throughout each component of the inclusive leadership conceptual model. This conceptual perspective was used to intentionally explore how the construction of Whiteness impacted the ability or inability of White leaders to engage in inclusive leadership at PWIs. Research participants explored the life experiences that had led to their current role as a WIL at a PWI. The inclusive leadership conceptual model served as a guide to explore the journey of WILs. It informed the development of the interview questions that each participant responded to as they narrated and critically reflected on their journey to achieve inclusive leadership. The stories that emerged through these interviews provided insight into how WILs have constructed their racial knowledge, since knowledge reflects the values of those who created it (Banks, 1993).

These questions were further explored through a pilot study focused on the researcher’s personal journey to investigate the construction of Whiteness and racial identity. With the assistance of one course instructor and eight peer analysts, the researcher critically examined the experiences in her life that inspired a critical race consciousness about her White racial identity and the impact that made on her role as an
educator in higher education. This examination was illustrated through a fictional narrative, based in the researcher’s social reality, in the introduction of this chapter.

Additional influences of this conceptual model involved examining issues of racial privilege as the research participants’ stories unfolded through data analysis. While intersections of identity (i.e., gender, sexual orientation, social class) emerged as contributors to White racial awareness, the goal of this conceptual model was to ensure that White racial privilege did not become invisible in the participants’ stories. The focus on race through this conceptual model facilitated the critical re-examination of racial privilege, rather than allowing participants to focus solely on identities in which they may have experienced oppression (Goodman, 2001). The inclusive leadership conceptual model encouraged participants to engage in a critical race dialogue. Through the use of narrative inquiry, WILs had an opportunity to engage in critical race discourse as they made new meaning of the construction of Whiteness and their personal racial identity.

As White individuals, we are responsible for unmasking our own racial privilege to authentically participate in eliminating systems of racial privilege at PWIs. Manglitz (2003) challenges White educators to remove the misperceptions that promote racism by creating awareness that racism is alive in educational institutions. Inviting WILs to generate narratives that counter exclusive practices is intended to facilitate this awareness.

One of the most important recommendations of critical racial discourse in education was to connect the intellectual knowledge with the emotional understanding that everyone was racialized and significantly impacted by their racial membership.
The creation of White narratives that countered racism may also foster a critical race consciousness about the construction of Whiteness and White privilege that can transform traditionally held racist beliefs through action, reflection, and making meaning of life experiences (Barlas, 1997). To this end, the conceptual model was used to investigate the construction of Whiteness that emerged during data collection and through the co-construction of narratives during data analysis.

**Methodology: Narrative and Fictional Narrative**

Identities are narratives, stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not). But identity is fluid, always producing itself though the combined process of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong. This duality is often reflected in narratives on identity. (Yuval-Davis as cited in Riessman, 2008 p. 7)

Reality is a social construction, therefore the processes, patterns, and structures that influence different realities should be explored (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Narrative as a methodology allows the researcher to explore how participants make meaning of their lived experiences to understand how their beliefs construct their social reality (Chase, 2008). While narrative inquiry provided a framework to engage participants to make meaning of their racial and ethnic realities in this study, fictional narrative was integrated to engage the imagination by connecting the mind with the heart (Banks & Banks, 1998). Although critics suggested that fictional narratives removed factual information, Banks and Banks argued that this type of storytelling partnered fact and truth by connecting the mind with the heart.

Using fictional narrative was meant to give as much attention to the imagination as to the “rigor of inquiry” (Banks & Banks, 1998, p. 8) and to create a connection between the texts that described the social world to the reality of lived experiences in the
social world (Banks & Banks). Berger and Luckmann (1967; 2002) proposed that a shared reality in society remained unquestioned, until an experience occurred in which that shared reality was challenged. This idea was particularly important to research focused on race, since race is a socially constructed story that benefits White individuals while distorting and silencing the experiences of people of color (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Fictional narrative was an innovative research method used to assist individuals in developing new ways of understanding the subjective experience of self and others (Banks & Banks).

At the beginning of this chapter, a fictional narrative derived from the researcher’s social reality was used to demonstrate how storytelling transformed exclusive realities. By making the construction of Whiteness visible through imagination, the intellectual knowledge about race was connected with the emotional awareness about the consequences of racism. CRT epistemology created the framework to focus on issues of race and racism; the use of narrative and fictional narrative in this study attempted to deconstruct the power and dominance of Whiteness in research. The use of narrative and fictional narrative combined the two goals of this research: to explore the research questions and to inspire change.

The purpose of narrative inquiry was to allow participants to make meaning of their past through narrating their own biographical story (Chase, 2008). Narratives afforded the participants an opportunity to make sense of their actions in a meaningful way (Chase). Hatch (2002) found that critical researchers used narratives to tell stories about injustice with the goal to inspire change. Critics of narrative inquiry may have
presumed a “stable, unchanging reality that can be studied using the empirical methods of objective social science” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 11) without recognizing that individuals construct their own reality which is constantly changing depending on their context and lived experience (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; 2002). Accordingly, narrative becomes a significant instrument to understand the narrator’s experience and to explain why their story is worth telling (Chase). The emotional/personal connections that evolved through narratives influenced the way the narrator made sense of their lived experiences (Chase). This type of reflection provided a foundation for the narrator to understand how their reality may have changed during different events in their lives, and how reality may be socially constructed depending on their historical context and life history (Denzin & Lincoln).

The WIL participants in the current study made new meaning about how their past led to their present roles at PWIs through narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry also provided an opportunity for the narrator to engage in action (Chase, 2008). For example, as WILs narrated their personal experiences, they made new meaning regarding the interdependence between their racial identity and their professional roles as they worked to implement Inclusive Excellence in their department. Nash (2004) found that personal narratives “help us all to understand our histories, shape our destinies, develop our moral imaginations. . . .” (p. 2).

Riessman (2008) emphasized that through narrative inquiry researchers were able to understand how individuals as well as groups constructed and reconstructed their identities. Storytelling ensured the voice of the narrator was heard to gain insight into
what they communicated, how they communicated, and how their social identities influenced their stories (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). One of the most significant contributions of narrative inquiry was to identify how individual stories were derived from stories in the social world and understand the “flow of power in the wider world” (Riessman, p. 8).

WILs’ stories about their personal journeys and their roles in PWIs unmasked their Whiteness to reconstruct their “sense of self, their experience, and their reality” (Chase, 2008, p. 65). Scholarly personal narratives have also inspired readers to engage in their own journey of self-reflection (Nash, 2004). Narrative inquiry afforded the researcher insight into the impact of the external factors that influenced a sense of self and reality, including historical context, social networks, and social identities (Chase, 2008). The cognitive process of understanding reality through narrative inquiry was a catalyst for individuals to understand how they experienced the world. They were then able to critically reflect on their experiences (Bruner, 1997).

In narrative inquiry, researchers are also narrators, finding their voice as they work to co-construct the voice and realities of their participants (Chase, 2008). Integrating the researcher’s voice through scholarly personal narrative was essential in this research because the “writer is as much the message as the message itself” (Nash, 2004, p. 53). Since personal transformation is constantly occurring in an individual’s life, it should be narrated in an effort to make meaning of the changes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1995). Dewey (as cited in Clandinin & Connelly) found that an individual’s personal experience was interconnected to a context in the social world. This
resulted in a continuity of experiences because each new experience was built upon the last. Therefore, narrative inquiry was an intentional and strategic process that assisted individuals in critically investigating their experiences while providing groups the opportunity to engage others in collective transformation (Riessman, 2008).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explained that narrative inquiry was a method to assist researchers in making sense of their experiences, through collaboration with participants, by listening to the stories that represented individuals’ lived experiences. The goal of narrative interviewing was to create a space in which individuals used narratives to make new meaning of their lived experiences (Czarniawska, 2004). The interactive practice of the researcher and interviewee as narrator provided an opportunity to understand how the participants described and then made meaning of their experiences (Chase, 2008). In order to develop a narrative that countered the dominant narrative on race, it was imperative that WILs told their story and reflected on the impact of their journey.

Since Whiteness, as an invisible norm, was engrained throughout historical, social, and political stories, people of color were stigmatized as outsiders (Goffman, 1959; Manglitz, 2003). Similarly, European immigrants gave up aspects of their native cultures to achieve White acceptance and abandoned their own cultural and ethnic identities (Kivel, 2002). They were able to ignore or to intellectualize the inequity that they endured because their newly constructed White identity came with privileges and social acceptance (Kivel). These different constructions of race demonstrated the fiction that created an imaginary understanding of race throughout history until the present time.
(Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). By engaging the imagination through fictional narratives, White individuals were able to identify what fear and ignorance may have prevented them from seeing in regard to their role in perpetuating racial discrimination (Mezirow, 1991). Furthermore, narratives moved beyond traditional scientific methods to inspire change (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Methods

Setting.

Inclusive Excellence University (IEU) has been used as a pseudonym for the PWI in this study to provide additional confidentiality to the research participants. Over the past three years, IEU took on the challenge by the AAC&U to achieve Inclusive Excellence under the leadership of the CDO. The institutional leadership verbally and financially committed to the campaign of Inclusive Excellence approximately five years prior to this research. Each year an annual conference is held to educate more than 300 community and campus members on the various components of Inclusive Excellence.

The CDO has facilitated the development of Inclusive Excellence Task Forces or committees throughout campus. The CDO and his staff created educational/professional development trainings, as well as a blueprint on how to implement different aspects of Inclusive Excellence throughout the campus. Historically and currently, administrators and faculty of color shouldered the responsibility for embedding inclusiveness at this PWI. One of the major tenets of the Inclusive Excellence literature is to shift the responsibility of embedding inclusiveness to everyone on campus. Therefore, it was
important to explore the experiences of White college administrators who were identified as inclusive leaders as part of the challenge to shift responsibility to everyone at the PWI.

Two national leaders who spearheaded the Inclusive Excellence movement have visited IEU several times to discuss the progress made toward partnering diversity and excellence throughout the campus. This institution has been recognized nationally for its innovative work towards the goal of Inclusive Excellence. Since this PWI took the responsibility to achieve Inclusive Excellence, and the majority of administrators were White, an important aspect of the desired change was to study the WILs who were already committed to create sustainable change within their departments and throughout campus. Focusing research on an institution that was achieving great strides with Inclusive Excellence and which had a commitment to diversity allowed for rich personal stories, a critical component of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998).

In consideration of PWIs for this study, IEU emerged as the most appropriate site to: (a) co-construct a framework for understanding inclusive leadership for White college administrators, (b) further inform research as well as professional development for current and future leaders in higher education, in particular at PWIs, and (c) explore the narrative of WILs at an institution that has been nationally recognized for its commitment to diversity and excellence. It is within this context that IEU was selected as the site for the current study. The opportunity to explore inclusive leadership at a PWI that has espoused Inclusive Excellence as a core value and has been nationally recognized for their efforts made this institution a good fit for this investigation.
Participants.

While the focus of the study was White race and White ethnicity, the implications about the intersections of identity for inclusive leadership were also considered. The rationale for selecting administrators, including deans, and not faculty was made because there was already a large body of literature on inclusive pedagogical practices (Banks, 1997; Bell, 1994; Calafell, 2007; Burbules & Rice, 1993; Darder, 1996; Freire, 1993; hooks, 1994; Hurtado, et al., 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Tatum, 1992; Tuitt, 2000; 2003), but only limited research about inclusive practices for college administrators (Danowitz Sagaria, 2002; Owen, 2009; Rosser, 1990).

Although it is important that all college administrators become inclusive leaders, White leaders were chosen as the focus of this study because they continued to be the numerical majority of administrators at PWIs (Danowitz Sagaria, 2002). As previously explained, the Inclusive Excellence literature emphasized the need to shift responsibility for diversity and excellence to everyone on campus. White college administrators had the privileged choice, on a daily basis, to ignore their racial identity and subsequent privilege at PWIs. Administrators of color, however, did not have this same choice because they were required to think about race and to experience racial discrimination (Valverde, 2003). WILs were insiders to racial privilege at IEU and had the responsibility to critically examine how their racial identity impacted their ability or inability to implement Inclusive Excellence.

The goal of this research was to critically explore the journey by which White college administrators developed into inclusive leaders at a PWI. While there was no
consensus in the literature about the specific number of participants required for a qualitative study, Hill, Thompson and Williams (1997) suggested that in-depth interviews of eight participants was sufficient to make generalizations.

Through snowball sampling, which is commonly used in qualitative research, (Merriam, 1998), 67 emails (see Appendix D) were sent to undergraduate and graduate administrators, faculty, staff, and students throughout campus to request recommendations of research participants who met at least two of the following criteria: (a) were self-identified inclusive leaders, (b) were viewed by students as inclusive leaders, (c) were viewed by colleagues as inclusive leaders, (d) had demonstrated a commitment to diversity and Inclusive Excellence by initiating change within their own departments, and (e) had received awards and/or recognition for their commitment to diversity.

Individuals who made recommendations completed an anonymous online survey through Survey Monkey® (see Appendix E). This was recommended by the Institutional Review Board to ensure the participants did not feel obligated to participate in the study. Thirty-four people made recommendations (17 identified as White and 17 identified as a person of color or multi-racial) which resulted in 13 participants who met the criteria. Within two hours of sending the initial emails, there were several repeat recommendations for participants.

Once the administrators were recommended, they were invited to take part in the study through an email invitation (see Appendix F). Initially, 12 participants agreed to participate, but after the first round of interviews, the schedule and time commitment did
not work for one of the participants. Therefore, 11 WILs participated in three individual interviews. There were 6 participants who identified as senior-level administrators and 5 who identified as middle-level administrators. Seven participants identified as female and 4 identified as male. Each participant was identified by pseudonym to protect her or his confidentiality. The participants chose their pseudonym based on an individual, or in some cases, a combination of individuals, who significantly influenced their journey in becoming WILs at a PWI.

A snapshot into the context and life history that have shaped participants’ journeys is provided in the following descriptions. Both the participants and the researcher were frequently reminded through the interview process that we, as humans, are all works in progress who continue to learn and make mistakes on a daily basis throughout this life-long journey. The reader is also advised to consider this when reviewing this work. However, fear of making mistakes should not be an excuse for inaction. White individuals have a responsibility to unmask their own Whiteness as well as systems of racial privilege at PWIs to authentically participate in creating inclusive environments. This researcher appreciated and felt honored that the participants chose to make this journey explicit to other White individuals who may be struggling in similar ways.

Participants were not identified as senior-level or middle-level administrators, nor were their years of service indicated. This was done to further protect their confidentiality. Instead they were identified by: (a) pseudonym, (b) how they identified by gender, and (c) the general title of administrator. Their years of experience ranged
from 10 to more than 40 in higher education leadership: 4 had 30-40 years, 4 had 20-30 years, and 3 had 10-15 years.

Emily (female administrator).

Emily has worked in various positions in higher education. During our first meeting, she reflected on how social justice has always been an inherent part of her from a young age. She attributed this to her compassion toward people, which influenced her decision to become an educator in higher education. She has spent the majority of her adult life (both personally and professionally) intentionally questioning issues from the perspective of her privilege, but not so much regarding her White identity per se. The idea of Whiteness came more recently for Emily. She spoke openly about feeling inadequate to do this work and yet knew that part of her current as well as future learning process was to share her story as a means to inspire other White individuals to make their story visible. Emily has experienced what it feels like to be an outsider in society, and this has inspired her own growth in exposing the constructed privilege of Whiteness. She believed that the true meaning of leadership should be interchangeable with inclusiveness.

Connie (female administrator).

Connie has experienced varying degrees of responsibility within her area of higher education. As part of her learning process, she has felt the need to prove herself due to her experience as an outsider on many committees. She acknowledged that while she was a “work in progress” in terms of being an inclusive leader, what you see is what you get. During one of our conversations, she explained that she took great pride in never
wearing a mask and that she always remained true to herself. From an early age her parents instilled the value of “inclusiveness of all humanity.” As a result, she had a great love for people. Yet, she admitted that there were times her own racial privilege remained invisible to her, which has impacted her professional practice. However, as a self-identified “work in progress” she continued to embrace her learning regarding Inclusive Excellence. Similarly, she was intentional about building multicultural alliances as a means to keep issues of privilege visible and to provide individuals with opportunities that may not otherwise be afforded to them. She strove to be the best in her profession, a perspective that stemmed from her competitive and passionate spirit.

**Betty (female administrator).**

Betty has experienced a variety of roles in higher education during her tenure. She explained that attending college during the Civil Rights era was a rewarding and painful time for her, which was still impacting her life currently. This period was rewarding because her mind and heart were open in new ways when her only African American professor put the autobiography of Malcolm X in her hands. She explained, as her voice quivered with emotion, how this book inspired the transformation of her racial worldview. At the same time she was struggling as a White person to find a place in race relations. She attributed this struggle to the messages she heard during the Black Power era that there was no place in the movement for Whites, yet at the same time (through her liberal religious lens) felt called to support people of color plagued by racism. She experienced sexism in a male-dominated graduate program, which was another influential catalyst in recognizing other forms of discrimination. Betty identified that part
of her growth was to be more intentional in keeping her racial privilege visible on a daily basis.

**Rembert (male administrator).**

Rembert has experienced a variety of leadership roles during his tenure in higher education. Although he grew up in a predominately White community, with, as he believed, the “traditional American prejudices,” it was his experience as a member of a lower socio-economic class that provided the foundation to comprehend “in-group and out-group exclusion.” The socialized messages that he received concerning socio-economic class still influenced his current day action as an administrator at a predominately affluent institution. He identified himself as a “watchdog of fairness,” which was inspired during his time as a leader at a historically Black institution in the early part of his career. This experience significantly influenced his intentional exploration of his own White racial identity. Furthermore, he educated and trained internationally and through those experiences, he identified race as socially constructed in the United States and that his own “White Anglo-Saxon Protestant identity is socially constructed.” The continuous learning and transformation in this life journey humbled Rembert.

**Stephanie (female administrator).**

Stephanie has served higher education through a variety of leadership roles. Through her personal and professional journey, she has experienced being an outsider, which provided “fertile ground” for identifying racial discrimination. She stated: “If we are really doing this work as best as any of us do it, from the places that we come, we
have to always understand that we are works in progress.” Stephanie’s intentionality with inclusiveness initially emerged through exploring her own experiences of being pushed to the margins in society and eventually evolved into the “right thing to do.” Stephanie acknowledged that “who we are as people impacts who we are as leaders” and that context determined the level of authenticity that was brought to professional environments. She also stressed the necessity to keep visible the historical construction of higher education as an exclusive system and part of her personal challenge was to make visible any expectations she may have for her colleagues of color to adapt on any level to the dominant culture historically constructed at PWIs.

**Josie (female administrator).**

Josie started in one area in higher education, then intentionally made the transition to another division, where she perceived the culture and climate to be less sexist. Her journey began in a small, predominately White community with a mother who tried to assimilate into the American culture and a father who believed that you could do or be anything if you worked hard enough. It was through witnessing the discrimination her mother experienced as a “foreigner with a thick accent” as well as her personal experience with being pushed to the margins of society as an outsider that provided a desire to work towards inclusiveness. Josie described how co-curricular activities served as a “natural exposure” or reason to interact with people of color. This influenced a transformation with her racial worldview and biases. She identified as an action-oriented person and expressed frustration with the slow pace of change concerning issues of
diversity. She believed, like many, that one doesn’t really understand issues of
discrimination unless there are personal experiences that impact one’s heart.

*Amelie (female administrator).*

Amelie has worked in higher education, intentionally trying to integrate inclusive
practices in each position. She grew up in a predominately White community outside of
the United States and it wasn’t until she came to the United States that she acquired
language to identify her racial privilege. It has been within the last six years that she has
moved from thinking of Whiteness and racial privilege on an individual level to
understanding how systems perpetuate these issues. She discussed more than once how
humbled she was to be identified as an inclusive leader because the label felt like a final
destination. She recognized that this process was a life-long journey that was never fully
achieved. For Amelie, once her eyes were opened, she couldn’t reclose them. She
mentioned that “the term *ignorance is bliss* is true on some level” since she experienced
internal turmoil and an inner judge on a daily basis as she tried to make sure her personal
and professional practice was inclusive. She expressed that constant self-reflection and
keeping her racial identity ever present was a personal challenge for her on a daily basis.

*Hope (female administrator).*

Hope changed careers to be more involved with access issues in higher education.
In making this transition, she began to engage in professional development that made
issues of Whiteness and her own racial identity visible. She worked for a diverse office,
which forced her to explore not only her racial identity but her ethnic identity as well.
She explained that this was the first time she recognized that she had an “identity as a
White person.” It took that experience to be able to use the word White, because previous to that it felt awkward. She had been socialized to believe that being White was negative and eventually moved from seeing herself as an individual to being part of a privileged group. As a self-identified systems thinker, she was able to identify how systems were constructed to exclude some and advantage others. She struggled with trying to find a role as a White person working toward Inclusive Excellence and with how to get other White colleagues to recognize the importance of this work. Through various life changes she has become more intentional about recognizing discrimination and her role within a racially privileged system.

Dallas (male administrator).

Dallas has spent the majority of his career in higher education with a small hiatus when he worked in another sector. He has experienced many different roles during his tenure, including his volunteer position as the affirmative action/equal opportunity chair before this type of office was funded as a full-time staff position. Through his personal and professional experiences, he learned that part of his privilege was being able to pass with the part of him that, if known, would identify him as an outsider. He joked “that if left to my own devices I would probably be blissfully ignorant of being a White male.” Dallas continued to intentionally put himself in situations where he got that squeeze in his stomach so he could explore his feelings of discomfort as a means to make visible some of his personal biases. He described himself as having an easy-going personality and as someone who deliberately chose his battles. Dallas’s personal challenge was to avoid
getting so caught up in his own experience that he was unable to identify how his actions contributed to the challenges and exclusion of other people.

**Ed (male administrator).**

Ed initially believed that he would be a K-12 educator until an opportunity in graduate school launched his career as an administrator in higher education, in separate yet related areas. He grew up in a predominately White community where race was not explicitly discussed, yet he felt racial differences were readily accepted, at least when he participated in co-curricular activities. He and his teammates (mostly Black) came from different backgrounds and different communities but then taught each other about those differences (through shared activities) that resulted in “great camaraderie.” Ed acknowledged that he had not reflected on how Whiteness and his own White racial identity influenced his professional practice. At the same time he embraced the importance of Inclusive Excellence as a core value in this campus community. During one of our conversations, he explained his intentionality to continue making Inclusive Excellence a core value in his area on a daily basis. He has not experienced feeling like an outsider, which may keep levels of his own privilege invisible.

**Jamie (male administrator).**

Jamie initially developed a commitment to inclusiveness from a place of self-interest as he tried to understand his own experience. This inspired a career as an administrator addressing issues of discrimination. His journey toward making visible and interrogating his own White racial identity commenced as a teenager, when, for the first time, he realized (through a co-curricular activity) that not everyone shared the same
experiences. It was an intentional struggle on a daily basis for Jamie to keep both his racial privilege and his gender privilege visible. While Jamie explained that inclusiveness had become “the right thing to do,” he still had the privilege to choose when to “fight the fight” and when to take a break and “justify it as self-care.” His challenge to himself was to constantly keep a mental check-list and a tool-belt striving toward the goal of this practice becoming a culture of habit. He worked to make sure that having experiences as an outsider did not prevent him from questioning his privileged identities as a White male at a PWI.

**Data collection.**

After the 11 participants agreed to join the study, three, 60-90 minute interviews were conducted privately with each one (Seidman, 2006). One group conversation was then conducted with 10 of the 11 participants. A second group conversation (requested by the participants), that involved 6 of the 11 participants, was also convened. During the first one-on-one interview, each participant received and signed the informed consent form for the individual interviews (see Appendix G). In the last individual interview, the participants each received and signed the informed consent form for the group conversation/focus group (see Appendix H). The Institutional Review Board approved these forms. For a comprehensive protocol for the individual and group interviews, see Appendices I and J.

Qualitative researchers use interviews as a method to uncover the hidden meaning structures based on participants’ lived experiences and worldviews (Hatch, 2002). Interviews provide the essential context and content for one’s stories (Seidman, 2006).
With the advent of CRT, interviews have become a significant way to document the lived experiences of individuals who are victims of race and racism (Dunbar, Rodriguez, & Parker, 2003). Unfortunately, in the United States, White identity has been the “. . . unreflected upon standard from which all other racial identities vary” (Dunbar, et al., p. 132). Therefore, the WILs in this study were asked to engage in a narrative inquiry based on the critical reflection of their historical context and life history, as well as the subsequent influence on their roles at a PWI. The goals of qualitative interviews include: (a) trying to understand the social world from a participant’s lived experience, (b) revealing how participants make sense of their experience, and (c) exploring their experience in the social world “prior to scientific explanations” (Kvale, 1996, p. 1).

For the research participants to co-construct their stories, they needed an opportunity to explore the beginning, the middle, and the reflective end of their biographical accounts (Seidman, 2006). These interviews allowed the researcher to hear the lived stories of the participants with the “opportunity for an authentic gauge into the soul of another” (Tierney, 2000, p. 823). For this reason, the researcher chose the three series, in-depth interviewing process in an effort to collect rich, detailed descriptions of the participants’ experiences and the meaning they made as they reflected upon and evaluated their experiences (Seidman). The first interview consisted of questions that assisted participants in narrating their personal racial and ethnic life history. The second interview consisted of questions that provided participants an opportunity to connect their life history to the current context of their experiences as inclusive leaders at PWIs. The final interview allowed participants to narrate how the experience of reflecting on the
meaning of their lived experiences influenced their personal and professional practice. Each interview was tape recorded and transcribed to ensure credibility in representing the participants’ stories (Silverman, 2005).

**Interview one: life history.**

According to Kvale (1996), conversations serve as the “ultimate context within which knowledge is understood” (p. 37). During the first interview, questions were asked to assist the participants in exploring the historical context of their experience with race and racial identity. Participants were asked to narrate their experience with family, friends, and community as it related to their personal racial and ethnic identity. The questions focused on the participants’ journey with the construction of Whiteness, specifically their personal White racial and ethnic identity, to establish a context for their lived experiences and the experiences of those around them (Seidman, 2006). Since the topic of the study was how racial identity influenced professional roles, the goal was for participants to narrate the events in their lives that led to being identified as an inclusive leader at a PWI.

**Interview two: the details of experience.**

The goal of the second interview was for participants to provide details about their current lived experience as WILs at a PWI. The researcher assisted the participants in reconstructing a day in their life to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their lived context (Seidman, 2006), and to provide details about their work as inclusive leaders and its impact on their personal experience. The personal and professional were
interconnected, therefore it was important that WILs reflected on how their racial identity influenced their ability or inability to practice inclusive leadership at a PWI.

**Interview three: reflection on the meaning.**

Throughout the final interview, the researcher assisted participants in connecting the intellectual to the emotional in their lived experience of their personal and professional lives (Seidman, 2006). This reflection afforded the participants an opportunity to make meaning as well as to evaluate their experience and the impact on their current and future actions as WILs (Seidman). This interview provided an opportunity for WILs to make new meaning of how their racial and ethnic biographical account has led to their current role as inclusive leaders, and to further explore the interdependence between the personal and the professional.

The 60-90 minute format proved effective to accomplish the goals of each interview, because it was adequate time to assist participants in reconstructing their life history, detail their current experience, and reflect upon the meaning (Seidman, 2006). The goal was to complete all interviews over a two to three week period to allow participants to think about the interviews without losing their connection to the context (Seidman). All interviews were scheduled two to three weeks apart, with the exception of two research participants who had four weeks between their final two interviews due to scheduling conflicts. The first focus group conversation was scheduled after the final individual interview and the second was scheduled one month after the first. While a tighter schedule of interviews was recommended in the literature, there was also
recognition that flexibility due to time and availability of participants may be warranted (Seidman).

**Focus group conversations.**

A focus group is an interview with a small group of people, typically six to ten, to gain additional insight into the themes and patterns that emerge through the study (Patton, 2002). Morgan and Krueger (1998) identified three strengths of focus group research. First, it provided an opportunity for the researcher to learn about the participants’ perceptions and views through exploration. Second, the participants were able to identify the ways in which their experiences were similar and different from other participants. In the focus group context, the researcher and participants had an opportunity to understand the life histories that contributed to their current beliefs. Third, focus group conversations allowed participants to answer the *how* and *why* questions, and attempt to understand individual and collective experiences. Through focus group conversations, participants generated collective meanings, which eventually evolved into their collective reality (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001; Patton, 2002). Intentional group conversations with the WILs to explore the challenges and responsibilities for eliminating racial discrimination were critical to co-constructing a framework to understand inclusive leadership at PWIs.

The goal of the first focus group conversation was to receive feedback on the themes that emerged through the individual interviews. In addition, the results of the focus group contributed to a composite narrative on inclusive leadership. While each participant’s history was unique, common themes materialized to co-construct a
framework for understanding inclusive leadership for White college administrators. While WILs made new meaning of their personal racial identity during the individual interviews, the focus group conversations were an opportunity for them to deconstruct how Whiteness manifested as a system at PWIs and how they benefited from this system of racial privilege. These group conversations also served as another source of personal and professional accountability for White college administrators to achieve inclusive leadership. For example, when some of the WILs concentrated on the institutional issues, their peers challenged them to recognize their roles in maintaining systems of racial privilege at PWIs.

Two separate group conversations, one with senior-level administrators and one with middle-level administrators, were considered to avoid a loss of voice for some participants due to power dynamics. After individual discussions about this, however, participants chose to convene in one focus group with everyone present. The researcher established a ground rule such that only the title inclusive leader was used within the group (i.e., no formal title based on their role at the PWI was allowed). Each participant shared that they felt they had a voice in this group conversation.

The second focus group conversation was requested by many of the research participants as a way to continue the dialogue and to engage on a more personal level. Both focus groups were scheduled for 60 minutes, which participants felt was not enough time. The data collected through the group conversations informed the creation of a composite fictional narrative representing the shared experiences of the White participants and the researcher during this study. The group conversations were used to
make visible the construction of Whiteness as a means to achieve trustworthiness in the data analysis process. In addition to individual interviews and group conversations with the participants, reflective journaling provided an opportunity for the researcher to have a voice in this study (Janesick, 1999).

**Researcher journal and reflexivity.**

Journaling provided the opportunity for the researcher to investigate her own theories and biases about the construction of Whiteness; to critically examine self as the research instrument in this qualitative inquiry (Janesick, 1999). Further, research journaling enabled the researcher to be critically aware of the invisible components within an individual that need to be comprehensively explored (Janesick). The journal served as a significant tool to ensure that issues of White privilege were identified and explored through the data collection and the data analysis experience. Goodman (2001) suggested that privileged individuals should determine “what is valued and what is ignored” (p. 13), which was particularly important when attempting to recognize the racism that may have existed during this research. Through journal writing, the researcher was able to critically examine inner thoughts and reflections to gain clarity in the decisions that were made while conducting the current research (Janesick).

Positioning journal writing through the inclusive leadership conceptual model with an epistemological perspective of CRT necessitated that the researcher focused on issues of racial privilege. CRT epistemology made visible the power that researchers had in all components, including data collection, data analysis, and the identification of the imagery that is meant to be representative of the participants’ voices (Chapman, 2005).
Journaling racial identity began with the researcher’s first year in college when White peers questioned her identity as illustrated in the fictional narrative, based in her social reality, at the beginning of chapter three. Critical reflections of journal entries provided the opportunity to identify stories that revealed and informed the ways in which the researcher kept the construction of Whiteness and White privilege invisible (Eisner, 1997). Specific contexts that informed the researcher’s experience with race, in particular the saliency of an ethnic identity among family, friends, and social networks, were identified. Journaling created the opportunity for the researcher to tell her story and then critically reflect on her experiences by making meaning of how she constructed the story.

**Data analysis.**

It was the researcher’s goal to use narrative to co-construct, with the participants, a framework for understanding inclusive leadership at PWIs. The inclusive leadership conceptual model that emerged through the researcher’s personal pilot study, as well as a critique of the relevant literature, informed the data analysis through a critical race lens. While there was not a single formula for the qualitative data analysis, the literature emphasized the importance of outlining a detailed method to manage the data to maintain a credible process (Ritchie, Spencer, & O’Connor, 2003; Seidman, 2006). The following sections discuss how the data was effectively managed, beginning with the initial coding process and continuing through the narrative analysis that was used to explore the themes that emerged.
Analyzing and connecting themes.

Throughout the data analysis, Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) constant comparative method was used to ensure that the themes were connected to the participants’ narratives. The following steps were taken in this process:

1. The response to each interview question was read to identify key themes that emerged from the participants’ narrative representations.
2. The entire transcript was read to identify commonalities across each interview question.
3. The entire transcripts from both group conversations were read.
4. When the commonalities in all these data were identified, open coding was used to capture the meaning of different sets of themes (Lincoln & Guba).
5. The open codes and participants’ stories were grouped to determine if the relationships accurately represented the data.
6. Thematic connections were made by bracketing segments of the interview transcript into categories (Seidman, 2006).

In addition to finding thematic connections, this method also allowed for a reduction of the massive amount of data that materialized through the individual interviews and group conversations (Seidman, 2006).

The constant comparative method provided an opportunity to achieve credibility by continuously exploring the themes to ensure that they connected back to the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This method also allowed a consistent comparison between tacit theories and themes to stay grounded in the data (Lincoln & Guba). Tacit theories can be
further tested with additional examination and review, however if this knowledge was not initially captured, it may have been “virtually impossible to recapture” (Lincoln & Guba, p. 341). Accordingly, Coffey and Atkinson (1996) emphasized the importance of continuing to go back to the data to question the initial coding and to provide a detailed explanation about how the themes emerged and the connections throughout the data (Ritchie, et al., 2003). Links in the data were identified as a means to explore explicit connections that were stated in the interviews (Ritchie, et al.). Once the themes were identified, the next phase was to identify the stories through the narrative analysis process.

**Narrative analysis.**

Stories create space for researchers to learn about culture and society through an individual’s point of view, since reality, like stories, is a social construction resulting from everyday conversations (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; 2002; Riessman, 2008). Through interpersonal exchanges, individuals are consistently reinventing their identity, which is important to recognize, since identities are constructed and reconstructed depending on the audience that is present (Goffman, 1959).

While story telling happened every day, individuals were more able to critically reflect on how experiences impacted their worldview through an interview process (Mishler, 1986; Ladson-Billings, 2000). During the interview process, the research participants were able to narrate their stories; through the data analysis process new stories were identified that further informed their experiences (Kvale, 1996). Through
narrative analysis, participants told their stories about how they developed and made meaning of their experiences (Mishler).

One of the most significant components of the narrative analysis was to identify the relationship between the content of the individuals’ stories and their subsequent construction of reality (Labov & Waletsky, 1967), as well as the relationship between the individual and the social world in which they lived (Kvale, 1996). To make these connections, Labov and Waletsky identified critical elements of narrative structure that included: (a) an abstract or summary of the core of the narrative, (b) an orientation that provided information about the context and participants, (c) complicating actions or sequences of events, (d) an evaluation detailing the meaning of the actions, and (e) a resolution of the final result (p. 20).

According to Mishler (1986), there were three ways to interpret interviews through narrative analysis. First, using a temporal lens, the researcher identified a sequence of patterns that occurred through the participants’ story. Second, a social lens existed since participants were engaged in storytelling with another person. Third, there was a meaning component in which participants learned that their experiences told through narrative had a purpose. Stories allowed individuals to develop a social connection with others who shared a common identity (Kvale, 1996). Riessman (2003) described narrating stories as the ability for individuals to relate through listening to lived experience, sharing experience, and encouraging empathy about experience. Researchers used narrative analysis to unfold the plot in each story to provide insight into the lived experiences of the participants (Kvale).
Throughout the narrative analysis process, the researcher went back and forth between finding the narratives, co-constructing new narratives that emerged from the interview transcriptions for each participant, and identifying common themes that were shared by the participants (Kvale, 1996). Analyzing their narratives through thematic and narrative analysis provided an opportunity to understand the context in which their stories were constructed (Riessman, 2008). In addition, by engaging in reflexivity, the researcher brought her own voice into the research as a means of inviting the reader to also participate in the dialogue between the researcher and the participants (Riessman).

Through thematic and narrative analysis, a framework with three overarching categories emerged for understanding inclusive leadership at a PWI. Further, this analysis informed the fictional narrative that engaged the imagination by connecting the mind with the heart in critically exploring issues of inclusiveness for WILs. The three categories and fictional narratives are presented in detail in the following chapters.

_Credibility and trustworthiness._

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is established by ensuring the research process is executed fairly and the data accurately represents the experiences of the participants (Ely, 1991). Additionally, it is essential for the researcher to acknowledge personal biases to ethically analyze the data and strive for an objective lens (Patton, 2002). While there are a variety of formulas for establishing credibility and trustworthiness in qualitative research, it is necessary to make each step through the data collection and data analysis practice transparent to the reader (Riessman, 2008; Ritchie, et, al., 2003; Silverman, 2005).
To ensure authentic accounts of the participants’ voices, the following strategies were employed. First, each individual interview and group conversation was tape recorded and transcribed to accurately record how participants made meaning of their experiences through their narratives (Riessman, 2008; Silverman, 2005). Second, direct quotes from the data were used to represent participants’ own experience (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Riessman, 2008). This strategy was a critical component to persuade the reader that the accounts used to illustrate the participants’ stories were reasonable (Riessman, 2002). Third, prior to each individual interview, the research participants received a hard copy of their transcript from the previous interview to review for accuracy and reflection. Fourth, the themes that emerged through the individual interviews were further explored during the group conversations to check for accuracy in representing their individual and collective voices. Finally, a researcher’s journal detailing the methodological decisions was used as an audit trail of all decisions made through data analysis (Riessman, 2008; Ritchie, et al., 2003). The researcher’s journal facilitated continuous reflexivity as a means to make the audit trail transparent to the reader and to document the biases that may have arisen throughout the study (Riessman, 2008). The audit trail can be used by other researchers to engage in additional exploration about the findings and implications of this qualitative inquiry (Riessman, 2002).

**Representation through narrative analysis.**

Since participants use narrative as a method in which to tell their stories, it is imperative that their way of making meaning is honored through the analysis process (Riessman, 2002). The challenge to researchers is to employ strategies to authentically
represent the voices of their research participants through the interpretation component of narrative analysis (Riessman).

Denzin (1997) suggested several criteria that researchers needed to consider to ensure that participants’ ways of making meaning of their experience was accurately interpreted through data analysis, including:

1. Illuminating the interpretation by grounding it in the lived experiences of the participants.

2. Collecting thick, detailed material that recorded intellectual, emotional, and meaning-making actions of the participants.

3. Identifying historical location as a means to fully understand how the participants’ stories have unfolded over time.

4. Presenting knowledge about the phenomena being studied and detailed accounts of experience to enable the reader to understand the participants’ experience as a whole.

5. Recognizing that it was impossible to provide an exhaustive understanding of the phenomena being studied (pp. 362-364).

These criteria provided a foundation to more effectively represent the experiences of the participants.

*Issues of generalization.*

Individuals generalize on a daily basis in personal exchanges and thinking about how to react in a similar situation with others (Kvale, 1996). Different types of generalizations can inform the implications found through the data analysis method
It is important to recognize that there are various forms of generalizations and various understandings of generalizations since there is not one truth that universally represents lived experience (Tierney, 2000). The goal of generalization for this study was to identify methods White individuals used to challenge the status quo, since research should also inspire transformation (Kvale; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Many White individuals have only understood one truth about race that was derived from a legacy of power and privilege (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). It was critical to acknowledge that there were multiple realities. Through storytelling, the readers had an opportunity to understand how the participants made meaning of their realities (Chase, 2008). Further, since reality was socially constructed, truth was also socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; 2002; Kvale, 1996). Narratives provided trustworthy accounts of knowledge created in a specific context (Kvale). Furthermore, narrators accomplished credibility by telling a biographical story of their racial and ethnic journeys (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). Scholarly, personal narratives became part of a life-long journey for those telling the stories and those reading the stories to make meaning of experiences as they sought to construct their truth (Nash, 2004).

**Summary**

Chapter three presented the epistemological perspective, conceptual perspective, methodology, and methods for this study to explore how White college administrators became successful inclusive leaders at a PWI. A qualitative design was employed to make meaning of the participants’ experiences through the epistemological perspective of CRT and the conceptual perspective informed by the inclusive leadership conceptual
model. Narrative and fictional narrative allowed personal stories to connect the mind with the heart to understand the interdependence between the personal and professional. Further, narrative and fictional narrative provided an opportunity for the researcher to have a voice through reflexive practice to achieve credibility and trustworthiness in this study.

Participants’ stories were collected through three in-depth individual interviews and two focus group conversations. Data was analyzed through a constant comparative method in an attempt to keep the researcher grounded in the data using thematic and narrative analysis.

In the following chapters, data is presented through narratives, fictional narratives, and a collective framework to understand inclusive leadership at a PWI. Chapter four describes each overarching category that materialized through this study, with a detailed focus on the first two developmental phases for understanding inclusive leadership for White college administrators at PWIs.
Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion

Many of us who are white have little sense of what it means for our lives, and we are not particularly concerned with finding out. It doesn’t seem relevant. We see ourselves as individuals rather than as members of a group . . . (Kendall, 2006, p. 41)

In an effort to make the journey of WILs visible, the inclusive leadership framework that emerged through data analysis in this study is described in detail throughout chapters four and five. This research was guided by the following primary question: how do White college administrators describe their journey toward becoming a successful, inclusive leader at a PWI? The goal of chapter four was to: (a) restate the purpose of this research, (b) provide a comprehensive illustration of the inclusive leadership framework, (c) discuss the themes and analysis of the first two phases of the findings through the voices of the participants, and (d) analyze the findings through narratives of the inclusive leadership framework and contributions to existing literature.

Restating the Purpose

As previously explained, the purpose of this study was to explore the journey of White college administrators who have been identified as inclusive leaders at a PWI recognized nationally. Narrative research was employed to: (a) explore the personal journey of White administrators identified as inclusive leaders, and (b) co-construct a framework that would lead to understanding inclusive leadership at a PWI. Eleven WILs participated in this study, including 6 senior-level administrators and 5 middle-level administrators. These WILs first participated in three individual interviews and were then
invited to participate in two focus group conversations. In addition to the individual interviews and group conversations, the researcher engaged in research journaling to record personal reflections throughout the research process.

**Exploring Themes**

Through a critical race epistemological (racial knowledge) and ontological (racial reality) perspective, three overarching categories emerged from the data to assist in constructing a framework for understanding inclusive leadership at a PWI. These three categories were titled:

1. Phases.
2. Processes.
3. Transformative life experiences.

Category one included four developmental phases that represented different levels of inclusive leadership for WILs at a PWI. Two sub-phases within each developmental phase were identified to show how the construction of Whiteness for WILs (i.e., personal racial identity and roles within systems of racial privilege), was manifested through the different phases (see Table 1).

Category two consisted of four processes that contributed to the growth and transition for WILs from one phase to another (see Table 2). The processes were expressed differently in each developmental phase for WILs. It was the context and experiences of WILs that influenced how the processes were experienced in their personal and professional practice.
Category three described the transformative life experiences that influenced the processes and the development through the phases (see Table 3). In the next section, the three overarching categories were described separately to explain how the categories were interconnected in a comprehensive framework. Describing each overarching category illustrated the complexity as well as the multiple layers that evolved in each phase, each process, and each transformative life experience through the life-long journey of living inclusiveness.
Table 1  
**Overarching Category One: Phases/Sub-Phases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase One: Normalizing Inclusiveness</th>
<th>Sub-Phase: Constructing Whiteness</th>
<th>Sub-Phase: Justifying White Privilege</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyone shared the same experience.</td>
<td>During a WIL’s historical context, Whiteness was constructed as the invisible norm through the concept of different from White.</td>
<td>White privilege was a form of unquestioned inheritance passed from generation to generation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase Two: Performing Inclusiveness</th>
<th>Sub-Phase: Maintaining Whiteness</th>
<th>Sub-Phase: Ignoring White Privilege</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusiveness was performed as part of a WIL’s job expectations.</td>
<td>WILs may have made the choice regarding when to engage in addressing issues of inclusiveness depending on the context in which they found themselves or if they saw benefit to themselves.</td>
<td>When inclusiveness was only perceived as a job requirement (e.g. information sharing), systems of White privilege at a PWI were ignored.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase Three: Embracing Inclusiveness</th>
<th>Sub-Phase: Deconstructing Whiteness</th>
<th>Sub-Phase: Unmasking White Privilege</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WILs developed a personal/emotional connection to inclusiveness as the right thing to do.</td>
<td>The myth that Whiteness was a shared experience was unveiled. Whiteness was identified as a social construction in the United States.</td>
<td>White privilege was exposed and WILs were able to identify their role within systems of racial privilege at a PWI.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase Four: Living Inclusiveness</th>
<th>Sub-Phase: Reconstructing Whiteness</th>
<th>Sub-Phase: Dismantling White Privilege</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusiveness became a culture of habit for WILs.</td>
<td>WILs reconstructed Whiteness grounded in inclusiveness.</td>
<td>WILs recognized that institutions of higher education were not established as inclusive enterprises and took shared ownership and shared responsibility for dismantling systems of White privilege.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phases.

The word *phase* was an intentional choice to demonstrate the complexity as well as the fluidity in the transformation for WILs. Similar to other developmental models, WILs did not work their way through each phase in a linear manner. Indeed, on a daily basis, WILs may have experienced each phase depending on the context in which they found themselves. This presented a challenge in describing each phase separately while demonstrating the fluidity of the inclusive leadership journey.

The majority of the WILs who participated in this study fell mainly in the performing and embracing inclusiveness phases. However, depending on the context, these individuals also experienced the normalizing inclusiveness phase due to their historical socialization, which resulted in racial privilege remaining invisible in certain contexts. Two WILs appeared to move between the normalizing and performing inclusiveness phases, with moments in the embracing inclusiveness phase. Finally, there were 5 participants who demonstrated moments of living inclusiveness.

Embracing and living inclusiveness was clearly a life-long process that was never fully achieved. Therefore, the main goal of the inclusive leadership journey was for WILs to purposefully commit to working through the processes and transformative life experiences to continue to learn how their personal context and experiences influenced their professional role at a PWI. As the participants emphasized, this life-journey consisted of making visible the exclusive socialized messages that were ingrained in their subconscious when historical context and experiences were not examined. The use of the expression “life-journey” conveyed that the ultimate phase (i.e., living inclusiveness) was
never fully achieved. However, intentionality was required each day through the processes and transformative life experiences to strive toward embracing inclusiveness and living inclusiveness for WILs.

**Processes.**

The second overarching category included the processes that inspired transition between the phases in the inclusive leadership framework. These processes occurred at each phase to promote growth in the personal and professional practice of WILs.
Table 2

*Four Processes of Growth and Transition from One Phase to Another*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process One: Discourse</th>
<th>Theme: Language used to discuss one’s own personal White identity and Whiteness.</th>
<th>Theme: Language used to discuss White privilege.</th>
<th>Theme: Complex language and various interpretations of the concept of Inclusive Excellence.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intentionality to engage in dialogues about inclusiveness.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuous reflection regarding personal beliefs and professional practice.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process Three: Meaning-Making</th>
<th>Theme: Intellectual LSUW</th>
<th>Theme: Political/Professional LSUW</th>
<th>Theme: Emotional/Personal LSUW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WILs revisited their historical context to make new meaning with their current and future practice.</td>
<td>• Espousing the importance of inclusiveness without recognition of racial privilege.</td>
<td>• Part of job description and performance evaluation.</td>
<td>• Inclusiveness seen as the right thing to do. • Inclusiveness as a culture of habit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process Four: Praxis</th>
<th>Theme: Walk the talk (personal accountability).</th>
<th>Theme: Shared responsibility and shared ownership for inclusiveness (professional accountability).</th>
<th>Theme: Navigating politics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and action.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Locate a sphere of influence. • Take intentional risks and make compromises. • Build alliances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of the processes (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, and praxis) happened at each phase, however they were qualitatively different from each other.
Although discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, and praxis were common words in the literature (e.g., Bruner, 1990; Fairclough, 2001; Foucalt, 1980; Freire, 1993; Mezirow, 1981; 1991; 1995; 1996; 2003; Tierney, 1989; and others), these words also materialized in the data as a means to describe the processes that occurred to promote transformation within the four phases of WIL development. The themes within each of the processes demonstrated the way in which WILs described their continuous journey toward embracing and living inclusiveness at a PWI.

**Transformative life experiences.**

The final overarching category in this study was transformative life experiences; these experiences motivated WILs to continue to grow and learn as they strove towards embracing and living inclusiveness on a daily basis. There were three main themes (i.e., exposure, intersections of identity, and mentors/personal relationships) that emerged as the transformative life experiences for participants.

First, as the participants revisited their historical context, they identified that exposure to racial diversity within an educational, co-curricular, geographical, generational, or professional context, influenced their understanding of racial difference. In the normalizing and performing inclusiveness phases, racial difference was perceived as different from the *norm* of Whiteness. In the embracing and living inclusiveness phases, however, the exposure was a means to unmask the social construction of Whiteness.

Second, 10 of the 11 participants named the intersections of identity as transformative in their recognition and understanding of discrimination. As the WILs
experienced discrimination in connection to one of their own marginalized identities (i.e.,
gender, sexual orientation, social class), they learned that connecting the mind with the
heart was critical to achieving inclusive leadership.

The third and final theme that emerged as a transformative life experience was
mentors/personal relationships, that is, individuals who opened the WILs’ mind and heart
to inspire a more inclusive racial worldview. Each participant identified a person or
persons in her or his life that made a significant contribution to transforming their racial
worldview. Participant pseudonyms were chosen based on this individual, or, in some
cases, a combination of individuals, who had made a difference in their journey to being
identified as a WIL at a PWI.

Table 3

_Transformative Life Experiences_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transformative Life Experience One: Exposure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WILs were exposed to racial identity within an educational, co-curricular, geographical, generational, or professional context.</td>
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_Transformative Life Experience Two: Intersections of Identity |
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WILs experienced discrimination due to one of their marginalized identities (i.e., gender, sexual orientation, social class), which provided fertile ground to understand racial discrimination.</td>
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_Transformative Life Experience Three: Mentors/Personal Relationships |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WILs identified individual(s) who opened their mind and heart to a more inclusive racial worldview.</td>
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</table>
Early in the developmental phases (i.e., normalizing inclusiveness and performing inclusiveness), participants recognized race as a dichotomy of Black and White and had a perception of a homogenous experience for Black people and a homogenous experience for White people. As the participants made new meaning of their historical context and experiences, they told how race was initially connected only to the African American and Black communities, while Whiteness as a race, along with other racial communities, remained invisible. In the later developmental phases (i.e., embracing inclusiveness and living inclusiveness), however, the dichotomy of race was unmasked and many of the participants were able to understand and articulate that experiences varied within all racial groups, including White (Brodkin, 1998; Ignatiev, 1995).

In the following, the first two developmental phases are presented with examples from the data of how the processes were experienced differently in each phase. Next, the transformative life experiences that contributed to the WILs’ growth and development in the processes and phases are discussed. Each section concludes with a compilation of a fictitious human being, that is, a composite of all the WILs in this study, to demonstrate the ideal type for each of the four phases. Sociologist Maxwell Weber coined the phrase ideal type as a conceptual construct to hypothesize the strengths and consequences of a social phenomenon (Coser, 1972; Henderson & Parsons, 1947). In this study, the social phenomenon is WILship.

The purpose of the narrative representations was to provide the different developmental phases within the inclusive leadership framework through the composite voice of the WIL participants. Discussion and analysis immediately follows the narrative
representations to demonstrate how the inclusive leadership framework contributes to current literature on the construction of Whiteness and connection to inclusive leadership at a PWI.

Figure 3 illustrates the overarching categories to demonstrate how each is interconnected in the inclusive leadership framework. The illustration provides a comprehensive visual representation prior to the discussion of how the processes and transformative life experiences are experienced differently through each of the four developmental phases of the inclusive leadership framework.
Inclusive Leadership Framework

Critical Race Epistemological (racial knowledge) and Ontological (racial reality) Perspective

Historical Context and Experiences

Figure 3. A comprehensive representation of how the overarching phases, processes, and transformative life experiences are interconnected in the inclusive leadership framework.
Phase One: Normalizing Inclusiveness

During the normalizing inclusiveness phase, there was a belief that everyone had the same experiences as well as the same opportunities. As the participants shared their historical context and life story, they made visible the normalizing messages with which they were socialized in reference to race and their personal White racial identity. A summary of phase one is repeated in Table 4 for the reader’s convenience.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Normalizing Inclusiveness Phase</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase One: Normalizing Inclusiveness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone shared the same experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discourse process.

Through the normalizing inclusiveness phase, the discourse process on race was either focused only on people of color or not discussed at all. For many of the WILs, race was not explicitly discussed in their families or was only discussed in reference to people who were not identified as White, which constructed Whiteness (sub-phase) as the invisible norm. This was evident in the words of Emily:

I was obviously part of this dominant culture around me, and I am trying to think if there were times where I was not part of the dominant group . . . I don’t think that I was so aware of my Whiteness, it was more about their [people of color] difference from me rather than my Whiteness as the difference from them. I think
that part [awareness of my Whiteness] came later. Their color was different than me and their class is different than me . . . yeah, me as the center of the universe (laughing), and injustices around that but not so much an awareness of my own Whiteness. I think like most [White] people, I was most aware of being White when I was around people of color and less aware of it [being White] when I was around just White people.

*Othering* individuals, whom Emily and many of the WILs in this study considered as not White, constructed Whiteness.

The WILs also explored how constructing Whiteness (sub-phase) through the concept of difference further perpetuated Whiteness and their personal racial identity as the norm within United States culture. White individuals used difference to normalize the construction of Whiteness and their own White racial identity as exemplified by these comments from Amelie and Jamie:

I think the word difference doesn’t sit super well with me because it [difference] is always couched in different from White people, different from heterosexual people, different from able-body people, like that [dominant identity] is the norm and everything else is different. I think that it [concept of difference] can operate to mask your own understanding of what White identity means. So if you are surrounded by White people, and then you operate with Whiteness as the norm, and you are consistently othering folks who don’t identify as White, then I think that it doesn’t help to illuminate your own privilege racially . . . it can place a blanket over it because you are surrounded by a sea of White people. (Amelie)

It [concept of difference] can homogenize the racial other. So it is people of color, as if that is one group, with all the same needs and concerns. When I do think to question that [concept of difference], it has the same affect that I can get preoccupied with trying to be attentive to that diversity by not paying attention to my racial identity and, I think, can also let me get off the hook in some ways. (Jamie)

As a result, not discussing or making visible one’s own White racial identity (without being in contrast to people of color) was another example of how normalizing inclusiveness manifested itself for WILs at a PWI. Jamie further described how this belief influenced his early upbringing “I didn’t think anything of it [Whiteness] . . . that is just
the way things were.” I would argue then that if WILs had not made visible their own racial identity, they may have been unable to identify the ways in which they continued to perpetuate the invisible privilege of Whiteness at PWIs. This type of racial discourse process continued to normalize that everyone must have the same experiences and opportunities, regardless of racial identity, as intellectualized in the following statement by Ed:

I walk in the room probably with more credibility because of the years that I have worked at this campus, and my title, and because the reputation, maybe, of this area. I think again just because mostly people are White . . . White here doesn’t get you any further along. I guess it [being White] doesn’t buy any added whatever . . . probably in different environments, sure, if you are a White male I bet it would enhance whatever you are doing. But I think at this campus it [being White] is kind of a wash, I don’t think you get any bang for it [being White]. I also have not observed a negative on the opposite, in other words, I have a couple staff members of color, and I don’t think they walk into a room and have to defend themselves or explain their resume. I don’t think people question them on the negative side either, just like I don’t think anything is added when I walk into a room. I think there are certainly some rooms where a Black male would walk in and they would ask questions like: where did you go to school, or do you have a degree, or where did you get your degree from? But I have not observed that, here, at this institution.

Ed was unable to identify how this type of White racial discourse process contributed to justifying White privilege (sub-phase). Through this statement Ed universalized the experience of all White people and all people of color instead of recognizing White privilege as a form of unquestioned inheritance passed on from generation to generation of White leaders at PWIs.

Putting Whiteness in the foreground as a form of inheritance may have assisted WILs in deconstructing their socialized realities by exposing the historical construction of racial privilege at a PWI, as expressed by Jamie:
I think a term that I have come to is just inheritance. And so, we are quite happy with benefits that have come down from that system [racial privilege], we don’t see those [systems of White privilege] as having been anything other than I worked hard as an individual.

Jamie revealed the way many White individuals may simply accept Whiteness as a form of justifiable inheritance without questioning the historical construction and their role in the systems that continue to maintain exclusion for those considered non-White. Indeed, the passing of Whiteness from generation to generation without question significantly influenced a WIL’s racial worldview, as discussed by Amelie:

I think that the inheritance thing is huge. It is almost mind exploding in the sense that; how do I, as a White person, escape that? I mean I can distance myself because I didn’t grow up here. . . but there are still these issues back home, like you just stop to think that your parents, and your parents’ parents, going back, and back, and back, and back, and if you are consistently White all the way through there is just this rollercoaster…Yeah it [inheritance] is massive and I don’t think people give that [inheritance of Whiteness] two seconds of thought. The blind spots that White folks, myself, have we don’t see how our privilege manifests itself.

By engaging in difficult racial discourse, issues such as the inheritance of Whiteness at PWIs, was exposed as a means to create more inclusive environments. However, the WILs explored that fear was an obstacle for many White individuals to participate in the racial discourse process, as shared by Stephanie:

I think that we are so afraid to talk about race, and instead of talking about it [race], we hide it [race] under the rug, or we ignore it [race], and if we can find neat boxes to put people into . . . I mean I struggle with, it is okay to be Black as long as you take on the dominate culture, you take on the language . . . you take on . . . I just think we are afraid.

Stephanie’s comments emphasized the fear that was expressed by many participants in regards to engaging in the racial discourse process with people of color,
more specifically the dichotomy between the African American and Black communities and the White community.

For many WILs, it was through exposure to diversity (i.e., transformative life experience) that interacting with people of color, more specifically the African American and Black communities, became less intimidating, as expressed by Josie:

Growing up in a small town, where there were very few people of color, you did not even know how to befriend someone [a person of color]. I really do not remember any people of color in my classrooms growing up and didn’t really have [racial diversity] exposure.

As part of her historical context, Josie explored how exposure to racial diversity served as a transformative life experience for her to not be intimidated by developing friendships with individuals from different backgrounds. Josie explained that, because she identified as White, and was predominately surrounded by others who also identified as White, she did not know how to befriend someone from a different race/ethnicity. She further explained:

I think part of it was young, naïve fear of something different . . . If I didn’t really know anybody or had never grown up with anybody of a different color, it was a little intimidating or scary because there was that fear of not knowing . . . Once I developed friendships, people of color were not intimidating, they were not scary, they were not any different than me. I just did not know that until I experienced it.

Josie’s reflection illustrated how her historical context and experiences with racial exposure perpetuated her construction of Whiteness as the norm through the feeling of being intimidated about developing relationships with individuals from the African American and Black communities. It was clear through this representation that Josie’s initial exposure to racial diversity continued to other people of color, yet also served as a
transformative life experience for her to engage in developing personal relationships with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Also critical in understanding the construction of Whiteness for Josie, and many other White individuals, was the idea that “. . . . they [people of color] are not any different from me.” As previously explained, in normalizing inclusiveness, the White racial discourse process tended to universalize the experiences for everyone instead of recognizing that there were different histories and experiences for White individuals and for individuals who did not identify as White.

By engaging in the racial discourse process, WILs and other White individuals were able to identify the experiences that contributed to the construction of their racial worldview. WILs were also able to recognize how some of those experiences may have impacted their current context. Betty explained that generational exposure (i.e., transformative life experience) to racial discourse during the Civil Rights era caused her to question her interactions with members of the Black community:

One of the things that I have had to struggle with since attending college, during the Civil Rights Movement, is change in the generations where there is more dialogue or some understanding that there maybe is a place for Whites to be involved [with race relations]. When the message I got in college, was this [race relations] was something that the Black community had to do for themselves . . . I think it has been really hard for me to sort of discern my interacting with the Black community because the message I got in college is this was no place for you [as a White person] so I still struggle with that.

It was apparent, based on these examples, that the WILs in this study, similar to other White individuals, were socialized to not identify their own White racial identity, which resulted in further normalizing and universalizing the construction of Whiteness. Accordingly, the self-reflexivity process materialized for the participants to locate how
their historical context and experiences influenced the way in which the construction of Whiteness as a race and their own White racial identity was kept invisible during the phase one: normalizing inclusiveness self reflexivity process.

**Self-reflexivity process.**

As the research participants reflected upon Whiteness and their personal racial identity, they identified how White ethnicity served as another visible or invisible marker that normalized their experiences. In fact, the majority of participants in this study did not have a connection to their White ethnic heritage, which contributed to their constructing Whiteness (sub-phase) as the invisible norm. Hope’s experience represented how Whiteness was normalized when White ethnicity was not explored:

> My ethnic identity is primarily Irish and it [being Irish] didn’t mean anything to me until I went back east, and there were a lot of Irish people, and a lot of groups, that identified themselves as Irish there. All of a sudden they would see me, and hear my last name, and they were like come and join us, be part of our family . . . and all of a sudden there was this whole big group that was my family. I had never experienced this before and it was kind of fun. When I was in junior high, and high school, my friends and I would sit around, and we would talk about how wonderful it would be if we were part of these families that have such strong cultural identities, like these big Italian families, with all of the great food, and all of the parties, and all of this great stuff. Here we were, just these nothing, we were just these dull White . . . I don’t know if we used the term, White, but we were just like, we felt that we were boring. And so when I went back east, it was kind of like well maybe I am part of something. I am sure that we didn’t say White we were just, there wasn’t a term to describe it [our culture]. We were just like everybody else.

Rembert and other participants explained that the belief within their family was that their “heritage of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant was definitely thought of as not only important, but superior.” Due to these socialized messages, the participants were able to avoid exploring their personal ethnic and racial identity, because Whiteness was normalized as everyone’s experience, as explained by Betty:
I am completely White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. I never felt like I was Welsh-American or a Scottish-American or an Irish-American it [White ethnicity] has no meaning for me whatsoever with the exception of a corner piece of the Welsh that has to do with music. The Welsh are very musical and that [music] is a big part of my life and it has taken me awhile to realize that [music] is part of my heritage. But in terms of the White identity development that I hear people talk about now, I cannot even relate to that.

The comments made by Hope, Rembert, Betty, and other participants in this study exemplified the significance in engaging in the self-reflexivity process. This process enabled WILs, and other White individuals, to better understand how Whiteness and their own racial identity were constructed in the United States.

Many of the WILs identified several reasons why there was no connection to their ethnicity. First, for many, their families had been in the United States for generations, and historically, the labels of American in the United States and White were used simultaneously (Alba, 1990). Next, all but three of the WILs came from multiple European backgrounds, which resulted in a lack of connection to any of those cultures. Finally, since Whiteness was constructed as the norm in the United States, and they were all fortunate to fall within the norm, there was no reason to question their own racial identity and the subsequent privileges that were attached. Based on this researcher’s personal experience and from the narratives of the WILs who had southern European backgrounds, White ethnicity was a more salient identity because ancestors were not, at first, identified as White, but were eventually accepted in the fluid boundaries of Whiteness after immigrating to the United States. Even though White ethnicity may have been more salient, the construction of Whiteness and our personal racial identity remained invisible until purposefully engaging in the self-reflexivity process.
One of the obstacles with the self-reflexivity process in phase one: normalizing inclusiveness was that the WILs expressed how they were able to depersonalize issues of racial discrimination because the comments were directed towards White individuals in general, not necessarily to them personally. Dallas first experienced removing his personal connection from race relations through educational exposure (i.e., transformative life experience), which provided the foundation for him to listen to the discrimination faced by members of the African American and Black communities without feeling threatened or defensive as a result of their comments:

I think for the most part that when I went to graduate school the whole racial thing was probably much more intense because a lot of the students were from Chicago or the Chicago area and a lot of them brought some really strong racially motivated feelings. I would sit down, and have discussions with people who were Black, who were angry, and so kind of being exposed to that anger and those kinds of emotions helped me to probably, in some ways, be less fearful of it [racial difference]. I think probably because I began to learn, while the anger might have been broadly directed at me it really wasn’t directed at me, personally. It may have been broadly directed at White people. When you don’t have to take it real personally I think it makes it easier to try to understand and appreciate where that anger, or whatever, is coming from.

Depersonalizing issues of White racial discrimination may have provided the basis to hear the experiences of people of color without forcing the WILs to engage in the self-reflexivity process to examine their own role in perpetuating systems of racial discrimination at PWIs. In other words, depersonalizing racial discrimination significantly influenced the individualism of Whiteness for WILs, as expressed by Emily:

I guess one of the hardest concepts for White people to actually grab onto is the sense of how individualistic we are . . . trying to explain that to a White person who is kind of beginning their journey on this [exploring Whiteness] and trying to get them to see how they get to be individual . . . it is very very difficult to point out. How do you see the water when you are swimming in it?
The WILs identified the concept of individualism as a catalyst for perpetuating the myth that racial discrimination occurred in individual acts instead of systems of racial privilege. This type of meaning-making not only continued to normalize the construction of Whiteness, but enabled White leaders to only intellectualize racial discrimination instead of recognizing how they continued to benefit from systems of racial privilege at PWIs.

**Meaning-making process.**

The meaning-making process in phase one: normalizing inclusiveness, emerged at the intellectual level, in that WILs may have espoused the importance of inclusiveness, without revealing how their personal racial identity may have prevented their shared responsibility in dismantling systems of racial privilege at PWIs, as shared by Ed:

> I guess I have never really thought in terms of my own [racial] identity. I am in charge of this area and I think in other peoples’ terms, and think of their lives, and their feelings, and how to help them fit into this campus community. It has not really dawned on me to think; well what does it mean for me, or being White . . . I guess I don’t spend a lot of time thinking about that [my racial identity].

Ed focused on creating inclusive environments for other people instead of engaging in the meaning-making process of his own role in perpetuating systems of racial privilege at this PWI. Furthermore, by engaging in the meaning-making process at only the intellectual level, WILs may have been unable to identify the socialized messages that influenced their racial worldview, as expressed by Betty:

> I was still dealing with; there is no place for me in Black groups, but I wanted to work with this gospel group. I spent one year with the young, gifted, and Black gospel students and they were totally accepting of me. They were amazing and if they had issues with my race they did not tell me. I mean, we were just engaged with each other. I think having that experience caused me to realize that the playing field was different in the ‘80s than it was in the ‘60s and I needed to just kind of get over my fear that nobody is going to want to talk to me, or no Black
person is going to think that I have anything to say. So that is when it [race] changed, when I was with this group for one year, and traveled with them, and spent a lot of time with them. So I think what that has caused in my interaction with people of color is to get over the White guilt. I think what happened in the ‘60s was I just got a really hefty dose of White guilt that was truly imposed by the Black community. I accepted that [White guilt], and I took that [White guilt] mantle right on, and I internalized it [White guilt]. I think once I got over that White guilt and I was able to lay that down then my interactions were much more honest and open. I stopped being so tentative around people of color. I guess I am no longer fearful with my interactions with people of color.

Although there was some emotional/personal reaction to Betty’s experience, it was evident through her comments that the construction of Whiteness and her own personal racial identity were maintained through the guise of White guilt. Betty internalized the messages that she received in college during the Civil Rights era and believed she did not have a place in race relations because she was White. Yet, as younger people, for many of the White participants, there did not appear to be any intentional exploration about what it meant to be White in the United States or the systems of racial discrimination that Betty intentionally or unintentionally benefited from. As a result, the meaning-making process at the intellectual level served as self-protection from the more hostile interactions Betty experienced as a White woman in college during the Civil Rights era and this type of intentional exploration didn’t occur until later in her life-journey.

Many of the other research participants explored the way in which White guilt manifested in their personal and professional practice as exemplified through Stephanie’s statement:
I have to deal with my own White guilt at the end of the day. I have really been thinking about this whole idea that; it is okay if you are a different color as long as you adapt to my dominant culture, and really how much room is there in higher education to be outside the dominant culture? Some faculty do it, as long as they are creating enough scholarship that a tenure committee cannot turn them down, but we know that still happens.

It was WILs’ historical context and experiences that shaped their racial worldview and their ability to recognize how the historical socialized messages they received about race influenced their personal racial identity. Rembert’s reflection demonstrated how critical it was to examine historical context and experiences to expose the construction of Whiteness:

I became an administrator at the tender age of 29 years old in a historically Black college. The historically Black college had a faculty that was about evenly divided racially between White people and Black people. You have to understand, that at the time, there really weren’t very many Black people coming out of the universities with master’s degrees or doctorates and part of my job was to try to recruit faculty, and to recruit as many qualified Black faculty as I could… it was very difficult, although we did pretty well in maintaining that balance. More of the administrators were Black so I was pretty much the [numerical] minority in that college and definitely there were probably two or three White students in the college. So it was definitely an African American environment… totally immersed and I am Mr. [numerical] Minority, and that’s the point in which you really learn your racial identity, when you are a White person living and working in this environment. I should have said working I lived in a nearby town, in the suburb. So I lived this dual life; this White person who socialized with other families in that town, but came to work every day at this historically Black college.

Through his professional exposure (i.e., transformative life experience) to racial diversity, Rembert made intellectual meaning of his Whiteness and White racial identity working at a historically Black college. Rembert also identified that the reason there was not more of a racial balance with faculty at this historically Black college was that racial discrimination caused barriers for Black scholars to gain access and opportunity to faculty positions.
As Rembert revisited that experience, he was able to cultivate a new understanding of the impact of his racial identity on his current practice as a WIL at a PWI. By naming the exclusive barriers that existed for faculty of color historically, Rembert identified the advancement barriers that still existed for faculty, staff, and administrators of color at PWIs. He may also have recognized his role in maintaining such systems.

Re-examining their life-journeys provided WILs an opportunity to identify the historical context and experiences that may have inhibited their ability to make the connection between their personal experiences and their professional practice. Further, WILs were able to engage in a new meaning-making process to question the normalizing messages that remained in their subconscious without intentional exploration. In an effort to authentically engage in deeper levels of the meaning-making process, it was necessary for WILs to balance reflection and action through the praxis process. As demonstrated in the next section, the praxis process existed at a surface level in phase one: normalizing inclusiveness.

**Praxis process.**

The praxis process in the normalizing inclusiveness phase remained at a high level without much intention of WILs to engage in constant reflection and action about their personal racial identity and their professional practice at a PWI. Some change may have occurred without working to unmask and dismantle the deeply entrenched forms of racial discrimination at PWIs and the WILs’ roles within those systems of racial
privilege. Without constant reflection and action, the change may not be sustainable in transforming a PWI to be more inclusive, as expressed by Amelie:

I think self-reflection is super important in the sense that I don’t think you can profess to be an inclusive leader or to practice inclusively if you are unaware of your own identities and how those identities impact the way you interact with the world. So I don’t think that inclusive leadership is simply about the presentation of inclusivity, I think that it is a cyclical process that is internal and external all at the same time and one without the other I don’t think . . . I mean you have to have both because I could sit here in my head thinking about my Whiteness, and how it impacts my positionality, and the way that I am marked, and all of that good stuff, but unless I actually take action upon that, and change my behavior externally, it is not going to change anything.

Amelie’s comments emphasized the significance of the connection between reflection and action to make sustainable change in creating more inclusive environments. In phase one: normalizing inclusiveness WILs may have engaged in some level of self-reflexivity, yet may not make the connection that their personal context and experiences significantly influenced their action or inaction in taking shared responsibility for and shared ownership in transforming a PWI to be more inclusive. Similarly, WILs may have engaged in action without the self-reflexivity process to make visible how their personal identities significantly influenced their professional ability to be inclusive.

Without intentional reflection upon their racial identity and subsequent racial privilege, WILs may not be able to identify the ways in which they are contributing to and benefiting from racial privilege at a PWI. Betty stated:
I feel like what we have done in terms of multiculturalism here [at this PWI] generally is to say; well, we are just going to throw our doors open so you all [students of color] come on in. And you can come into our institution, not like we are going to change anything that we do, but you are welcome to come in, and in fact we will recruit you, but then we are not going to make any systemic changes to make [this PWI] a more comfortable environment and a more relevant curriculum. And to bust our butts to get compositional diversity of faculty and staff to make it [this PWI] a more inclusive environment. All we have been willing to say is; look the doors are open. I don’t think any of us has really gotten a good foot hold in saying; you cannot just open the doors, and expect that students of color are going to come in and thrive.

Betty exposed one of the major barriers to the praxis process of WILs in phase one: normalizing inclusiveness, at a PWI, which was recruiting compositional diversity without the intention to change exclusive systems that prevented the retention of diverse students, faculty, administrators, and staff. Additionally, WILs may have benefited from systems of racial privilege that impacted their ability to recognize the ways in which they actively participated in constructing Whiteness (sub-phase) and justifying White privilege (sub-phase) at a PWI.

The following narrative illustrates how the four processes (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, and praxis) are experienced in the normalizing inclusiveness phase.

**Ideal type of WIL in phase one: normalizing inclusiveness.**

I know that diversity and Inclusive Excellence are important concepts with the changing demographics in society. In fact, I have read the information provided by the CDO and have attended a few trainings to better understand the concept. During these trainings, I listened to the information, but I kept reminding myself that I was not part of the problem because the issues with racial discrimination at this campus were not my
fault. In the trainings, I tried not to become defensive because I knew that discourse on racial discrimination was not directed towards me personally, but was directed to other White people who were not yet engaged in transforming their divisions/departments to be more inclusive.

After all, I did not receive any special treatment because I was a White administrator at a PWI. I was treated the same as everyone else. I had credibility because of my hard work in earning a higher title; others who worked hard got rewarded as well. I did not want to feel guilty about my achievements because I happened to be White. While I understood the concept of White privilege, I did not receive any special treatment. I was rewarded because of my hard work, dedication, and commitment to this campus community.

I have never had a problem with race and ethnicity or people of color. Race was rarely discussed in my family growing up, with the exception of a few occasional comments that were negative toward people of color, in particular the Black community. But the negative comments were just part of that generation. Since then times have changed. I think everyone believes now that being inclusive is important. There is an expectation that everyone at this institution will assimilate into the culture so we all have the same experience. This expectation is true for White people and for people of color.

Issues of racial discrimination do not seem to be as much of a challenge now as in history. Even within the last 5-10 years at this institution, diversity and Inclusive Excellence were ideas that were not on everyone’s radar like today. We have come a long
way with the work that we have done as an institution because now there is exposure to diverse communities.

**Discussion and analysis.**

Through phase one: normalizing inclusiveness, the WILs in this study re-examined their historical context and experiences to understand how they engaged in othering individuals who did not identify as White. The act of *othering* is to attach race to people of color while believing that being White meant one is not raced (Crenshaw, 1997). It is through the act of *othering* that the WILs constructed Whiteness and their personal White racial identity.

McKinney (2005) found that many White individuals depended on exposure to and interactions with individuals they identified as the “racialized other” (p. 21) to recognize their own racial identity. It was evident in their narratives that the WILs did not initially engage in exploring their personal racial identity until they had been exposed to racial diversity (i.e., transformative life experience).

As explained by the participants, the construction of Whiteness and their role in perpetuating racial privilege remained invisible because they avoided the discourse process in reference to their own racial identity. McIntyre (1997) coined the phrase “White talk” to describe the process by which White people eluded the exploration of their individual and collective participation in maintaining racism (p. 45). When Whiteness was not made visible, then racial privilege escaped any identification of power that was embedded throughout an institution (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). Accordingly,
WILs unveiled that Whiteness was a form of inheritance that significantly contributed to normalizing inclusiveness at a PWI.

Jamie and Amelie’s comments demonstrated how the invisibility of Whiteness as an inheritance contributed to WILs justifying White privilege (sub-phase). Yancy (2004) explained that “whiteness is a form of inheritance and like any inheritance, one need not accept it” (p. 8). Additionally, Wise (2005) identified that unveiling his Whiteness as racial inheritance had profound meaning in his personal transformation. Yet, if WILs were not able to expose the construction of Whiteness as a form of inheritance, then the subsequent racial privilege was not only accepted, but justified, through the guise of meritocracy (i.e., the belief that everyone had the same opportunities as long as they worked hard enough). Further, the WILs’ narrative representations created awareness about the way in which they universalized the experience of racial communities.

Nakayama and Krizek (1995) found that the “invisibility of Whiteness has been manifested through its universality” (p. 293). Therefore, the self-reflexivity process was imperative for WILs to re-examine how White ethnicity contributed to their construction of Whiteness. Hope’s narrative demonstrated how many White individuals felt they did not have a culture because “she was just White” and Whiteness was the norm. Perry (2001) proposed that the sense of “culturelessness” felt by White people sustained the invisibility of Whiteness and resulted in an attitude of racial superiority (p. 59).

The WILs in this study shared that they were socialized to believe that Whiteness was superior and that other races were inferior. Research further suggested that social advancement served as a catalyst for many White ethnic communities that were not at
first identified as White (e.g., Italians, the Irish, Jews) to later accept the entitlement of Whiteness, and denied privilege to individuals who did not fall within the fluid boundaries of Whiteness (Brodkin, 1998; Ignatiev, 1995; Kivel, 2002, and others).

Dallas’s narrative unmasked how he and other WILs depersonalized comments about racial discrimination, and thereby maintained the invisibility of Whiteness and their role in benefiting from systems of racial privilege. Without leaders intentionally engaged in the self-reflexivity process, they may continue to participate in privileged systems that perpetuate the status quo (Patton, 2004). They may also continue to only engage in the meaning-making process at the intellectual/personal/professional level because they were able to depersonalize racial discrimination as individual acts of meanness, rather than identifying it as a system they intentionally or unintentionally assisted in constructing and maintaining (McIntosh, 1998).

Amelie’s comments exemplified that the praxis process was critical for WILs to recognize the interdependence of personal reflection and professional action. Through continuous reflection and action, WILs were able to make new meaning of their historical context and experiences to more effectively understand how their personal experiences manifested through their professional practice (Tisdell, 2003). WILs may have transitioned into phase two: performing inclusiveness when they experienced a context in which the department/division where they worked was being evaluated on its progress towards embedding Inclusive Excellence.
The next section describes in detail how WILs experienced the processes (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, praxis) and transformative life experiences in phase two: performing inclusiveness of the inclusive leadership framework.

**Phase Two: Performing Inclusiveness**

For some WILs, intentionality in working toward inclusiveness may have been an aspect of their job performance that began and concluded within traditional work hours. Further, observers within the institution who were working toward Inclusive Excellence and expected the same from their colleagues, may have magnified the WILs’ performances. WILs in phase two: performing inclusiveness may have taken actions that appeared to be inclusive due to the observations of others and their own job expectations, as explained by Connie:

> When I first started early in higher education, there wasn’t a lot of diversity at any level within my division. I think it was my hunger to be very successful that I recruited diverse people. We had languages that were different, and people that looked a little bit different, and ate a little bit different, and I can remember it was a really big deal for other people. For me, personally, I think that I was still in a vacuum.

Through a critical race perspective, WILs may have performed inclusiveness because they identified the potential of personal benefit in working toward addressing issues of Inclusive Excellence in their department/division. Similarly, if a perception of political risks were involved, a WIL had a privileged choice to not engage in the discourse regarding Inclusive Excellence, and thus maintained Whiteness (sub-phase) at a PWI. A summary of phase two is provided in Table 5 for the reader’s convenience.
Table 5

**Phase Two: Performing Inclusiveness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase Two: Performing Inclusiveness</th>
<th>Sub-Phase: Maintaining Whiteness</th>
<th>Sub-Phase: Ignoring White Privilege</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusiveness was performed as part of a WIL’s job expectations.</td>
<td>WILs may have made the choice regarding when to engage in addressing issues of inclusiveness depending on the context in which they found themselves or if they saw benefit to themselves.</td>
<td>When inclusiveness was only perceived as a job requirement (e.g., information sharing), systems of White privilege at a PWI were ignored.</td>
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**Discourse process.**

As WILs employed the discourse process in phase two: performing inclusiveness, their focus was on the professional expectations set forth by leadership, specifically the CDO, regarding Inclusive Excellence. Yet, there was minimal, if any, dialogue about their personal racial identity and the many ways it manifested at a PWI. As previously explained, the main goals of Inclusive Excellence were to embed diversity throughout every aspect of the institution and to shift the responsibility of diversity to everyone on campus (Milem, et al., 2005). Through the leadership of the CDO, departmental leaders were trained on Inclusive Excellence, and provided with a practical guide about how to implement diversity and excellence in their respective departments/divisions. Part of the challenge, as identified by some of the research participants, was the constant change of language (e.g., diversity, social justice, multiculturalism). The perception was that there was not a shared understanding or a shared belief in the term *Inclusive Excellence* due to the different interpretations with this concept. In Rembert’s words:
I know that Inclusive Excellence is widespread, and accepted, and nationally it has been given a lot of visibility through the Association of American Colleges and Universities. They have done a lot of work to establish that theme and in a way it [Inclusive Excellence] is like a brand. There is an aspect about it [Inclusive Excellence] that bothers me and I may just be being silly here. I think this comes from my days of being at a historically Black college, and being so sensitive to words and phrases, but Inclusive Excellence can come off sounding like; you can be inclusive, and still be excellent, and that sounds so White, privileged, dominant to me at times . . . we can include you on our precious White campus and you won’t really wreck our standards because we can still be excellent with you here too. Now I know that is not what is meant by Inclusive Excellence but it seems like it can have that ring, or that misinterpretation, and I guess I do better with just the word inclusive. Inclusive comfort, or ability to honor, and yet get beyond our diversity, and I don’t know if the phrase Inclusive Excellence will get us there. I really think that the task in the years ahead is to honor diversity, when it needs to be honored, and to just get beyond it [diversity], when it is not an issue . . . and I know that there is still so much discrimination both structurally and interpersonally. There are many Americans who are still like that family I grew up in years ago and there is still much much work to be done. And yet, I think we’ll get that work done better if we do not make such a big deal over everything. Acknowledge it [diversity] but move beyond it [diversity] and really think about the organization; its tasks, the mission, the way in which different people are employed with the organization, and the way in which we work together as a team.

Rembert acknowledged that language, with its multiple interpretations, may promote inclusiveness while simultaneously perpetuating negative stereotypes. His comments suggested some conflicting analysis between moving beyond diversity and recognizing the individual as well as the systems of racism that still existed. There was also the sentiment that too much focus on diversity separated people instead of bringing people together to accomplish the goals of the organization. These comments illustrated the complexities and multiple layers involved with Inclusive Excellence. Yet, until systems of racial privilege were dismantled at a PWI, these systems would exist to benefit White leaders, while leaders of color continued to shoulder the responsibility for creating change. Moving beyond Inclusive Excellence without fully engaging in the
transformational process required to fully implement it may have only perpetuated the constructed historical exclusion at this PWI. Similarly, communicating the benefits of Inclusive Excellence without engaging in a critical discourse process about systems of racial privilege may have perpetuated the messages that inclusiveness was performed as part of a WIL’s job expectations. Ed commented:

I would really put it [Inclusive Excellence] in practical terms, and also talk about outcomes and benefits. I think the piece that people leave out a lot is that if you just shove things down people’s throats, and give them stats, and percentages, it just gets lost. And, I think, people also get defensive and they get sensitive about it. But I think if you talk about, number one, what is going well? What are the strengths? What are they doing to, not ease people’s minds but, let them know that they are not bad people, that just because they have not thought about these things, and they have not incorporated it [Inclusive Excellence] doesn’t mean that they are racist, or that they are bad people. So I think you have to be very open, but very sensitive, and just understand where people are coming from. But, I think, the most important piece is getting them to have buy-in and ownership of it, and accountability of it. Because I think a lot of people think; well it is always someone else’s responsibility, and that is partly why you put it in everyone’s job descriptions.

Tension between communicating the importance of transforming environments to be more inclusive of all identities, while interrogating the motives behind WILs making change, existed in Ed’s comments. In other words, he thought it was critical to highlight the ways that change could be made if WILs identified the benefits to themselves, rather than because transformation was the right thing to do to eradicate racist systems. It was important that WILs questioned the White racial discourse process to ensure that the change was sustainable for the betterment of everyone and not a select few.

The research participants identified the concept of political correctness as a potential obstacle to unmasking the construction of Whiteness through a critical discourse process. The following comment by Jamie represented how the majority of the
participants used political correctness as a reason not to participate in the discourse process about race and racial discrimination:

I think it [political correctness] has the function of shutting down conversations that might not be pretty, but might be useful so it protects the privilege. There is no engagement with it, and the status quo is in favor still. I never thought about it [political correctness] specifically to Whiteness but, I think, that would be a connection. I think it [political correctness] has a chilling effect out of selfish motivation.

This comment identified that politically correct discourse may be masked with perceived good intentions while simultaneously ignoring benefits gained from White racial privilege. Several WILs, however, argued that performing politically correct discourse was at least a step in making progress towards being more inclusive with one’s language, as stated in the following by Emily:

I think that sometimes we underestimate the power of words which is why this whole notion of political correctness I buy into because I think it is important to use words that people claim as their own to self-identify. You know for me to give a name or a label to an individual or group of people is not fair. People ought to be able to do that [identify] themselves and if that changes over time that is okay. It is my job to learn because every word that comes out of our mouths is like the strongest weapons we have. . . .political correctness is at least a step forward.

The discourse process was critical for WILs to examine how language and concepts such as political correctness contributed to their ability or inability to create inclusive environments as well as to demonstrate inclusive behavior. By intentionally engaging in the discourse process, WILs identified the interconnectedness between their personal values and professional action, as suggested by Stephanie’s remarks:
I think a lot of times, as leaders, in general we understand and appreciate that who we are as people impact who we are as leaders. But, in the systems that we operate in, we are more or less able to bring our full authentic selves to the endeavor depending on the circumstance. I struggle with . . . how one is performing in a job, and what are those cultural nuances that they bring, and how much am I still operating from a predominant White, predominant elite, predominant systemic expectation around how people can behave?

**Self-reflexivity process.**

During the phase two: performing inclusiveness, the self-reflexivity process for WILs was maintained at a professional level in terms of job expectations for creating inclusive environments, with minimal, if any, personal connection to their role in perpetuating systems of racial privilege at PWIs. WILs may have believed that they were giving up something (e.g., power, privilege) in creating more diverse environments, which perpetuated the myth that Whiteness was a universal experience. However, there was also an intellectual awareness of the benefits to having a more diverse community, as indicated by Betty:

> I think this is controversial but I believe this to be true; one of the things I experienced at my previous institution, as we got more students, and faculty, and staff of color, is that we gave up something to get something and what we gave up was intimacy. So when you have a group of staff people around you that all look like you, and are basically middle-class, and they tend to think like you, and you have common interest, and you listen to the same music…you have this sort of sharing or common ground or understanding. And then, you bring another critical mass of people of color into the group; you start to bump up against that, and that’s what’s real, and I think some of that common ground goes away because music was different, and the family structure was different, and the whole approach to boundaries was different. And in my view, that yeastiness or, that engagement is way worth giving up the intimacy.

By universalizing the experience of all White people and all people of color, racial bias may be masked in perceived good intentions. Betty expressed that there was good intention in giving up the perceived intimacy among a group of people who may
share societal norms for the purpose of becoming a more diverse community. The concept of *intimacy* may be masked in comfort, privilege, and even power to exist in systems that were beneficial to individuals who identified as White at a PWI. There did not appear to be any purposeful engagement in the self-reflexivity process about how Betty’s Whiteness and her own White racial identity remained the invisible norm to be interrupted in a positive way by recruiting a more diverse staff. Good intentions may have alleviated the sense of responsibility for eradicating systems of racial privilege at a PWI due to the need to believe that in performing inclusiveness, WILs have made positive change, as suggested by Jamie:

> None of us want to think of ourselves as bad people, so I did not intend . . . that is not what I intended . . . I did not mean to, although the gun still went off, and hit somebody, and that is a really tough lesson for people to get. And, I think, that in terms of leadership or trying to be an ally . . . my good intentions are only as good as the impact that we have, and we may differ on the definition or judgment about those [good intentions] in those instances. My intentions can be perfect and horrific things can happen, and I have to sit and say: well I will not do that again, or I am sorry or how can I help fix it, even if, that is to go away and not come back.

Jamie’s comments called attention to the tension between intent versus impact. The WILs may have had good intentions in performing inclusiveness, but not recognize the impact of intentionally or unintentionally perpetuating exclusive systems at PWIs. It was critical for WILs to explore their perceived good intentions through the self-reflexivity process. Rembert described a context in which his good intentions as a conflict resolution facilitator, masked in racial privilege, impacted a community of students working through some issues that emerged during their learning process:

> I remember going to Asia to facilitate an educational training. Then when they [students] came to the United States, they had issues, and they had things that they
had to adjust to and so on. We had accumulated a number of those issues and one night we had a meeting that went kind of long into the evening. I was facilitating and trying to hear their questions, and their issues, and how we would solve them, and how we would address them. I came back the next morning and three of the students were in my office wanting to talk to me. They said to me; we didn’t agree with what was concluded last night. I was sort of shocked because here I was using this wonderful democratic process facilitating this discussion and I thought we had democratically arrived at appropriate solutions that would satisfy the whole group. They said well Mr. Ho really has much more status and much more influence in the group. So, here, unbeknownst to me, there was this whole status system within the hierarchy of the student group. And me, and my naïve way, was saying; oh well they are all equal and we will just resolve these things as we do in the United States . . . and it didn’t work that way.

Rembert’s good intentions in using a democratic process to facilitate conflict resolution did not take into consideration the cultural issues that contributed to the problems for this group of students. Through the self-reflexivity process, Rembert might have further explored how his White racial identity contributed to believing that a democratic process assumed equality within a group regardless of the different levels of privilege within the group. There may be an assumption by WILs and other White individuals, that a democratic process created a group environment in which all voices were heard. Yet, even in a group where individuals have identified as sharing a racial/ethnic identity, there were other considerations to create an inclusive environment where everyone had a voice. For example, when individuals participated on committees with their direct supervisor, they may not have felt as though they could express their true opinions for fear of consequences, due to the hierarchical nature of the relationship.
WILs were challenged to recognize how their racial privilege may have impacted their professional roles. Emily identified the challenge in keeping her racial privilege visible on a daily basis at a PWI:

I am not sure that I keep it [White privilege] present daily. I think that the nature of privilege is that you do not have to do that [keep privilege visible]. I try to remain aware of it [White privilege], but it is certainly always easier to look at the places where you do not have privilege than where you do.

Hope reflected on a factor that contributed to her resistance about keeping issues of White privilege visible in phase two: performing inclusiveness:

I was thinking about White privilege the other day, and why there are so many [White] people resistant to this idea, and it struck me that for all of your life you are told that you need to be something different than the crowd to get special treatment, and now because you are like the crowd you have special treatment. It is so contrary to the way you are raised, to think about things, to demonstrate how you are unique, to demonstrate how you stand out, and that is how I was raised to get certain status or privilege or something such as: better pay, better jobs, better grades you work to make yourself stand out. And then, you are saying, well White privilege, . . . because you are like everyone else you have something more.

The idea that all White people at a PWI were the same significantly contributed to their ignoring White privilege (sub-phase) as part of a system that was historically constructed to exclude those who did not identify as White. Without WILs’ intentional participation in the self-reflexivity process to expose the ways in which they benefited from systems of racial privilege at a PWI, their meaning-making process remained at the intellectual/professional/political levels.

**Meaning-making process.**

In phase two: meaning-making process, WILs made meaning of inclusive leadership in relation to their job. They had an intellectual/political/professional
understanding of the importance of implementing and making intentional choices to demonstrate their commitment to transformation within their division/departments. In the words of Ed:

In my current position I tried to change the role, and, as I moved up, I was able to control who we hired as a staff. And our staff is much more diverse than it was when I came here and it is by design. It just makes sense . . . it seemed odd that would not have happened a long time ago. I think it [Inclusive Excellence] is something that for a lot of people is just not on their radar and I think at the time, diversity did not have the priority that it does today. I think more people need to know what it [Inclusive Excellence] is and just understand some basic definitions before you can actually let it [Inclusive Excellence] thrive or grow into something that is more meaningful.

It was apparent that Ed engaged in transforming his area, as well as the campus as a whole, in terms of Inclusive Excellence. He shared that in his previous professional positions, racial and ethnic diversity was central to his experience, and inspired him to recognize the benefits of a more diverse campus community. Ed demonstrated that transformational change could take place if an individual leader was only engaged at the intellectual/political/professional levels in the meaning-making process. He had made great strides in implementing inclusive practices at various levels within his department (e.g., compositional diversity, goals, mission, job descriptions) and made Inclusive Excellence a core value. Yet, if WILs were unable to make the connection to how their personal racial identity impacted their professional practice, change may have occurred while maintaining Whiteness (sub-phase) and ignoring White privilege (sub-phase) at a PWI. Racial privilege gave WILs a competitive advantage that they may not want to acknowledge or to lose, as expressed by Emily:
When you acquire privilege, and when you have some, it is a very difficult thing to not take advantage of . . . want to let go of . . . want anybody else to have. I have my own, how hard is it to just make sure you keep it? And that certainly gets in the way, I think, of us moving to the heart on some of this stuff. I think the positional power stuff is the most obvious thing that kind of holds privilege in place in this [predominately White] institution.

It was important for WILs, who may be considered insiders to the privileged social systems at a PWI, to make meaning of their role in challenging the status quo. As Betty explained: “I think, for me personally, it is important to try to continue to chip away at the status quo of this culture. And I am very much aware that I am an insider. I do have a lot of [racial] privilege.” WILs intentionally or unintentionally engaged in maintaining Whiteness (sub-phase) at a PWI by making the choice of when to address issues of Inclusive Excellence and when to take a break because their energy for Inclusive Excellence waned, as explained by Josie:

I admit that sometimes my battery on diversity and Inclusive Excellence can get run down. The good thing is that I have been able to fill it up again. I think that people have this big job ahead of them . . . they have got to be like the energizer bunny that keeps going and keeps going. But I do not get tired of this kind of work that I do . . . I feel like I have energy for it. And I know that there are people out there who have that energy for diversity and Inclusive Excellence because I have been amazed about how their energy does not get zapped. But, for us mortals, it [Inclusive Excellence] is difficult because we get tired.

Josie’s comments reflected the complexities in how WILs may champion inclusiveness while they simultaneously acknowledged their privilege to take a break, because other people (i.e., people of color) maintained the momentum for sustainable change. Individuals who experience oppression on a daily basis did not have the same privileged choice to perform inclusiveness and then take a break when they become tired. As WILs only engaged in the meaning-making process at the intellectual/political/
professional level, they were not able to recognize how their inaction was embedded in their racial privilege. Jamie and Dallas illustrated, through the following narratives, how they employed their privilege in the guise of self-care and political consequences:

The privilege thing is tempting to say; I do not want to be the inclusive leader today. My punch card is full for the week, I spoke at the last four meetings, and at what cost to the community is that nothing gets done because I am tired. And, I think, that is the privilege being able to say; based on the identities that I have, and the positional authority, I think that is the struggle of I can tell myself that I am self-caring . . . .I need to be able to fight the fight tomorrow so I am going to bail on this one . . . at the end of the day, I think, it is about my own racial privilege. I get the choice to not have to do it, with no great negative impact on me…so it is a personal struggle. (Jamie)

I think from an institutional/political perspective I have learned to choose my battles carefully. There are a lot of things to fight about, but there are a lot of things where you are not going to win the battle to begin with, so you have to make that decision as to whether or not you want to spend the capital or take the political risk to do something, when probably nothing is going to come out of it. (Dallas)

Systems of racial privilege were maintained at a PWI when WILs intentionally or unintentionally participated in exclusive practices by not connecting the mind with the heart. Josie explained, “you don’t really get it [Inclusive Excellence] until you have those aha moments where they impact your heart.” Without the personal connection, changes only occurred if mandated in job descriptions and job performance evaluations.

**Praxis process.**

During the praxis process in phase two: performing inclusiveness, WILs participated in reflection and action in relation to the professional expectations evaluated in their department/division. Stated differently, the various professional contexts in which WILs found themselves at PWIs impacted their level of performance in terms of change within their areas. Betty recognized that these types of changes may have been
challenging as well as shallow, but argued a need for a beginning point in making further change:

I do struggle, because my inclination in some ways, and I am not proud of this, since I have positional power, sometimes I just want to use the authority to say you just have to do this. I don’t think that is the most effective way, and that is not how I want it to be. Because I am so idealistic, I think, people are going to see; how important this [Inclusive Excellence] is, and how valuable this [Inclusive Excellence] is, and how this [Inclusive Excellence] just makes sense, and they are going to have their own aha moments but that hasn’t necessarily been my experience. I believe that the 1960’s civil rights legislation was really important and some people say that you can’t change attitudes. You can’t always change attitudes, but you still can put things in place that can make it a more level playing field. That is part of what I believe, by our putting this in everybody’s job description that, we can at least nudge forward with some kind of nominal compliance or questioning.

Betty, as many WILs in this phase, may have mandated that Inclusive Excellence be part of everyone’s job as a professional expectation of the institution. Without such a mandate, many White employees may have chosen not to engage in creating more inclusive environments because Inclusive Excellence was perceived as another add-on to a population that self-identified as already overworked. Conversely, one may argue that there was a level of intentionality with the praxis process while performing inclusiveness, as suggested by Ed’s remarks:

I think most importantly you have to make it a priority whatever it is. It is Inclusive Excellence in this case, and you have to make it a priority in what you do every day. It [Inclusive Excellence] is not something that you talk about once a month or once a year in your retreat. It is important to talk about it [Inclusive Excellence] as part of what you do all the time; so you put it in job descriptions and performance evaluations. I knew to make change; you had to get up, and think about Inclusive Excellence every morning. If you do not prioritize it [Inclusive Excellence], if you do not make it [Inclusive Excellence] important, it [Inclusive Excellence] will never happen.
It was apparent that Ed purposely and strategically reflected upon Inclusive Excellence as a means to make his department/division more inclusive. As previously noted, Ed made positive strides by treating Inclusive Excellence as a core value and a part of everything his area did, including job descriptions and job expectations. The challenge with only acting and reflecting at the intellectual/professional/political level was that WILs may have been unable to comprehend how their personal racial experience influenced their ability to identify systems that were entrenched with racial discrimination at a PWI. Further, a part of the White privilege paradigm that remained unquestioned by many White individuals at PWIs was information sharing as a form of power that resulted in ignoring White privilege (sub-phase). In the words of Josie:

This institution has a very interesting power dynamic where information is power here. And, information is not given out easily here which I don’t understand because this is not secret stuff that we are doing. We are trying to educate students, give them a transformational experience, and so there is nothing really secret about it, but the systems are not set up, here, for the information to be spread. The vast majority of committees, or councils, or task forces, or anything that I have been on, here, do not keep minutes . . . and so people hold information really tight.

On the other hand, the praxis process within performing inclusiveness at least inspired an initial level of transforming a department/division to be more inclusive. The caveat was that the leadership was in support of furthering the Inclusive Excellence agenda through action and not simply rhetoric. Amelie stated:

The challenge that comes, I suppose, is that it is not easy when you are operating within a system that does not necessarily value or appreciate that [Inclusive Excellence], or embedding Inclusive Excellence, and no one is being held accountable when that does not happen. And when I talk about accountability, I mean hard accountability in that you are not going to get a merit increase, or you are not going to have a job, if you do not do this [Inclusive Excellence]. So that is the challenge, you have this surface level acknowledgement but no willingness to
be supportive. I want to embed Inclusive Excellence into everything that I do but do I have the external support?

Amelie identified that, for many departments/divisions, there were no consequences for not addressing issues of Inclusive Excellence beyond a performance level, causing another barrier to transforming deeply entrenched environments of racial discrimination. The following narrative representation illustrates how each process (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, praxis) is holistically experienced in phase two: performing inclusiveness in the inclusive leadership framework.

**Ideal type in phase two: performing inclusiveness.**

I wake up every day intentionally thinking about how to embed Inclusive Excellence within my division/department because I know that the members of this campus community will evaluate me. Since Inclusive Excellence has become an important part of this institution, I am working with my staff to make sure that they have all been trained on the concept. In fact, I asked the CDO and his staff to come in to do some training. I have also mandated that everyone have Inclusive Excellence in their job descriptions and performance evaluations. If I do not mandate this for some of my White staff members, then they may not engage with Inclusive Excellence. I do not want their attitude to reflect poorly on the work being done in my area or on the institution. I must admit that sometimes their attitude is a reflection on the complicated nature of a concept like Inclusive Excellence.

It seems overwhelming at times to try to be inclusive and excellent at the same time. I mean, how do we realistically work to be inclusive of all identities? In addition, language is always changing. We have used terms such as diversity, social justice,
multiculturalism. It just becomes confusing after awhile. I become exhausted just thinking about it and so sometimes I do admit that I take a break to get reenergized around issues of diversity and Inclusive Excellence. Then I get refocused. Sometimes we just need to take a break since our plates are all so full already and to have another huge responsibility to try to incorporate is definitely challenging.

Yet, I know it is important because I can see the benefit in having a more diverse staff and more diverse ideas even if we are giving up some of the intimacy that we have when everyone is from the same background. I think part of giving up the intimacy is not always sharing information with everyone on campus. It is interesting to me how some people think of information as power at this institution. The other challenging part for me is that there are some areas on campus that have no consequences for not working toward Inclusive Excellence and my department/division is purposeful with this work. Maybe we will be recognized as an area that other departments across campus can emulate.

**Discussion and analysis.**

Goffman (1959) defined performance as the behavior and actions of an individual in the continuous presence of a specific group of observers. The specific group of observers in the current context included the administrators, faculty, staff, and students working toward Inclusive Excellence at this PWI. The narratives within this section exemplified how WILs engaged in performing inclusiveness partly due to the expectation that the evaluation of their department/division would be based on their work toward Inclusive Excellence. It was apparent through these narratives that the WILs identified a
personal benefit of being recognized for their work, and therefore engaged in
transforming their department/division to be more inclusive. Connie’s comment, “... it
was my hunger to be successful that I recruited diverse people,” exemplified how she and
other White leaders may have made change due to the perceived personal gain. Through
a critical race perspective, the actions of WILs in phase two: performing inclusiveness
may be identified as interest convergence, a term connoting inclusive action due to
perceived personal benefits (Bell 1980).

The personal gains related to creating more inclusive environments may be
masked in the good intentions that hid White racism on a daily basis (Bush, 2004). Betty,
Rembert, Jamie, and other participants provided examples of how actions disguised in
good intentions may have had significant consequences for individuals who did not
identify as White at a PWI. Their comments highlighted the importance for WILs, and
other White individuals, to critically examine the intent of their actions and to think
through the consequences of the impact. The praxis process provided the opportunity for
WILs to engage in constant reflection upon their actions. However, without intentional
engagement in the self-reflexivity process, WILs were not able to recognize how their
racial privilege was masked in good intentions. Through the discourse praxis in this
study, performing inclusiveness was exposed as a good intention to create a more
inclusive environment, because change happened, yet structures that caused exclusion
were maintained. Patton (2004) warned that institutional change may often only occur on
a surface level, perpetuating the status quo. The WILs in this study suggested that
including a commitment to inclusiveness in job descriptions and performance evaluations
was critical to mandate change within their area. However, by only mandating inclusiveness, without a personal mind/heart experience, White staff may have engaged in the meaning-making process that Inclusive Excellence is only a “diversity requirement” (Patton, 2004, p. 62) to check off, instead of the right thing to do.

Finally, the narratives in this section highlighted the challenge to first understand Whiteness as a privilege both personally and then to understand the ways racial privilege is manifested at a PWI. For example, Dallas, Jamie, Josie, and other WILs suggested that their racial privilege was masked as a form of self-care. They could employ their racial privilege to take a break on working toward Inclusive Excellence, and then get reenergized in transforming their department/division to be more inclusive. Emily’s narrative exemplified the challenge in not only keeping privilege visible, but the tendency to focus more on the intersections of identity in which discrimination is experienced. Goodman (2001) found that individuals tended to focus on the identities in which they experienced discrimination because it was uncomfortable to unveil their privilege. Emily reflected that once privilege was acquired, there was a fear of losing that privilege. Therefore, WILs and other individuals who represented privileged identities (e.g., men, heterosexuals, Christians) may be uncomfortable in identifying personal privilege for fear of losing it. If a PWI benefited White leaders, why would the system ever need to change?

In phase two: performing inclusiveness of the inclusive leadership framework, change has to occur since departments/divisions were evaluated. The personal gain in recognition for Inclusive Excellence may have been the catalyst for making change, as
suggested in Amelie’s narrative, which challenged institutional leaders to implement accountability and consequences for not making change. For example, some WILs explained that they included Inclusive Excellence in job descriptions and performance evaluations, yet wondered what consequences would be imposed if they were not meeting their “diversity requirement” (Patton, 2004, p. 62).

The meaning-making process experienced only at the intellectual/political/professional level prevented WILs from connecting their mind with their heart, a critical component of inclusive leadership. The next chapter details how the processes (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, praxis) were experienced as WILs transitioned into phase three: embracing inclusiveness and phase four: living inclusiveness through transformative life experiences (i.e., exposure, intersections of identity, mentors/personal relationships) that served as catalysts to connect their mind with their heart.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings for understanding inclusive leadership at a PWI. The three overarching categories that emerged from the data, (1) phases, (2) processes, and (3) transformative life experiences, were individually introduced and then presented in a comprehensive inclusive leadership framework. The first two phases (i.e., normalizing inclusiveness and performing inclusiveness) were described throughout this chapter. The interdependence between WILs’ racial identity and their professional action was woven throughout each aspect of the framework to connect the mind with the heart. After each theme was introduced, a narrative combining participants’ voices was
presented to represent their collective comments in relation to the themes that
materialized through their individual and collective stories.

Each section concluded with the ideal type of WIL to illustrate how each process
(i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, praxis) was experienced in phase one:
normalizing inclusiveness and phase two: performing inclusiveness in the inclusive
leadership framework. A discussion and analysis section followed the narrative
representations to demonstrate how the findings in the inclusive leadership framework
may further contribute to existing literature on the construction of Whiteness and higher
education leadership.

The findings of this research continue in chapter five with a detailed description
of phrase three: embracing inclusiveness and phase four: living inclusiveness in the
inclusive leadership framework. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the
limitations of this study.
Chapter Five: Findings and Discussion

*Our life task, as I see it, is to examine at increasingly deeper levels what it means for us to be white and then to alter our behavior so that we are better able to change our systems to be just and equitable and ourselves to enter into authentic cross-race relationships.* (Kendall, 2006, p. 41)

Connecting the Mind with the Heart

This chapter describes in detail the final two phases of the inclusive leadership framework: phase three: embracing inclusiveness, and phase four: living inclusiveness. Through transformative life experiences (i.e., exposure, intersections of identity, mentors/personal relationships), the WILs in this study identified how their mind was connected with their heart in addressing issues of inclusiveness. As WILs transitioned into the final two phases of inclusive leadership, there was a deeper understanding and commitment to being more inclusive as a person and as a professional. WILs experienced the processes (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, praxis) in a more intentional way because inclusiveness moved from the perception of something they were required to do (phase one: normalizing inclusiveness and phase two: performing inclusiveness) to the belief that inclusiveness was the right thing to do (phase three: embracing inclusiveness) and eventually became an inherent part of their being (phase four: living inclusiveness).

The goals of this chapter are to: (a) discuss the themes and analysis of the final two phases of the findings through the voice of the participants, (b) analyze the findings
through narrative representations of the inclusive leadership framework and the contributions from existing literature, and (c) discuss the limitations of this study.

Similar to chapter four, examples of the transformative life experiences that served as catalysts for the WILs to connect their mind with their heart in working toward inclusiveness were presented with detailed explanations of how the processes (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, praxis) were experienced in phase three: embracing inclusiveness, and phase four: living inclusiveness of the inclusive leadership framework. Narrative representations are again used to demonstrate the ideal type of WILs in the final phases. A discussion and analysis section follows the narrative representations to illustrate how the inclusive leadership framework contributes to the existing literature. The conclusion of this chapter presents the limitations of this study.

**Transformative Life Experiences**

As previously explained, the overarching category three of the findings was the transformative life experiences that significantly influenced the growth and development of WILs as they transitioned between the phases. Through these experiences, WILs became more purposeful in engaging in the processes (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, praxis) as a means to better understand how their personal identities were connected to their practice as inclusive leaders at a PWI. The following narratives exemplified the types of experiences that inspired connections to the heart regarding issues of inclusiveness. Examples of these types of transformative life experiences were integrated in the next two sections to demonstrate how the processes and transformative life experiences worked together to influence transition between the phases.
As participants described their historical context and experiences, intersections of identity emerged as critical for the WILs to develop a more emotional/personal connection to issues of inclusiveness. Ten out of the 11 participants shared that they had experienced being both the insider in systems of privilege as well as a perceived outsider, which inspired transformation with their racial worldview. For example, Connie stated:

Being a woman who has worked in organizations dominated by men was considered somewhat unique, and then being a woman who has served in a leadership position typically dominated by men, was considered being a pioneer you know. . .so it was something that I became much more sensitive to and I never saw myself as a minority but I was thrown into that role then as the underrepresented gender in an organization trying to find connectivity to everyone. What it has taught me about myself is my effectiveness is solely based on my responsibility and ability to make people comfortable. That there are some internal pressures that I have; I tend to be over-prepared, and I am never late because I never want my gender to be seen as deficient . . . In some ways I am thankful for being an outsider because I do think it has made me more sensitized. And I don’t realize all the time, because of where I was born, and how I look, and my experiences that I am privileged. But I think being in this environment has made me see, for example, I just realize it is much much much deeper than ethnicity or socioeconomic. And there were times that I am thinking; oh my gosh what was I thinking? I didn’t see it. So I do think it has made me much more sensitized to people who have different experiences, different ethnicities, different age, disability . . . just because maybe I have a little bit more of an ear for it now or an eye, you know, I don’t ever remember not having a longing to know or to connect.

Connie’s experience of being an outsider based on her identity as a female in a traditionally male-dominated position served as fertile ground for her to recognize other forms of discrimination. The personal experiences of being perceived as an outsider in the United States for the majority of WILs in this study provided a foundation for them to develop a commitment to work toward inclusiveness. The intersections of identity kept the various forms of discrimination present, as expressed by Amelie: “I have been lucky enough to be surrounded by people who have consistently stressed that looking at the
intersections of identity are really important, so I can’t look at gender without looking at racism or looking at homophobia.” For White individuals who aspire to WILship, a focus on their White privilege, rather than their outsider identities was recommended for reasons outlined by Betty:

White privilege, to me, is probably the privilege that runs under all others . . . it’s a stronger privilege than gender privilege, than class privilege, than sexual orientation privilege that one [White privilege] is the definition of our world. Whiteness is much more pervasive than any of those others [privileges].

This did not mean that other forms of privilege and the subsequent consequences were not equally important to question and dismantle. The purpose of highlighting these comments within the context of this study focused on race and ethnicity, was to illustrate how Whiteness was the invisible marker that cut across other forms of discrimination.

The WILs also identified that mentors (transformative life experience) inspired a more emotional/personal conviction to revealing issues of racial discrimination and

White privilege. According to Rembert:

The president at the historically Black college where I worked was just; the most fabulous guy in the world, the most understanding person, very perceptive about the times, and what was going on with the civil rights movement, and what the role of the college was in educating young Black men and women to move into an environment that was going to be radically different from the environment of my parents. So that’s really where my identity was shaped around race relations, in particular, that then spreads and broadens into sensitivities about other types of ethnicities and other races . . . other forms of difference, religious difference, and so on . . . it is pretty interesting for them to have this young, White guy on their staff. The times were filled with what they would sometimes refer to as, you know, the bleeding heart liberals-White people who want to come and do good . . . the good doers but who didn’t really have the right kinds of attitudes, and were filled with subtle forms of prejudice themselves- and it was also a time for me to examine and try to find those subtle forms of prejudice that I have, that I had grown up with, of course in my family environment, and to see how they played out. The president was so wonderful because he was so candid . . . he would just be really candid about my race relations 101 course on what is offensive and what
isn’t offensive. Years later, I was reading works about mentors and I thought . . . this person was my mentor.

Rembert’s comments illustrated how mentors/personal relationships for the WILs contributed to their understanding of race and racism. This transformative life experience contributed to identifying issues of racial discrimination as well as his role within systems of racial privilege at a PWI.

It is critical to remember that WILs are responsible for their own education with issues of privilege and oppression. Often, the individuals who experience the oppression are burdened with creating awareness about discrimination. Inclusive leadership demands that White leaders work to unmask their racial privilege in an effort to take shared ownership in and shared responsibility for creating inclusive environments at PWIs.

While revisiting their historical context to understand its impact on their present practice, WILs were able to identify how transformative life experiences served as the foundation to unmask the construction of Whiteness and move toward embracing inclusiveness at a PWI. Additional examples of transformative life experiences are integrated throughout the next two sections to exemplify the partnership with the processes in influencing the growth and development for WILs through the final two phases of the inclusive leadership framework.

**Phase Three: Embracing Inclusiveness**

In the context of phase three: embracing inclusiveness, WILs recognized that Whiteness was a social construction in the United States. Through transformative life experiences that connected the mind with the heart, WILs developed an emotional/personal connection to the importance of inclusiveness. As WILs experienced
this phase, they were able to engage in deconstructing Whiteness (sub-phase) by unveiling the myth that Whiteness was a shared experience because WILs came from different histories. A summary of phase three is repeated in Table 6 for the reader’s convenience.

Table 6

*Embracing Inclusiveness*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase Three: Embracing Inclusiveness</th>
<th>Sub-Phase: Deconstructing Whiteness</th>
<th>Sub-Phase: Unmasking White Privilege</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WILs developed a personal/emotional connection to inclusiveness as the right thing to do.</td>
<td>The myth of Whiteness as a shared experience was unveiled. Whiteness was identified as a social construction in the United States.</td>
<td>White privilege was exposed and WILs were able to identify their role within systems of racial privilege at a PWI.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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By deconstructing Whiteness (sub-phase), WILs may have identified how their own White identity was socially constructed in the United States. Rembert explained:

I should have known this, and I guess I did know, . . . that race is socially constructed, and then you start thinking about how all these other forms of diversity are socially constructed. Age, old-age, is socially constructed in the United States, adolescence is socially constructed (very badly I might add) so that got me to thinking about, well, how do I view these things in terms of my own Whiteness . . . my own White Anglo-Saxon Protestant pre-revolutionary heritage is also socially constructed. You are a different traveler in your own world, and you see things with somewhat different eyes. The things that you see are the little paradigms that are accepted and unquestioned that people are somewhat blind to because they are unquestioned. What it does to you, without trying to paint myself as someone who is totally unique or different or especially enlightened or anything like that, I don’t mean that because I view all of this with great humility because it is so complex, you do see these social constructions, and you see how they are embedded then as paradigms that people don’t question.
Rembert’s family instilled the idea that Whiteness was superior in the United States. As he narrated his historical context and experiences, he discovered the ways in which identities, in particular his White identity, were socially constructed paradigms that were unquestioned by those who benefited from the attached privileges. The discourse process was a critical component to unmask the construction of Whiteness and those unquestioned paradigms as WILs developed into more inclusive leaders.

**Discourse process.**

During phase three: embracing inclusiveness, the discourse process was grounded in understanding how WILs’ personal racial identity was interconnected to their professional practice. WILs were intentional in creating the time and space to participate in thoughtful dialogue regarding inclusive excellence. They engaged in recognizing how the language of their personal racial identity significantly influenced their professional practice as a WIL at a PWI. They recognized how the discourse process assisted their personal development, as Emily explained:

I think some people just react to using language that feels trendy. What is the problem with the language that we used before, it means the same thing. The language is constantly evolving, and changing, and I think it is important because when we change language it shifts the way that we think about it just a little bit. So by adopting that new language; you are adopting some new ideas and a new way of seeing it. That has certainly been the case for me as language has changed, I have evolved, and grown with it, but I also think that some people can adopt a new idea without changing the language. Talking with friends and people at conferences where I can get together with people who are like-minded, and challenging themselves on those same things is important. So being in those kinds of environments where language is happening, and there are opportunities for talking in smaller groups with people who are in a similar place, and challenging each other. I think of it as more of a collaborative effort, and how important it is for me to understand my part in the system, and to change my part, to shift my role from being a blind participant in this structure- that is oppressive- into being
someone who is aware of the imbalances, and pointing it out to other people, and changing the structures, and changing the system.

Emily’s reflection on language exemplified the power in words. Leaders may have used the term *Inclusive Excellence* without fully understanding the meaning or how to implement the concept into practice. Language constantly evolved, from diversity, to multiculturalism, to social justice, and now Inclusive Excellence. Each of these concepts shared the same purpose, which was to inspire the transformation of exclusive environments to become inclusive. Emily’s narrative created an awareness of how language influenced deeper levels of thinking and how the discourse process was a collaborative effort that required everyone working together to understand how to more effectively create sustainable change.

The discourse process was critical for WILs to develop a common understanding of concepts such as Inclusive Excellence because there were different levels of interpretation. Stephanie reflected on the challenges she experienced based on the different interpretations of discourse within the concept of Inclusive Excellence:

I think you have to create change, one person at a time, and sometimes you do what we’ve begun to do here; which is that you talk about things that are the factors that create the kind of learning environment that we want. I think that you create a culture where hateful language is less prone to be used; but you can’t always censor that language ultimately. You try to create a culture where students can bring their whole selves into the classroom but at the end of the day the faculty member is the arbiter of that experience. So it is this constant push/pull around how one facilitates environments of Inclusive Excellence. There has always been a way that the majority has attempted to diminish attempts at equity for all claiming that it dilutes, it reduces quality. There is this whole kind of set of standards that are unwritten but you know you cross them when someone gets cranky. So I understand the idea intellectually that inclusivity means that we have academic communities, where individuals are welcome to learn, that are
excellent. But the term [Inclusive Excellence] people look at it, and hear it, and think, what does this mean? I think that is a limitation of our culture that we don’t have language that helps us to easily qualify and quantify what those communities look like and, I think, it is because we don’t know what those communities look like. There is this broad definition and then there is how it manifests itself in my different professional roles; there is how it manifests itself when I am out in the community, there is how it manifests itself when I am representing the university, in a particular way, and it is all about, at least for me, intentionally negotiating all of those roles. I don’t know that we have gotten to the point with that level of intentionality, and I am not saying that to make myself special, I mean, I think it is just a hard thing to do. And it does require that capacity to think about those things and to make them very present. And for some people they either do not have the time, or the space, or see that as their roles.

Stephanie’s comments provided additional insight into the complexity of truly creating inclusive environments that valued all identities. The last line of her comments demonstrated the importance for leaders to understand how their personal beliefs connected to their professional practice. The discourse process enabled WILs and others to constantly dissect complex concepts, such as Inclusive Excellence, as a means to understand the main points to: (a) embed diversity throughout the institution, and (b) shift the responsibility to everyone on campus to create inclusive environments.

It was imperative for WILs to critically examine White discourse to expose the invisibility of Whiteness at PWIs. When WILs were in phase three: embracing inclusiveness, they created the time and space and took shared ownership in the discourse process because inclusiveness was a core value, both personally and professionally. The goal of making these complexities visible was to assist WILs in facilitating a purposeful discourse process with their colleagues to identify the changes that needed to be made for their divisions/departments to become more inclusive. Through an intentional discourse process, WILs recognized the importance of continuing to engage in challenging conversations for their own growth and development. Jamie explained:
You hear people talk about, you know, I woke up and I can’t go back to sleep. So I certainly make mistakes, there are times, where I choose not to fight. I invoke my privilege to say not today, or not in this situation, but it never has gone away. For whatever reason, that I can’t really explain, I have made it [Inclusive Excellence] my life’s work. I hope I can shatter some stereotypes about my people [White] to other people, but it also means that I don’t get off the hook by being a good one. So I can’t pat myself on the back, and say; well I am not like those other White people, but to sit in my privilege, and say; that sometimes people are going to be really upset with me not because of me, or maybe because of me too, but because of what I represent. What does it really cost me to give them that space? My hair stands on end it is not personal in that way, small price to pay for not getting pulled over, or walking through passport checkpoints, so really a lot of internal dialogues. You know, I get it right sometimes, and I get it very wrong sometimes. I try to keep myself awake to the opportunities, and fight the fights as often as I can appropriately, and I like the fact that it is never check done. I can take some comfort in this humanity part. I just don’t want to get complacent and say; well on race issues I have the privilege to mess up, or to not fight today, if I don’t want to fight other people don’t have that [privileged choice].

Jamie’s discourse process provided an opportunity for him to develop checkpoints to ensure that he continued to understand his role and choices in working toward inclusiveness. By intentionally committing to the discourse process, WILs engaged in a deeper level of self-reflexivity as a means to continue to recognize how their racial privilege manifested in their role as an inclusive leader at a PWI.

**Self-reflexivity process.**

The self-reflexivity process in phase three: embracing inclusiveness, consisted of unmasking White privilege (sub-phase) to identify their role within systems of racial privilege at PWIs. WILs critically explored their personal experience to more effectively unmask the systemic construction of Whiteness. Hope explained:

I really could see there have been systems put in place that will benefit some people and will not benefit other people. And it is almost like it is . . . I don’t know if there are intended consequences, or not, but I could see that as a very real problem that needs to be solved. I realized that there was a lot of pressure on me to behave in a certain way, and to behave in a certain way if I want to be
successful in this sort of privileged world. And I stepped out of it, and it felt like the rug was pulled out from beneath me.

Hope identified that part of her historical context was to be conditioned to behave in certain ways as part of her social construction of Whiteness. Thus, WILs actively participated in deconstructing Whiteness (sub-phase) in an effort to make visible how this racially privileged identity impacted their professional roles. Dallas expressed the following:

I guess I don’t spend a lot of time thinking about my history, and how I got to where I am, and who I am today. I think discrimination is often very very subtle. And, you know, I mean the stuff that you see are people carrying signs, and calling people names, or telling jokes that are off color, or out of taste, or politically incorrect. But the most subtle things that people do that really are discriminating against people are, something that is sometimes, harder to find. Sometimes it is a reflection back on me because maybe things that I do, or ways that I am are not very sensitive to what somebody else may feel when something is said, or is done around them. I mean that whole process continues on. I think it is one of those things that I feel pretty strongly about and try to at least be sensitive to, even if I don’t completely understand it all the time, is trying to understand how somebody else’s life experience is very different than mine. Being the egocentric person that I am, of course the world revolves around me (laughing), I don’t mean that seriously but that is a very easy trap to fall into, and just not thinking beyond what my own life experience has been especially, I think, when it comes to issues around race.

For Dallas, engaging in the self-reflexivity process through his historical context provided insight into his responsibility to recognize that the construction of Whiteness was not a universal experience. The self-reflexivity process was necessary to constantly question the way in which he may intentionally or unintentionally perpetuate exclusive practices. Accordingly, the self-reflexivity process made visible how the WILs’ reality was socially constructed, and enabled them to deconstruct the exclusive socialized messages learned during their historical context and experiences. WILs were responsible
for integrating their past with who they were currently, because these experiences influenced their ability to engage in inclusive leadership at PWIs. In Rembert’s words:

I know that developmental psychologist say it is important to go back and keep integrating your past into who you are today . . . trying to identify and then integrate really some fairly old experiences for me that occurred many years ago into where I am today and what I am doing. I would say that revisiting clear back to my high school years, and the town where I grew up, and the differences in social class, . . . you know, I don’t think about that every day and it is indeed a part of who I am, how I think, and the way I act in the face of social class differences. I know I recognize them and I really kind of bend over backwards to reduce those differences or at least try to build bridges across those differences.

Rembert’s reflection identified how his historical experiences with social class difference (i.e., transformative life experience) impacted his current role as an administrator at a predominately affluent campus. Depending on the context, Rembert may not have recognized his privilege as a White leader at a PWI due to his focus on social class differences. The self-reflexivity process was an opportunity for WILs to investigate how their intersections of identity (i.e., transformative life experience) contributed to their ability or inability to effectively transform their departments/divisions to be more inclusive. For example, if Rembert was in a meeting with colleagues from a higher social class, he may not have felt comfortable challenging them on issues of inclusiveness, even though he had racial privilege at a PWI. The self-reflexivity process was an intentional commitment to keep in mind that the personal was interconnected with the professional.

Another aspect of the self-reflexivity process was for WILs to continuously examine their own construction of Whiteness and the ways in which Whiteness manifested itself through their personal and professional experiences. Stephanie shared her experience in the following:
I am really struggling with this question, personally, of do I expect the people of color, in whatever community I’m in, to adapt to the dominant culture? I’m really struggling with that. I think that there’s a way that uncomfortableness has always got to be there if you want to really challenge your own set of beliefs, and so that’s one of the things I think about a lot. Am I more comfortable with my friends of color who act like White people? And I don’t say that crassly, and that’s a bit of an overstatement, but we do expect an adaptation; we expect an adaptation around intellect, we expect an adaptation around verbal expression, and around physical expression in clothing. So if you bring your whole self, and that whole self is around expression that is different, around processing that is different, around language norms that are different, then how much am I, as a supervisor, expecting you to adapt to the dominant, male systemic culture of the university? I am a product of my upbringing. I will have an initial reaction to someone who is different than me that I come by honestly because it is part of my DNA. That being said, my job is to deconstruct that DNA on a regular basis, and to always question myself, and others around suppositions they make about race or wherever anyone fits on a spectrum.

Stephanie identified the way in which her historical socialization continued to influence her current context. She was intentional about deconstructing her Whiteness and some of the exclusive expectations she may have had regarding people of color assimilating into the dominant culture at any level. Through this type of self-reflexivity process she was constantly questioning her White identity to strive toward embracing inclusiveness on a daily basis. Similarly, Jamie identified how the self-reflexivity process played a role in maintaining ownership over his continued growth and learning throughout this life-long journey:

Self-reflection is; stopping and making the time to ask, how am I doing? How could I do better? Rather than just waiting until someone calls me out on something, which again leaves the burden of my education on other people. I’ll assume I am doing great, until I am told otherwise, well yes I can self-assess along the way. I think, it is a variety of feelings; I think there is frustration, in that, it is difficult sometimes to think about my race or ethnicity because it has been so normalized that a lot of things . . . never registered for me . . . so what is frustrating in wanting to be more engaging is that I am not socialized to think about it, society doesn’t make me have to think about that, so it can be turning that self-reflection piece by putting the mirror up and not finding anything.
As WILs made the intentional choice to engage in a personal and professional self-reflexivity process, they were unmasking the consequences of keeping issues of White privilege invisible by ignoring their historical socialization. Further, the self-reflexivity process established a foundation for WILs to move into an emotional/personal meaning-making process regarding inclusive leadership. The catalyst for this type of meaning-making process may have been a personal experience of oppression with one of their marginalized intersections of identity (i.e., transformative life experience). For example, Emily explained:

I realized that once I now identified in this minority status it was a sharp contrast to what I had before… all the privilege I had, as a White person, … And so, I kind of had the rug pulled out from underneath me, and started seeing the world in a very different way because now I didn’t have privilege, in that particular way, and I have often told people; that is one of the best gifts that I have ever been given in my life because I got to see the world differently, and have a sense of what it was like to not hold the world in the palm of my hand. I really had so much confidence, you know, in terms of feeling like I could do whatever I wanted in the world. That it [the world] was there for me to have, and at that point, I knew that wasn’t entirely true anymore. But my worldview really shifted and I knew then that somebody may actually want to harm me just because of an identity that I had, not because they knew me, or because I had harmed anyone, just for that very identity I had. And I don’t know that I ever completely believed that was going to happen to me, but I knew that it was a possibility, and certainly has happened to others, and that reality struck me because when I knew that was true, I understood in a different way how that was true for other people because of the color of their skin, or because of their religion, or their ethnicity . . . so that just made me understand it [White privilege] in a very different way.

**Meaning-making process.**

During the meaning-making process in phase three: embracing inclusiveness, WILs were able to connect their mind with their heart at an emotional/personal level in working toward Inclusive Excellence at PWIs. Initially, the meaning-making process derived from a place of self-interest for the WILs to understand their own experience as a
perceived outsider due to the intersections with their marginalized identities (i.e., gender, sexual orientation, social class). Through various contexts and experiences, inclusiveness eventually evolved into being about the right thing to do. The following three narrative representations exemplified how the intersections of identity (i.e., transformative life experience) influenced how inclusiveness developed into the right thing to do for WILs in this study.

This [inclusiveness] probably had a lot more to do initially with being selfish; fighting for my right, and justice, for me, in terms of my marginalized identity much more underlying than fighting for other people as the ally. And the longer that I have been doing this work, I think, the more that has kind of blended together; and it is hard to tell what is selfish, and because it is the right thing to do anymore. (Jamie)

In many ways my entrée into this meaning-making was from a very selfish perspective. I needed to understand why the world didn’t accept me for who I was, and then out of that came the capacity to make connections. It was not altruistic, it was not like I woke up one day to say; I want to be an inclusive leader. It was about personal experience that transformed into doors, and windows, and verandas into greater understanding. Now having said that I understand that we all have the capacity to say yes or no to those open windows, and doors, and that there are points, and I am sure there are points where I said I do not want to go there. I mean eventually it becomes about what one believes is doing the right thing but it is a process, and it is a process that comes with self understanding, and with taking a set of risks, and with maturity with, I think, levels of self-confidence, and self-awareness. (Stephanie)

I think the feminism stuff comes from within my body. I remember walking down the streets of New York and seeing on the newsstand the first issue of Ms. Magazine . . . and being in a place where in graduate school out of 120 there were 20 of us, who were women, and just what happened there, this kind of just outrageous sexism. That was sort of the wake up call to understanding my identity as a woman and identity politics. I developed a personal sort of righteous anger that I had not had before. That was really key at the time, again the whole thing of trying to understand myself as a Christian, and what it meant to be a Christian, and then dealing with this anger. I mean I was sort of into reconciliation and I do not like conflict, so trying to sort out who I was, and I guess, it was a time of developing my voice, trying to identify my voice, and my identity as a person separate from men especially at that time and then, beginning to relate to people
who were feeling oppression in other ways. I think it was a real gradual progression from understanding my own voice and having, not an empathetic but, at least a more sympathetic understanding of how oppression was playing out for other groups. I mean there is nothing like having something happen to you to cause you to understand, experientially, in a way that you could only understand intellectually or maybe emotionally but not in the same way. (Betty)

Jamie, Stephanie, and Betty, as well as the other WILs, shared stories about how their commitment to inclusiveness initially stemmed from their own need to understand personally exclusive experiences. Each narrative representation illustrated that this type of emotional/personal connection in the meaning-making process was a gradual journey. This journey became more intentional when the WILs’ minds were connected with their hearts through personal experience. WILs learned that inclusiveness was the right thing to do because it was not fair for anyone to be excluded. Yet, WILs were cautioned to keep their racial privilege ever-present in an effort to identify and deconstruct systems within their own department/division that continued to cause exclusion.

The other part of naming inclusiveness as the right thing to do was the intentional action of unlearning socialized prejudice from the WILs’ historical context and experiences. Rembert shared:

I got to thinking about the emotional side and you never completely get over your prejudice. And as part of the dominant White, and in this case male society that I come from, you have been bombarded all the time as kids with the bad words, and the bad jokes, and I think part of this learning is to make yourself sensitive to what that was that we grew up with, and how much of it is still lingering, if any, and there are ways in which that lingering bias, prejudice, prejudgment . . . what is the word they use today. . . profiling, if any of that is still going on, and I think sure some of it still goes on. You learn to discipline it, and to be aware of it, and make sure you keep it harnessed, and if possible work to get rid of it.

An important component to explore the construction of a WIL’s racial identity was to unmask these socialized prejudices that were deeply engrained. By exposing these
biases and prejudices, Rembert strove to become more inclusive by transforming his worldview, grounded in a more inclusive reality, by connecting his mind with his heart.

In a similar vein, Amelie expressed the following:

“I connect the head and the heart because my heart starts to thump, and I get pissed, and I think that you need to tap into that anger because it is the right thing to do. It doesn’t serve to just lose your head. . . . the fire is really important . . . it is really easy to get exhausted, and that fire gets extinguished when you are fighting the “good fight” but you have to keep it there . . . it does not have to rage all the time but it has to be burning like a pilot light . . . my conscience nags me because it [Inclusive Excellence] just feels like the right thing to do.

The constant balance of reflection and action was critical to effectively work toward inclusive leadership. The praxis process provided the personal and professional accountability necessary for WILs to walk the talk in embedding inclusiveness throughout their personal and professional lives.

**Praxis process.**

The praxis process in phase three: embracing inclusiveness, was situated in personal accountability through the theme of walking the talk for WILs. As the participants narrated their journey toward becoming inclusive leaders, they explored if the inclusiveness they espoused to be important was actually implemented through their leadership practice. In other words, part of their personal accountability in making sure that Inclusive Excellence was part of their area was to identify if they had moved from rhetoric to action by *walking the talk*. As Stephanie asserted: “this is our job that if we are university leaders in the 21st century, then our job is to walk the walk and talk the talk.”

For me walking the talk would be, you know, correcting people when they say faggot, or retarded, or make a racist comment like, that is walking the talk not letting those things slide. It is also not as simple as that . . . it is embodying those values, and those beliefs, in the things that you do. So me saying that I believe in diversity, and inclusivity, and then only providing resources and programming
that focus largely on a White audience that is not walking the talk. So translating my work into Spanish, making sure I have diverse resources for folks who might not feel comfortable coming to the office, . . . making sure I have a statement on my webpage that says; this office serves anyone regardless of race, ethnicity, ability, nationality, sexual orientation . . . it is symbolism in some way but it is all a piece of walking the talk . . . it is recognizing that when I am having coffee with a student of color not to monopolize the conversation . . . I think that is part of walking the talk if you make a mistake, and you realize it, you say something about it. (Amelie)

Amelie identified the ways in which she engaged in constant reflection and action in becoming more inclusive personally and professionally. She made mistakes and in owning the mistakes she learned how to become more accountable for her actions. Josie continued this theme in the following:

I think that it is important to say that you made a mistake. I think that real leaders can say that they made a mistake and move on . . . we all make mistakes and it is okay to make mistakes because we are human. But for some reason I think that people believe that leaders cannot make mistakes . . . this is all part of the learning through this journey.

Too often, the fear of making mistakes was an excuse for White leaders to keep the meaning-making process at the intellectual/professional/political level instead of making an emotional/personal connection. As Josie explained, making mistakes was part of the learning that took place to assist WILs and other White individuals to become intentionally committed to reconstructing their racial worldview to be more inclusive. WILs made a conscious choice every day to be more inclusive as leaders. Walking the talk served as personal accountability to ensure that leaders followed through with their responsibility to create more inclusive environments. Connie shared the following:

I don’t know if I am lazy, or just on autopilot, but I don’t think I ever really pause to think about; if I am really walking the talk, if I am really doing what I say I do. I do know that I make a very conscious effort in group dynamics, and decision-making processes, and setting policies or philosophies for our division to make that inclusive but I don’t know that I normally do it every day. So I do not know if
I am really an inclusive leader. I know that this [narrating] has made me stop and think; well did I really think about that or did I just do it . . . I think that it is a choice we make, that it is a choice we make every day.

As WILs engaged in the praxis process in phase three: embracing inclusiveness, they intentionally engaged in constant reflection on the ways in which their personal racial identity significantly influenced their professional action. Stephanie expressed the following about her need for self-awareness:

I think that a really important thing to say is that if we are really doing this work as best as any of us do it, from the places we come from, we have to always understand that we are works in progress. I mean I really do pride myself on being approachable with students, here, but I also have to understand that I am not African American, and I am not Latina, so sometimes those students will get as far with me as they can with any White woman. I have to always be learning and observing, and doing my own language checks, and my own checks around a whole host of things, and admitting it. And I understand now that I carry race privilege, and class privilege, and . . . I have to be really aware.

As WILs intentionally explored personal accountability through walking the talk, they were able to recognize that implementing Inclusive Excellence at a PWI was a “shared responsibility” (Hope). As WILs engaged in embracing inclusiveness, they were able to deconstruct Whiteness (sub-phase) and unmask White privilege (sub-phase) in an effort to identify the positive outcomes in taking shared responsibility for creating a more inclusive environment at a PWI. Ed stated:

So when you have more diversity and Inclusive Excellence, what does that mean for your community, and what could it look like three years from now, or five years from now, if you embraced and practiced some of these things, how could it be better, how would it be enhanced?

Embracing inclusiveness was a critical component to developing into a more inclusive leader for the study participants. The ultimate goal for these WILs was striving
to transform personally and professionally by living inclusiveness on a daily basis, as expressed by Stephanie:

I believe there is always something about us that stand outside of the societal norm and if you can get an individual to acknowledge that in themselves, and then understand how it feels to be characterized in a particular way, then that is how you start to dismantle some of the stereotyping, and some of the prejudice. They [civil rights struggles] are all about being outside of a system that is inherently designed to keep us out; so then how do we negotiate it so that we can get in and start to change it? And, in that way, there is commonality but it is sad that we cannot often see that commonality, and instead have to continue to look at the ways that we are different.

As Stephanie affirmed, there were systems deliberately designed to be exclusive of various identities within society. WILs had a shared responsibility in and a shared ownership for dismantling systems of racial privilege at PWIs, because systems that excluded anyone were negative for everyone (Feagin, et al., 2000).

The following narrative representation illustrates what an ideal type of WIL within phase three: embracing inclusiveness may experience through the processes (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, praxis) and the transformative life experiences (i.e., exposure, intersections of identity, mentors/personal relationships).

**Ideal type in the embracing inclusiveness phase.**

I have finally realized the privilege that I have inherited just because I am a White person in the United States. Growing up I never had to think about being White since it was constructed as the norm. As I use the word constructed I am reminded that my own racial identity has been constructed. Being White is not a shared experience for everyone. White people have different histories and varied experiences. I have also learned that not all people of color share a universalized experience and that race is not a dichotomy between the Black community and the White community. Accordingly, I am
intentional about re-examining how my White identity impacts my professional practice in a predominately White environment. Part of my privilege is to not have to think about my racial identity on a daily basis or the role that I play in benefiting from a system that was intentionally created to exclude people who do not identify as White.

This realization initially occurred for me from a selfish place in trying to understand why I experienced discrimination due to some of my identities that are constructed as “marginalized” in this society. This painful experience has provided a fertile ground for me to recognize and understand other forms of discrimination including racial discrimination. One of my mentors also assisted me in recognizing issues of racial discrimination in order to open my mind and heart to being intentional about transforming my racial worldview to be more inclusive.

These experiences were a catalyst to moving Inclusive Excellence from something that I have to do, to being the right thing to do. I know from personal experience how painful it is to be cast as an outsider because of an identity that is one piece of me. It is challenging to recognize the role that I have played in maintaining systems of racial privilege at this institution because once privilege is acquired, it is difficult to give up. Since I have been able to unmask the racial privilege that I have as a White person, I work to intentionally question the exclusive socialized messages that I grew up learning because I now understand that my historical context and experiences influence my current practice as a leader in this institution. I also know that it is an intentional effort on a daily basis to unlearn those messages, because without this type of purposeful self-reflexivity, I continue to perpetuate systems that only benefit me. Inclusiveness is critical
to who I am as a leader so it is important that I not only talk the talk but walk the walk in working with my colleagues to move the Inclusive Excellence agenda forward. All leaders should understand that who we are as people impacts who we are as leaders.

**Discussion and analysis.**

Through phase three: embracing inclusiveness, the WILs named Whiteness as a social construction, which was “contested and deconstructed” (Ware & Back, 2002, p. 25). The subsequent privilege attached to the construction of Whiteness was also deconstructed, in particular at PWIs. According to Goodman (2001), privilege granted leaders unquestioned access to “resources, information, and power that can either block or help facilitate change” (p. 2). Racial privilege was constructed through historical and social contexts that were disguised in unquestioned paradigms passed on from generation to generation, as explained by Rembert. Hope identified that she was socially conditioned to behave in a certain way to maintain her privileged position. Birt (2004) found that the construction of Whiteness was a socially conditioned way of existing in the world. Through the discourse process and the self-reflexivity process, WILs were able to critically examine their social conditioning about race and made visible the unfounded biases that continued to manifest in their current context.

CRT demands that racism is foreground in analysis as a means to deconstruct the “patterns of exclusion and oppression” (Gilborn, 2006, p. 27). Jamie, Betty, Emily, and others recognized that the intersections of identity contributed to their commitment to inclusiveness becoming the right thing to do.
Initially, for the WILs in this study, inclusiveness evolved from a selfish need to understand their experience as a perceived outsider in the United States, to the right thing to do to make changes as privileged individuals at PWIs. According to Thompson and Tyagi (1996), positive transformation for White people was often connected to experiencing how being a perceived outsider (e.g., a woman, person of color, lesbian) and a perceived insider (e.g., White, male, heterosexual) influenced their life. These types of experiences inspired WILs to engage in a more emotional/personal meaning-making process. The personal connection served as a catalyst to connect the mind with the heart to become more inclusive personally and professionally.

While the intersections of identity were a critical transformative life experience in connecting the mind with the heart, WILs were challenged to remember that Whiteness was pervasive as an organizing principle that significantly influenced the multiple intersections of their social identities (Leonardo, 2004). Betty’s reflection suggested that WILs must keep racial privilege visible because White privilege was embedded throughout the United States. Johnson (2001) argued that part of privilege was to move through life without being cast as an outsider, or to only be accepted with conditions. Rembert’s narrative provided insight into how his experience with social class difference may have overshadowed his racial privilege as a White leader at a predominately White, affluent campus. His statement could act as a caution to other White leaders, to avoid the temptation to focus more on areas where they were oppressed, because they continued to benefit from exclusive systems as a result of their privileged identities (Goodman, 2001).
The WILs identified walking the talk as personal accountability through the praxis process. Amelie, Connie, Stephanie, and others provided narratives that exemplified the importance of following through on promises of transforming departments/divisions to be more inclusive. Alcoff (1998) borrowed the term *double consciousness* (originally coined by Dr. W.E.B DuBois) to explain the responsibility of Whites to unmask the historical construction of Whiteness (and their own White identity) that perpetuated systems of discrimination while simultaneously recognizing their shared responsibility in contributing to the creation of “an inclusive human community” (p. 25). WILs transitioned into phase four: living inclusiveness when inclusiveness became a culture of habit or an inherent part of their being.

The next section details how the processes (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, and praxis) were experienced in the fourth and final phase of the inclusive leadership framework.

**Phase Four: Living Inclusiveness**

Phase four: living inclusiveness, was at the heart of the inclusive leadership framework, and the most challenging to achieve due to WILs’ socialization regarding the construction of Whiteness and their personal racial privilege. During this phase, WILs participated in reconstructing Whiteness (sub-phase), grounded in inclusiveness, as a culture of habit in their daily lives, both personally and professionally. Further, WILs identified that institutions of higher education, in particular at a PWI, were intentionally created as an exclusive enterprise. Stephanie reflected on this topic in the following statement:
I think that we have to acknowledge that higher education was not founded as an inclusive enterprise. I think that we have to understand and appreciate the origins of higher education overall in the world, and in this country, and understand the power dynamics of that particular enterprise. And, I think, unless you understand that historical progression and that you are willing to put yourself in that enterprise with that knowledge, and then understanding how to negotiate an elitist environment, you are really at a loss if you just go in and think you are going to change it.

WILs took shared ownership in and shared responsibility for dismantling White privilege (sub-phase) at PWIs. A summary of phase four is repeated in Table 7 for the reader’s convenience.

Table 7

Living Inclusiveness

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase Four: Living Inclusiveness</th>
<th>Sub-Phase: Reconstructing Whiteness</th>
<th>Sub-Phase: Dismantling White Privilege</th>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusiveness became a culture of habit for WILs.</td>
<td>WILs reconstructed Whiteness grounded in inclusiveness.</td>
<td>WILs recognized that institutions of higher education were not established as inclusive enterprises and took shared ownership and shared responsibility for dismantling systems of White privilege.</td>
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The goal of this phase was to connect the mind with the heart interchangeably when engaged in the discourse process regarding the significance of inclusiveness.

**Discourse process.**

The discourse process in phase four: living inclusiveness, centered around issues of racial discrimination and racial privilege in an effort to create more inclusive
environments at PWIs. Accordingly, WILs questioned issues of racial privilege as a means to recognize their own participation in perpetuating systems of exclusion. A part of dismantling White privilege (sub-phase) was to identify the ways in which these rules, opportunities, and resources were maintained at a PWI, as reflected by Emily:

I relate White privilege to the game of life with the privilege that we get . . . we get the rule book, we get the stacked deck of cards, we get taught how to access the rule book or even be able to read it [rule book], it is not kept in a locked safe somewhere, so everything is there for us to be able to play the game and to know what we are doing, and to have the money to play it, and everything . . . all the pieces that we need so, I think, somebody without those same privileges might be missing the rule book, or the rule book is in a different language, or the money is kind of safe somewhere, or there are some obstacles that you have to go through to get to that [rule book], or, you know, there are just all these other barriers to having access to the same pieces of information and rules about how the game is played.

WILs identified that a component of navigating the rules on issues of Inclusive Excellence was to learn how to play the game by developing credibility in other areas, such as budget management and strategic planning. WILs may have tried to establish credibility in these other areas so they would be heard as voices working toward dismantling systems of racial privilege at a PWI, as expressed by Stephanie:

The question is how do we as positional leaders, in those areas, craft for ourselves and therefore the people who are coming up behind us a deeper and broader way of being in our higher education communities, so that we are not just the one talking about gender issues or we are not just the one talking about race issues. And I want to be the feminist who talks about strategic planning and accreditation, you know, because my credibility and my ability as a positional leader to forward things like Inclusive Excellence come not just from being about Inclusive Excellence but come from creating credibility in those mainstream cultural areas. You’ve got to have credibility to be heard on this [Inclusive Excellence]. It’s part of playing the game.

The challenge was that WILs had access to play the game and the opportunity to renegotiate the rules due to the racial privilege they had at PWIs. Therefore, WILs who
took shared responsibility in dismantling systems of racial privilege at PWIs, may have worked to provide everyone access to the same opportunities and resources. WILs were challenged to be intentional in re-examining the socialized messages from their historical context and experiences through the discourse process in an effort to dismantle unfounded biases and prejudices, as Emily explained:

When you are driving through certain neighborhoods, in the city, that are known to be more people of color, or high crime areas, and so forth, and people often just like reach for their door to lock their door. And there is internal dialogue that goes through my head, because I have done that too, I have this whole dialogue around, wow did you know that you just did that? Why, here? Why, now? You know, what messages have you gotten that made you do that just now? I cannot believe that I still buy into all of those messages that I have been given. So, I think, it is often sharing my own personal journey as an example in the moment with other people to let them know that you are not alone in this stuff that we are all struggling with it, and this is how I challenge you as I am challenging myself right now. I think it is important to start with the process of looking at our own identity asking questions such as who are you and who taught you to be that way? What does that mean in the context of the larger society and the privilege that comes with that? It is important for us to look at ourselves deeply before analyzing anyone else.

Emily’s narrative reflection called attention to the socialized messages that many White individuals have experienced as they learned about issues of race. It was evident through this discourse process that Emily was critically re-examining these messages and how they continued to impact her current context. This was an example of how intentional commitment to the discourse process made visible the socialized messages that permeated a White individual’s subconscious and continued to exist in her current experiences. Through the discourse process, WILs began to construct a more inclusive racial reality by deconstructing unfounded biases and prejudices.
During a purposeful discourse process, WILs unveiled the necessity for their shared responsibility in transforming predominately White environments to be more inclusive, as shared by Rembert:

I recognize that I operate within an institutional context and within an organizational context that I am playing a role and that other people are playing a role and so I think [Inclusive Excellence] is not just about nice people in the same organization trying to make the world a better place, it is about that, but it is also about dealing with these issues in the context of your role. And so for that reason I think that it has been good for me to revisit my history but then to think more carefully about how that [history] plays out within the role that I am in within an organization. There is much emphasis on the person who has been in the minority and who has had to fight for these rights and press for equity and justice and so on . . . but they can only do so much because it is the people, in a sense, who they are protesting against that have the power to change the situation . . . then somebody on the other side has to develop the sensitivity and be able to be a collaborative partner that makes a situation better. And so the role of the person in our society who is not identified as the person of difference has a tremendously important role to play in bringing about a fair, a more inclusive, and a more just society.

Through this discourse process, Rembert intentionally engaged in a challenging discourse to explore the shared responsibility he had in eradicating issues of racial privilege at a PWI. Accordingly, continuing to make new meaning of his historical context and experiences served as a catalyst for him to be more purposeful in his role as a WIL working to advance Inclusive Excellence within his department/division and throughout the entire campus. The discourse process about WILs’ historical socialization was essential in their commitment to the self-reflexivity process that connected the mind with the heart in striving toward living inclusiveness on a daily basis.

**Self-reflexivity process.**

During the self-reflexivity process in phase four: living inclusiveness, WILs made visible the ways in which they had perpetuated racial discrimination in their personal
beliefs as well as their professional actions. It may have been challenging and painful to identify how WILs’ racial identity had been constructed to create systems of racial discrimination and to recognize how they may continue to participate in and benefit from such an exclusive system, as shared by Jamie:

I think the frustration comes in that even when I am trying to battle the system, the system benefits me, and I think, that is one of those paradoxes of systems is that I still benefit because the systems still exist. So in working to dismantle it reinforces itself through me. I like being appreciated for the work, I mean, most people appreciate being appreciated. And I am succeeding because of it and I don’t know how to stop that from happening. So do I challenge everybody every time to say; you know you should not be appreciative because it is my obligation as an agent, and that comes across kind of awkwardly, it is a no win… I don’t think there is any way to get out of it. But I think to be cognizant of it and I think from time to time check well what are my motivations here, you know, or am I doing enough to really challenge? The answer is often no I am doing enough to get the kudos and that gets me through a little bit farther or, you know, am I likable as opposed to effective in really challenging the system and sometimes that gets very blurry and I have the privilege of saying; well it is enough to be liked today. Am I really going to rock the boat, or hey I did some good, and I am getting points for it again? My card is getting punched for challenging and again it gets kind of paradoxical, I think, but I don’t know how to get around it or out of it other than to stay cognizant of it rather than getting seduced by it. If I am always the White guy on the committee because committees need a White guy to validate themselves and I get all the kudos for being the sensitive White guy that is attractive on some level, but am I tokenizing myself for my own benefit in ways that aren’t really doing much to challenge things or to change things?

Jamie offered his awareness about the paradox of dismantling a system of racial privilege while, at the same time, benefiting from the system, because he was seen as a “good White guy” for his work. It was apparent that Jamie was engaged in a purposeful self-reflexivity process to question his motives in working toward inclusiveness. This type of self-reflexivity enabled WILs to keep their racial privilege in mind as they strove to dismantle exclusive systems at PWIs. Too often, the fear of losing privilege halted progress in addressing issues of inclusiveness for White leaders at PWIs. WILs may have
recognized the context and experiences that have made this journey toward inclusive leadership evolve into a more personal and emotional practice, as Hope explained:

I had never recognized how much of my experiences had shaped some of my attitudes and ways of behavior now particularly around this subject of inclusive leadership. That was, I am not sure how to say this . . . it was a recognition that these things [inclusiveness] are much more intrinsic to my character, and how I live my life, and how I view the world then I ever realized. And so it is more than just something that is part of the job or something that is in conflict with your job, it is more just about who you are as a person and that really struck me. My reaction when I had been identified as an inclusive leader was like really [laughing]? And so now I feel like I can take ownership for the leadership part of it and that is really powerful because if you get identified this way, and you say yes this is what I am, it really makes it much more of a visible part of what I am supposed to be doing, and not just what I am supposed to be doing, but what I want to do.

Reconstructing Whiteness (sub-phase) was an opportunity for WILs to connect their intellectual/political/professional understanding of their own racial identity to an emotional/personal understanding, by answering the question: what does it mean to be White? When the participants in this study were asked this question, there were initially some confused looks, pointing to one’s skin, and comments such as the following from Dallas: “I think that has probably just been the result of sort of having that [being White] somewhat thrown in my face” or “that is just the way things were.” As the conversations progressed, many (not all) of the participants identified the ways in which they had developed a deeper level of awareness with the construction of Whiteness and their own racial identity in relation to their practice as inclusive leaders at PWIs, as shared by Amelie:

Every day I think about the fact that I am White. It is just always there and I don’t know whether that has just become practice because that probably wasn’t always the case, definitely wasn’t always the case, but I do think about it. So people walk around and they don’t even think about the fact that they are White but now I
always think about the fact that I am White. I get up every day fully aware that I am a woman, I get up fully aware that I am a White, woman. Today I had meetings and I was aware of the room. I paid attention to who was in the room like their positionalities, and their identities, that I knew . . . I try not to dominate conversation for instance when there are people of color in the room and I have internalized that it is a predominately White campus therefore it is important even more important that I exhibit inclusive behaviors and inclusive practices. White privilege is White people, and then there is everyone else, so Whiteness is the center of the universe and part of my journey has been to knock myself out of the center and to stop centering everything around me.

Making new meaning of their own racial identity may have assisted WILs in taking shared ownership in reconstructing Whiteness (sub-phase) and dismantling White privilege (sub-phase), for inclusive practices to become a culture of habit as well as the new norm at PWIs. Recognizing that participants were engaged in unlearning years of exclusive socialization, phase four: living inclusiveness, might be recommended as an intentional goal on a daily basis.

**Meaning-making process.**

Many of the WILs expressed that one of their goals with the meaning-making process during phase four: living inclusiveness, was to be intentional with their actions as they strove toward inclusiveness. They wanted to move from inclusiveness being something they had to constantly think about, to something that became an inherent part of their being, as expressed by Jamie:

In being intentional, I have a mental checklist of things that I go through in my head and as with anything the more you do it the less you think about it consciously. So if you get into your car you might undo the parking brake, and put the face back on the radio, turn the car on, and lock the door, and you know pull your seatbelt down. You may have to at some point go through the checklist but at some point it becomes natural. I get up in the morning, I mechanically go through shampoo, soap, wash . . . so I think this is sort of the same . . . but intentionally checking in on it [inclusiveness] on a regular basis I think is good to do. I am challenging myself to say am I just coasting or could I be more regularly
conscious of how I could be more inclusive? You know if I reach a plateau because I have memorized my checklist well what else can I include? Now that I have got that down as a habit can I spare some conscious thought to additional communities thinking about how can I be more inclusive for them?

Jamie’s mental checklist served as a tool for inclusiveness to eventually evolve from something he consciously thought about daily to something that became a culture of habit for him. Part of living inclusiveness was for inclusiveness to become an inherent part of the WILs’ personal and professional being. Josie explained that the goal was for Inclusive Excellence to become part of the culture within her department/division:

I think that part of Inclusive Excellence is that when inclusivity becomes a habit you don’t have to think about it. It becomes a part of everything that you do. For example, usually when we have a hiring process we put together a posting, we put together a search committee, and we look at candidates. Probably about three years ago we started to be very deliberate about having a more diverse search committee and having a more diverse pool of applicants so I will feel like we have succeeded when we don’t even have to think about that . . . the point is that when it becomes a habit, it is standard operating and right now our standard operating is not inclusive. And so we have to do a lot of work, and we have to be very deliberate and intentional, and we have to be thinking about this stuff [Inclusive Excellence] all day. My hope would be that down the road that it [Inclusive Excellence] is a habit and that it is built into the culture of what we do.

Josie’s narrative representation outlined a plan to move Inclusive Excellence from a strategy to a culture of habit that was embedded throughout her area. She wanted inclusiveness to become a core value that was infused in personal and professional practice. Through constant intentional action, inclusiveness became an inherent part of WILs’ personal beliefs and habitual behavior in their professional role as inclusive leaders, as expressed by Emily:

My colleague says that when you change the way you look at things, the look of things will change, which I have always appreciated because I think that is true that once I started looking at things differently then everything started looking different and not always pretty. You start seeing where we [Whites] fall short
more clearly and it is hard to see that more often. It is easier to be blind to it then
to notice where we are failing . . .

Emily identified changing the way she viewed the world as a key component to
inclusiveness becoming a culture of habit. When she began to critically explore her racial
identity, she was able to recognize the ways in which her leadership fell short.
Accordingly, questioning the culture that framed the meaning-making process for a WIL
put issues of exclusion in the foreground as a way to reconstruct a racial identity
grounded in inclusiveness. In addition, a new shared reality for WILs emerged at PWIs
centered on shared ownership in and shared responsibility for dismantling systems of
racial privilege with inclusive reflection and action through the praxis process.

**Praxis process.**

During the praxis process in phase four: living inclusiveness, WILs committed to
continuous personal self-reflexivity on their privileged racial identity and to take
professional action to make visible the ways in which their racial identity impacted their
role at PWIs. Through the praxis process, WILs held themselves both personally
accountable (as previously explained through *walk the talk*), and professionally
accountable, in creating more inclusive environments by advancing the Inclusive
Excellence agenda.

**Praxis process as professional accountability.**

The WILs identified the discrepancies between departments/divisions regarding
the commitment or lack of commitment to implementing Inclusive Excellence on a
deeper level. Dallas reflected on institutional norms that espoused inclusiveness, yet did
not follow through. He also provided some suggestions on shared ownership in making change:

I would say probably be willing to challenge both directions sort of up the ladder and down the ladder. I think institutions a lot of times say a lot of things but then they don’t always stand behind them or don’t really do something about them. I think that the challenge for institutions, and maybe for individuals, is to really be and demonstrate that you are who you say you would like to be. It is real easy to talk about being a more welcoming, a more inclusive place, again I think it is because institutions have values, and norms, and ways of doing things that have evolved over time so it is kind of hard to dig deep enough to find out what all those things are and they really are barriers for being a more inclusive place, a more inclusive environment for people. And it is because we [White people] get comfortable with that . . . it is just the way that we have done it for a long time so it is easier to do it that way, it is hard, I think, to really challenge ourselves. I mean again I think that we do things that do help us to move forward but I do think that those institutional norms a lot of times do get in the way of moving forward at a faster pace.

The institutional norms to which Dallas referred were the constructed social systems of racial privilege that were historically created in higher education, specifically at PWIs. WILs should take shared responsibility for and shared ownership in moving the Inclusive Excellence agenda forward in an effort to transform the historical constructs of exclusion, as expressed by Connie:

When I first came here, we have an office of multicultural affairs with very, very good people, and my perception right or wrong was that many people felt it was their [office of multicultural affairs] job to make our university more diverse. Although I think they are very talented and very good I think that is an unrealistic expectation . . . it [Inclusive Excellence] has to be a shared responsibility and certainly we can take advantage of their expertise but we have to have action plans here . . . we very purposely have put diversity and inclusiveness in our strategic plan. It is one where you put it on your website where people can track to see how you are doing, saying here’s the bull’s eye take shots at us. But I think our intent is pure . . . we are really trying to be honest about what we are doing and we are committed to it [Inclusive Excellence].
As previously explained, one of the major goals of Inclusive Excellence was to shift the responsibility to everyone on campus. Connie acknowledged that the strategic plan for inclusiveness on the website was another form of professional accountability. This strategy was an opportunity for Connie to demonstrate her commitment to and shared responsibility for embedding Inclusive Excellence. By living inclusiveness, WILs shared responsibility and ownership for advancing the Inclusive Excellence agenda to transform PWIs. Rembert reflected on the ways that he tried to role model inclusive practices within his area of campus:

I think there are two elements that are really important: One is to create an environment where people feel that they are included, that they are accepted, and that this is a comfortable place to work. These differences are things that you work through, they are valued, and they make for a more creative mix of people. You try to create that environment, you say things, you have opportunities in meetings, you can write memos to the entire group, and you can talk about that occasionally, and I do. The other thing is to kind of be the watchdog of fairness so that you are constantly watching to see that when merit increases are coming up and so on that people are treated fairly. . . .there is a big personnel role, I think, for a leader where you have a chance to constantly watch out for whether there are little or big unfair things going on in your unit and addressing those.

The praxis process for WILs put issues of racial privilege in the foreground. If left in the background, deeper levels of professional accountability may have been prevented. For example, Rembert used the phrase “watchdog of fairness.” It was important to deconstruct how he defined fairness and to understand the lens through which issues of fairness were viewed. Indeed, WILs who were purposefully committed to continuous reflection and action may act as more inclusive “watchdogs of fairness,” because they have worked to dismantle privileged systems.
WILs were able to work toward making change through the praxis process of navigating politics by dismantling White privilege (sub-phase) at PWIs.

**Praxis process as navigating politics.**

There were three central themes that emerged as methods to navigating politics at this PWI for WILs: (a) locating a sphere of influence, (b) intentional risks and compromises, and (b) building alliances.

**Locating a sphere of influence.**

WILs identified that it was important to locate where they might have the most influence in assisting to move the Inclusive Excellence agenda forward. They perceived their level of influence to either increase (typically within their own area) or decrease (typically in the larger campus system) the Inclusive Excellence agenda, depending on the various contexts in the course of their day. WILs experienced challenges as insiders within the systems of racial privilege at a PWI, as explained by Stephanie:

As administrators I am not sure we have as much leeway to be outside the cultural norm in a lot of ways. And the thing that also, I think, happens around race and around gender, and even around sexual orientation is; how do you walk the line of being that bold leader but also not being pigeonholed so that everyone just expects that is your response? Make no question about it in the higher education community that is deeply traditional, and deeply hierarchical, when you get into the positional leadership role not only do you have the privilege of that role but you have the responsibility of that role to create the change that you want to see happen and that to me is the real fun . . . I mean that is the fun of these jobs is that you can use your positional authority to make a difference.

Stephanie highlighted that WILs could recognize their influence in making change through their positional authority and create a ripple effect by influencing inclusive behavior and demanding inclusive practices from their White colleagues at
PWIs. The following remarks expressed Rembert’s difficulties regarding this aspect of inclusive leadership:

You ask yourself well where can I have an influence? Where can I make little breakthroughs, where can I say things and do things that won’t break connections to make further influence? I would say within my own unit I feel a lot freer to speak my mind, to say things, and to write things that reflect issues. It is harder when I am at an administrator’s meeting and sometimes things come up and I have to say so far I have not been very effective. I tend to hang back and sort of watch this discussion go on which makes presuppositions about paradigms. At some point, I need to say more without totally losing my cool. To be more influential, and to question more, some of our multicultural practices and emphasis but I have not gotten very far along with that outside of my own unit.

The challenge to Rembert and other WILs is to be more intentional in taking risks outside of their own areas to address issues of racial discrimination. If WILs who are considered insiders at PWIs hesitate to question exclusive paradigms, the burden of responsibility remains with administrators of color. The participants identified intentional risks and compromises as a means to find a sphere of influence outside their own unit in working toward Inclusive Excellence.

**Intentional risks and compromises.**

Part of navigating politics for the research participants was to understand the hierarchy at the PWI in an effort to identify the moments when they could take risks and the moments when they needed to compromise, as shared by Stephanie:

It is some days a set of very intentional compromises. I think that the people who are ultimately going to be the most effective change agents are people who want to rock the boat, question the status quo, make the challenging points, and ask the tough questions, but understand and appreciate that they are operating in a deeply entrenched traditional, hierarchical, elitist culture. And they want to stay in that culture because it is hard to change it from the outside. So as a leader you do it [navigate politics] in different ways: you negotiate it as a professional understanding and appreciation, and you take calculated risks . . . so you ask the
tough questions but you don’t get voted off the island. And then you create a learning environment that questions the status quo.

Stephanie’s comments served to create awareness about how to navigate systems that were deeply entrenched in issues of discrimination. Part of making change was developing credibility to challenge others by asking difficult questions, while remaining in the system to keep chipping away at the status quo. By balancing intentional risks and compromises, WILs maintained momentum in making change in dismantling White privilege (sub-phase) in their area and throughout the campus. Josie reflected on the challenge and consequences in choosing which battles to fight:

It is hard sometimes to figure out which battles you want to go up against and I know that there are some meetings that I am not invited to anymore because I asked the questions that people did not want to answer and I don’t get invited anymore...you just kind of have to keep plugging away.

The challenge for WILs in trying to figure out the battles to fight was to keep making it visible that their silence as well as inaction protected the status quo at PWIs. When there was more than one voice asking the tough questions, the questions were more difficult to ignore. Accordingly, building alliances was a necessity for making sustainable transformation.

*Building alliances.*

In negotiating politics, developing a critical mass of voices to challenge the systems, structures, and policies at PWIs was imperative to transform an exclusive environment. Building alliances was a strategy employed by the research participants, as stated by Amelie:
Living and breathing it [inclusiveness] every day I absolutely agree with but then I think the other side of the coin being that we need to recognize the risk involved if you are constantly one of the only people that is consistently living and breathing it [inclusiveness] every day, and saying things, and there are labels that get created for you such as a trouble maker, or you only know diversity, or you are only doing this [diversity], or you need to broaden your horizons. So that is the snowflake in the avalanche concept, it would be good to have other snowflakes because the risk lessens but I think the tension still exists.

Amelie addressed some key reasons for building alliances to provide more voices to dismantle systems of racial privilege. Too often, a single voice was easier to ignore because the problem of racial discrimination was perceived as an isolated situation.

Hope’s comments supported this perspective:

You certainly need to be more than just the single voice because if you get enough voices there might be some movement, but when you look at an organization and the leaders are White males . . . you can tell that there is just nothing that is getting through. I mean you always go back and think should I try a different approach? Will this get through? Is there someone else who can bring the message that will be listened to?

Hope’s narrative posed critical questions about working with White leaders at PWIs who were unable or unwilling to hear the challenges because they benefited from the current systems that were in place. WILs, therefore, may have the shared responsibility to develop alliances to ensure that everyone on campus was accountable for implementing Inclusive Excellence. If institutional leadership espoused Inclusive Excellence as a core value, they should be personally and professionally accountable for transforming their campus environment to be more inclusive. Ed’s narrative continued this topic:

Start to work on directors who are really having more day-to-day influence on the staff and on your programs . . . maybe go lower on the chain. I think to be honest just be yourself, and be friendly, and be a good neighbor, and I think that you can get a long way just by being nice. I think that you have to start with the nice part.
When you do not necessarily get the change that you were looking for and you are still really committed because you really, truly believe that is the right change or policy or whatever it might be, you might have to get a little more firm and you might have to get a little more political economy... you have to get more people to help you in your cause and with your argument... I think as you are getting resistance you have to cultivate relationships to get people to buy-in.

Ed’s remarks provided a strategy for building alliances as a means to create a critical mass of leaders working to ensure that the promise of Inclusive Excellence became intentional action in living inclusiveness at PWIs.

WILs identified how to navigate politics through: spheres of influence, the use of intentional risks and compromises, and building alliances, as they strove to achieve Inclusive Excellence as a culture of habit at this PWI. The emotional/personal connection to issues of inclusiveness served as a catalyst for their intentional commitment to make change in their personal and professional lives through navigating the politics that were entrenched in the legacy of exclusion.

Phase four: living inclusiveness was shown to be a life-long journey that took intentional commitment on a daily basis. Some of the narrative representations in this section provided examples of how inclusiveness was a part of the WILs’ being and yet a constant struggle was required to dismantle systems that continued to benefit White individuals at PWIs. WILs’ commitment to reconstructing Whiteness, grounded in inclusiveness, was critical to understand their own racial identity and how to promote Inclusive Excellence as the heart of this PWI. The purposeful growth and development through the processes (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, praxis), and their own transformative life experiences inspired WILs on a continuous journey toward making inclusiveness an inherent part of their being.
Ideal type in the living inclusiveness phase.

Being inclusive has become a culture of habit for me. It is a part of who I am and my heart is fully engaged in working to dismantle systems of racial privilege at this PWI. I understand that I have shared responsibility and shared ownership in transforming this environment to be more inclusive. In addition, I have made new meaning of my racial identity that is now grounded in inclusiveness. PWIs were founded to be exclusive enterprises and so we all have a responsibility in eradicating systems of racial discrimination. As a WIL, I am no longer willing to benefit from systems of racial privilege. I am also no longer willing to take breaks from working toward Inclusive Excellence because this type of work is now a habitual part of my being. It is critical to balance personal accountability with professional accountability in transforming my area as well as participating in multicultural alliances to transform the entire campus community to be more inclusive.

I know that we are going to have to navigate through politics and resistance because there is a fear that we will lose the privilege that we unfairly inherited because of our racial identity. Therefore, I have located a sphere of influence within my department and across campus because I am an insider with the privilege to make change. Some days I take intentional risks and make intentional compromises in an effort to continue to chip away at the exclusive status quo that has been established at this institution. Furthermore, I work every day on exposing my personal biases and prejudices as well as the biases and prejudices that exist at this institution. I am very
much aware that my personal beliefs and values significantly influence my professional practice.

Yes, this is a challenging journey. Yes, it is painful to identify the ways in which I have benefited at the expense of those who do not fall within the fluid boundaries of Whiteness. Yes, it is a purposeful choice on a daily basis to keep issues of inclusiveness in my heart. But we all deserve to be welcome and valued members of this community. I know that there is always something about each of us that stands outside of the exclusively constructed societal norm. Therefore, inclusiveness is an interconnected part of being a leader for me; without one I cannot successfully have the other. Being inclusive is not something I think about only when I am at work. It is a part of me every minute of every day.

Discussion and analysis.

Emily shared her belief that racial privilege at PWIs was like the game of life, in which White individuals got all the resources to play the game, while people of color received a different set of rules without the appropriate resources. This type of game may be disguised in an exchange of favors that benefited White leaders and granted only a select few the necessary rules to play effectively (Brown, Carnoy, Carrie, Duster, Oppenheimer & Shultz, 2005). Consequently, those who were insiders, yet created awareness about exclusion, may have actually been considered outsiders, because they were trying to unmask a system of racial privilege (Meyerson, 2003).

Stephanie described the importance of “rocking the boat” while remaining in the boat to chip away at the status quo. Part of rocking the boat was through the discourse
process by posing difficult questions and dissecting concepts such as Inclusive Excellence to develop a common meaning to more effectively implement sustainable change. The constant questioning of language and communication was a critical component of an inclusive leader’s journey, since discourse was a socially constructed experience (Fairclough, 2001). Questioning one’s use of language was a catalyst for reconstructing more inclusive realities by dismantling privileged power, which was perpetuated through silence (Crenshaw, 1997).

Jamie’s reflection called attention to the paradox of receiving accolades as the “good White guy,” working to dismantle systems of racial privilege. Mezirow (1991) found that transformation was grounded in one’s ability to identify and challenge previously held assumptions and perceptions about the social systems in which one participated. Through this critical self-reflexivity process, Jamie was becoming more intentional in understanding his racial privilege and its interconnection with his professional role as an inclusive leader. Further, he and the other WILs were striving to be accountable to make sure the promise of Inclusive Excellence was implemented. According to Manglitz, et al. (2005), critical reflection on one’s life experiences was an essential catalyst to be actively engaged in creating inclusive environments rather than only espousing inclusive values.

The self-reflexivity process in phase four: living inclusiveness, also served as a catalyst for WILs to change inclusiveness from something they consciously thought about to something that became a culture of habit as part of their new meaning-making process. Amelie, Josie, Emily, and others provided examples on how inclusiveness
became a culture of habit. Their remarks suggested that the goal of intentional commitment through the processes (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, and praxis) was to strive for inclusiveness, which would eventually evolve into an inherent part of their being.

The praxis process became essential in reconstructing Whiteness grounded in inclusiveness and racial justice (Rodriguez & Villaverde, 2000). Researchers (e.g., Gallagher, 2003; Kincheloe, 1999) cautioned White individuals to resist the urge to reconstruct Whiteness through a victimization or color-blind lens instead of putting issues of racism and one’s role within systems of racial privilege in the foreground. Freire (1993) argued that only through the interdependence of reflection and action can one be engaged in authentic, sustainable transformation.

Dallas and others illustrated the importance of critically exploring the question: “what does it mean to be White?” (Kincheloe, 1999, p. 186). By questioning the construction of Whiteness and racial identity, WILs were more effective in navigating the politics in their effort to dismantle systems of racial privilege at PWIs.

Rembert, Stephanie, and others reflected on the responsibility to locate a sphere of influence and engage in intentional risks and compromises as a means to continue chipping away at the status quo. Hope’s narrative illustrated the necessity in building alliances so a single voice that spoke about issues of inclusiveness could not be ignored, since a critical mass working together to embed Inclusive Excellence was available. Pascale (2008) argued that building multicultural alliances was instrumental in sustainable transformation. Ed and others outlined strategic ways to build alliances,
beginning with professional accountability and identifying campus partners who were working to integrate Inclusive Excellence. These alliances might consist of leaders who were committed to developing through the processes as well as by investigating their personal transformative life experiences as they continued in the life-long journey to live inclusiveness.

Limitations

As with any developmental model, all leaders want to be in the final phase (living inclusiveness) because the final phase is perceived as the main priority. The goal of the inclusive leadership framework, however, is to work toward embracing and living inclusiveness. The conclusion of this study purposefully focuses on the processes (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, praxis) and transformative life experiences (i.e., exposure, intersections of identity, mentors/personal relationships) to emphasize that the intentional commitment to growth and development is more important than a title to a phase.

The inclusive leadership framework is a beginning contribution and may serve as an opportunity for future scholars to empirically test, analyze, and measure the developmental phases of inclusiveness (i.e., normalizing, performing, embracing, living). Furthermore, this study, as well as the practical guide presented in chapter six, is focused solely on race and ethnicity, yet the inclusive leadership framework and the practical guide can be used to explore transformation with any personal and social identity. Only focusing on one identity can alter the realities of the intersections of multiple identities.
The inclusive leadership framework emerged from narratives by White college administrators who were recognized as intentionally working to identify their racial privilege at a PWI. As such, the framework may look different for White college administrators who have not begun this journey. Although there are limitations, the practical guide provided in the following chapter may serve as another resource for future research on inclusive leadership for college administrators.

Summary

Chapter five presented a continuation of the findings from chapter four, focused on connecting the mind with the heart through inclusive leadership at PWIs. The three overarching categories of the findings for the inclusive leadership framework: phases, processes, and transformative life experiences, were described through phase three: embracing inclusiveness, and phase four: living inclusiveness. Each section concluded with a narrative representation of the *ideal type* of WIL based on the final two phases of the inclusive leadership framework. A discussion and analysis section followed each narrative representation to demonstrate how this research contributed to existing literature on the construction of Whiteness and inclusive leadership in higher education. Chapter five concluded with an outline of the limitations of this research.

Chapter six connects theory to practice through a fictional narrative as a means to connect the mind with the heart to achieve inclusive leadership. Implications for future research with the inclusive leadership framework are presented. Finally, the chapter concludes with a practical guide for White college administrators working to become
more inclusive in their personal and professional practice on a daily basis as well as a personal reflection connecting the conclusion of chapter six with the larger dissertation.
Chapter Six: Summary

Bridging Theory and Practice

During this study, narratives were used to construct an inclusive leadership framework that offered phases of inclusive leadership development and the processes as well as the transformative life experiences that promoted growth and development from one phase to another. Chapter six is comprised of three sections. First, a fictional narrative is presented, identifying the phases, the processes, and the transformative life experiences to imagine how a leader may experience the journey through this framework. The use of fictional narrative is intended as a reminder about the criticality of the processes to the journey of inclusive leadership. Second, implications for future research as well as tangible suggestions about how to work through the processes to promote growth and transition among the phases is offered. A personal reflection that connects the sections in chapter six with the larger dissertation concludes this study.

Fictional Narrative

The following fictional representation consists of a composite voice based on the narratives of the research participants in this study. This composite voice represents the ideal WIL, that is, an individual who has achieved the living inclusiveness phase (i.e., the ultimate phase of the inclusive leadership framework). The ideal WIL serves as the author’s personal guide. The goal of the interview is to inspire all WILs, as well as other White individuals, to purposely work toward embracing and living inclusiveness on a
daily basis, regardless of the context and experiences in which they find themselves. The interview also serves as a reminder of the challenge for WILs to make an intentional choice to question their historical context and experiences as a means to identify how their personal racial worldview influences their professional practice at a PWI.

In *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*, Derrick Bell (1992) used a personal guide to engage in a difficult dialogue as he explored issues of racial discrimination for the African American and Black communities in the United States. Bell engaged the reader by integrating the mind with the heart through the use of fictional narratives that were grounded in reality to illustrate racism in the United States without causing “disabling despair” (p. ix). Borrowing from Bell’s work, the following fictitious interview is based in the reality expressed by the WILs in this study, and incorporates the author’s voice as a White administrator/researcher as the interviewer, who is struggling with a similar journey.

For WILs, and anyone who represents dominant identities (e.g., men, heterosexuals, able-bodied individuals), a constant guide is needed to assist in keeping issues of privilege ever-present, with the hope that, eventually, this process will become a habitual part of their being. The purpose of the fictional interview is to demonstrate how the collective voices in this study may serve as a guide for White administrators striving to be more inclusive in their own personal and professional journeys. Integrating the author’s voice into the interview is meant to afford the reader an opportunity to connect with her personal struggle as a White administrator/researcher working to achieve WILship.
This fictional narrative is based on creating an institution in which Inclusive Excellence (i.e., embedding diversity throughout the entire institution and shifting the responsibility for diversity to everyone on campus) is the new norm; Inclusive Excellence is the only focus of the institution and every administrator has been identified as an inclusive leader. Accordingly, the institution is no longer referred to as a PWI. Instead it is a diverse community where Inclusive Excellence and diversity are at the heart of everything that happens on campus. The inclusive leadership framework is provided again in Figure 4 for the reader’s convenience as a visual guide for the interview.
Inclusive Leadership Framework

Critical Race Epistemological (racial knowledge) and Ontological (racial reality) Perspective

Historical Context and Experiences

Figure 4. A comprehensive representation of how the overarching phases, processes, and transformative life experiences are interconnected in the inclusive leadership framework.
Good-bye PWI: Hello Inclusively Excellent Campus

The time has finally come. After centuries of a campus environment fraught with racism, these systems have permanently been dismantled. No more PWIs. The only institutions that exist have successfully partnered diversity and excellence throughout the entire campus. Administrators of color and White administrators share the power, resources, and decision-making. Faculty positions are racially and ethnically balanced, the student body is comprised of students from all racial and ethnic groups, and the curriculum represents the rich histories of every culture. The board of trustees represents all diverse backgrounds with everyone working together to provide a learning environment with diversity as the heart of the institution. These institutions are finally representative of the multicultural society that has inspired cross-racial and ethnic relations. Race and ethnicity are no longer identities that divide people because difference in identity has been recognized, understood, embraced, and respected.

Through this journey, inclusiveness has become an inherent part of everyone as they live inclusiveness on a daily basis. While the outcome is celebrated, the journey to get here brought many challenges including fear, resistance, and racial discrimination. Administrators of color paved the way for dismantling harsh racist climates at institutions formerly referred to as predominately White. There were also White administrators who partnered in the struggle to create more inclusive environments. These individuals, known as WILs, first had to narrate the construction of their personal racial identity, and then the construction of Whiteness as a system, before they could authentically take shared responsibility for dismantling PWIs. At first, these individuals recognized that
they feared the great losses in resources, promotions, and decision-making they may have experienced by dismantling an exclusive system.

Yet, as they strove toward WILship, they learned that a system that negatively impacts anyone is detrimental to everyone. And so, these individuals joined in multicultural alliances to take shared responsibility and ownership to realize the goal of an inclusively excellent campus. The IDEAL WIL who lives inclusiveness every day talked with the author about this difficult journey. The journey evolved from personal experience as an outsider, to inclusiveness as the right thing to do, and then eventually inclusiveness as a culture of habit that inspired a connection with the mind and the heart.

**NML:** Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today about your journey. This conversation will serve as a guide for me, and hopefully other White leaders, as we strive to achieve WILship.

**IDEAL WIL:** I am glad that I can share my story with you and other White leaders as we continue to work together to authentically engage in cross-racial and ethnic relationships. The journey toward WILship opened my mind and my heart in profound ways.

Let me start from the beginning with the development of my own racial identity. Race was rarely, if ever discussed, while I was growing up. My family was taught that being White in the United States was the ultimate achievement. Whiteness was superior and other cultures were inferior. I never thought about race, I was White and that was all I needed to know. Race was something only assigned to my peers who were not perceived as White.
As the IDEAL WIL was talking, I recalled memories of my parents focusing on the Golden Rule—treat everyone the way you would want to be treated and appreciate that we come from different walks of life. Did I do that or did I want to believe I was treating everyone with respect while at the same time ignoring that my peers, who were perceived as not White, were being treated differently?

Suddenly, a vivid flashback occurred (similar to those in the movies). I am in first grade, playing with one of my peers who identified as Black. His name was Tommy White. Tommy and I were talking and our friend Tommy Smith joined us. Tommy Smith said, “I just thought of something, I should be Tom my White and you should be Tommy Black.” I remember the painful reaction on Tommy White’s face as he tried to make a joke about it. I told Tommy Smith that was a mean comment but in that moment I did not have an understanding of the impact. I just knew that I was following my parents’ advice. I did not make the comment and I did not hurt Tommy White’s feelings so I was not part of the problem. I had no idea in that moment how a comment or label regarding someone’s last name could influence her life. Wow, I do believe that critical life lessons that are missed come back around.

After my brief walk down memory lane, I refocused on the conversation as the IDEAL WIL narrated the historical context and experiences that shaped the journey toward WILship. The IDEAL WIL seemed lost in thought for a moment probably trying to quickly move through the flood of memories that came rushing back.

IDEAL WIL: For the majority of my education I was in predominately White schools and environments until college. My interactions with peers perceived as not White came from
co-curricular activities including sports, recreational clubs, and choir groups. We seemed to all get along with each other. I felt a little intimidated because I was used to being surrounded with people who looked like me. As I developed some friendships with my peers of color, they became less intimidating. I thought they were no different from me, with the exception of their skin color.

**NML:** I know that I shared, along with many White individuals, the goal to be color-blind. What I mean by color-blind is that I did not notice color or race. This was my way to not participate in racism. The truth is that I did notice color and it is clear from your comments that you noticed color as well.

**IDEAL WIL:** Of course I noticed that someone had a different skin color than me. It is unrealistic to say that we do not notice color and that color does not impact how we interact with people from different backgrounds. I now understand that we, as White people, use the concept of color-blindness with good intentions. No one wants to believe that we are racists or that we are bad people in any way. To claim that color doesn’t matter does not erase the fact that racism exists. Through this journey I understand that color is not the problem. White individuals not identifying racism and our roles in maintaining racist systems is the problem.

**NML:** Through this conversation I felt my heart start to beat out of my chest. Am I getting defensive that I am being lumped into a category with other White people because not everyone identifies me as White or that I have participated in racial discrimination? As long as I followed the Golden Rule, how could I possibly participate in racist systems and perpetuate racist behavior?
I decided to dig deeper into the IDEAL WILs’ comments by asking: when did you learn that Whiteness is not only a personal identity but a system as well?

IDEAL WIL: During college, I had more exposure to racial diversity. I took opportunities to talk with my peers of color to learn more about their lived experiences. I could distance myself from their comments about experiences in predominately White environments because I believed at the time that these comments were not directed personally at me. I can recognize now how easy it was for me to depersonalize these comments. I think one of the traps that I fell into as a White person was individualizing Whiteness without any recognition of this identity as part of a larger group.

NML: As the IDEAL WIL paused to reflect upon this memory, another vivid flashback came rushing back to me. Eight years ago I had the privilege of serving as the staff adviser to the Native American Student Alliance. I felt it was important to be transparent about my race and ethnicity. Often, individuals assume that I identify as Latina because of my last name, so it was important that the students knew who I am, not who they perceived me to be. While I worked to educate myself about the Native American culture, the students would share pieces of their identity and culture with me.

For example, a couple students showed me the traditional clothing their grandmothers made for participating in Pow-Wows, which they explained was a name for one of their sacred celebrations. They shared how each stitch and beading had a special meaning. I was honored to attend a Pow-Wow as well as a Welcoming Ceremony to experience aspects of this beautiful culture. One of the students made me a necklace
and explained that the small basket attached was meant to hold a picture of someone I wanted protected.

While the students appreciated our work together, we discussed the importance of connecting with a Native American faculty or staff adviser as I transitioned into a new professional role on campus. Some of these students continued to work with me in my new role in academic advising. When I challenged one of my students about her academic performance she became defensive and said that I was like every other White person who had challenged her before. She said it was because she had gotten to know me that she felt comfortable engaging in this conversation. I listened to what she said and when she left I realized how defensive I had become. I had spent a lot of time with this student trying to assist her in working through her personal challenges and transition from a reservation to this predominately White campus.

At first I was hurt and frustrated because it seemed as though all of my good intentions were not recognized. Then I reflected on her comments to understand the larger message as well as the impact of my actions. This young woman had experienced racial discrimination by White peers and White teachers for the majority of her life. It was through this experience that I realized my personal White identity was part of a collective group who has participated, intentionally or unintentionally, in maintaining systems of racial discrimination. For a moment my heart sank because I felt embarrassed for feeling defensive and then I identified what a transformational learning experience this was for me. As I made an emotional connection to this memory, the IDEAL WIL cleared her throat indicating that she was ready to resume the conversation.
IDEAL WIL: Thank you for giving me an opportunity to pause and reflect. As I recall these memories I am experiencing a lot of emotions because I am looking back through a more inclusive lens.

NML: I understand. Through our conversations many memories are coming up in my own personal journey. I believe this is why it is critical to engage in these conversations to be able to make new meaning of our lived experiences in our quest for WILship.

IDEAL WIL: Yes, we are not alone in our journeys to become more inclusive. Learning together is a powerful experience. Our stories are worth telling because there are new lessons to be learned. Let me share an example. As I was growing up, I did not allow myself to recognize that by ignoring my personal racial identity I was unable to identify the ways in which I participated in racial discrimination.

The desire to explore my role in systems of racial discrimination was a result of personally experiencing discrimination because of one of the intersections of my identity [e.g., gender, sexual orientation, social class]. Before this experience, I thought I had the world in the palm of my hand. I seemed to be part of the in-crowd with my peers and now because of one piece of my identity I was suddenly cast as an outsider trying to fight my way in. I get chills just thinking about this moment. . . .because of a piece of who I am that does not fall into what is considered the norm in the United States, people actually wanted to physically or emotionally hurt me. There were also laws, policies, and subtle social cues all indicating that I did not belong in certain environments. Experiencing the role of outsider looking in is a powerful experience that served as the catalyst for inclusiveness to evolve into the right thing to do for me.
NML: I agree that these are powerful experiences. I think it is a challenge to keep our privileged identities ever present. I struggled with acknowledging the privilege I have with my personal racial identity because, depending on my geographical location, I am not considered White. Consequently, at times I have been able to justify, in my mind of course, that I do not have privilege as a White person since there are many who do not identify me as White. I really have to be intentional with keeping this part of my identity visible because it is much easier to only focus on the discrimination that I experienced as a female than on the privilege I experienced as a White person.

IDEAL WIL: I have struggled with being told that because I am White I have privilege that continues to open doors for me. I would guess that people of color experience something similar when White people, including myself, have believed the myth that a colleague of color was only given a job because of affirmative action, not because of personal merit. This myth continues to permeate our culture, especially in today’s society where there is a misperception that White people no longer have racial privilege due to the changing demographics in our society. To learn that White women have benefited the most from affirmative action was a shocking part of questioning how the messages that I was socialized to believe shaped my misunderstanding of issues such as affirmative action.

This is tough personal work. I had many years of unlearning exclusive messages to get to the point of living inclusiveness on a daily basis. I never had to think about these issues past the workday, until I realized inclusiveness was the right thing to do. The mind and heart working together is critical to living inclusiveness.
NML: I agree that connecting the mind with the heart is critical to inclusiveness becoming habitual behavior. Yet, I know that there are days I get exhausted with all the personal work that I need to do in unlearning exclusive messages from my historical context. Since I have the privilege of not thinking about race, I sometimes want to take a break so that my mind and heart have time to reenergize.

IDEAL WIL: I have felt that same way. Then I realized, as you said, that it is a privileged choice to not have to think about issues of racial discrimination as a White person. It is much easier to continue along a path where I do not have to think about or feel the pain of knowing that when I take breaks there are so many people, especially people of color, who continue to shoulder the responsibility in addressing issues of racial discrimination that my breaks maintain. The status quo is definitely a less stressful path for White people, including myself, because I am the person who benefits and I do not have to fear losing anything that I have acquired. However, through my journey, I realized that I simply inherited privilege because I am accepted as a White person in the United States. After all, race is an illusion created by White people to maintain power and division for individuals they considered to be non-White.

NML: The idea of race as fictional without any biological evidence is an interesting debate in the United States. As I have been engaged in my own journey, I have also asked similar questions: is race fact or fiction? My great-grandparents were from Italy, yet their race was first constructed as non-White, and then later as White in the United States. The boundaries of Whiteness have fluctuated in the past and may continue to be
fluid in the future, due to the changing demographics in society as well as the subsequent vying for power.

IDEAL WIL: My journey has helped me realize that the invention of Whiteness, with its very real consequences for individuals considered to be non-White, was founded in the entitlement of power and privilege for White Americans. As if somehow we were superior beings who deserved all of this privilege. These messages became a part of my subconscious and this was the way I saw the world for the majority of my life. It was in this journey to get to a place of living inclusiveness, that I exposed these exclusive messages to begin to unveil the truth. I questioned the construction of Whiteness and my role in perpetuating such an exclusive construct, especially at this former PWI. When people who identify as White in the United States don’t take the time to explore the construction of Whiteness, they continue to teach these unfounded myths to future generations.

With the election of our first bi-racial President, many White individuals believed that the challenges of race had been solved. I have heard comments such as “let’s just move beyond race now.” I agree with a statement in a news article that I read the other day that to move beyond race we need to make it visible to everyone and clearly understand the construction of race. Only when we have achieved an accurate understanding of race can we work to deconstruct race and move to an authentic post-racial society.

NML: Obviously, to move beyond race because we have elected a bi-racial President, would be an easier path than purposefully re-examining our personal racial identity and
the assumptions that we make about his leadership that are connected solely to his race.
We certainly did not engage in a similar discourse in reference to how the race of the
previous presidents throughout our nation’s history contributed to their leadership
practice. Through this conversation I can further understand the necessity to continue to
balance meaning-making at the intellectual/political/professional and emotional/personal
levels.

IDEAL WIL: Yes, by consistently integrating the mind with the heart, I have been able to
see the ways in which my personal beliefs significantly influence my professional
practice. To achieve living inclusiveness I am constantly awake to the exclusive
messages that still try to invade my subconscious. However, with inclusiveness now
being an inherent part of me, I do not allow those messages in. More importantly, I work
to combat those messages by exposing the construction of Whiteness. I also try to engage
other White people in the journey to become inclusive leaders. My colleagues are always
talking about how they want to be an effective leader. To me, leadership and
inclusiveness are interconnected. This is why I constantly reflect upon my own racial
identity and my actions as an inclusive leader to share in the responsibility for creating an
inclusively excellent institution. Now that we have had a chance to discuss my personal
journey, let me show you around our institution so you can experience our diverse
campus community.

NML: As the IDEAL WIL showed me around campus I immediately noticed that the
physical environment consisted of portraits and artwork that represented the diverse
cultures of this campus community. I felt as though I was traveling the world as I walked
through the various buildings. I learned that all the student organizations worked together to discover artifacts that honor the legacy of their diverse cultures. This is a very different experience to the former PWIs where each building looked the same and catered to the legacy of exclusion.

I asked the IDEAL WIL: how were you able to create this inclusive campus community?

IDEAL WIL: As part of creating an inclusively excellent campus, we started with the physical environment. Through our multicultural alliances, we worked to transform the physical environment to be inclusive of diverse identities. We then divided the institutional policies including criteria for promotion, benefits, and resources among the various alliances to carefully review. The goal was to identify and eliminate any form of racial discrimination. Then we moved to finding resources to recruit and hire a more diverse administration, faculty, and staff, as well as to provide more scholarship and financial aid opportunities for our student body. We were then able to re-create a mission statement that accurately reflected the type of learning environment that actually existed.

The faculty within each department developed task forces or work committees to review the curricula to ensure that inclusiveness was represented in every learning objective/outcome, syllabi, course reading and assignment, and, course discussion. Every faculty member attended an inclusive educational series offered nationally to continue to develop inclusive pedagogical practices. Many of the facilitators for these sessions were from our own faculty.
Every member of the campus community from the board of trustees down attended at least three inclusiveness training workshops per year. All of these components contributed to the development of an inclusively excellent campus. Many individuals had been working on this before. The difference now is that inclusiveness has become a culture of habit for every member of this institution. This journey was challenging yet we continued working together to chip away at exclusion until we achieved our goal. Without working on my personal identity first, I do not believe that I could have authentically engaged in and understood the need for this type of transformation personally and professionally.

I have learned through this journey that we can always justify not engaging in transformation, especially if the current systems benefit us. For decades, many White leaders, including myself, justified inaction in transforming this PWI because it was comfortable, it worked for us, and we were not negatively impacted. Do you see how easy it is to universalize experiences as White people to maintain control within an organization? In the same way, we can universalize the experience of people of color by continuing to rationalize that racial discrimination is only a problem for them. The justifications are grounded in many disguises including that of self-care. We are always discussing the need to have balance in our lives and if we were to remove an issue as stressful as Inclusive Excellence, we’re just taking care of ourselves, right? Once we are reenergized we can re-engage in transforming the environment to be more inclusive. Yes, self-care is important, but it should not be used as an excuse for inaction.
NML: What advice would you give to other WILs trying to participate in transforming their PWI to have Inclusive Excellence at the heart of their institution?

IDEAL WIL: I would say they need to keep chipping away at the status quo every day to build momentum. They need to deeply examine their personal history and context, so that Inclusive Excellence becomes important to them on an individual level, and recognize that it’s the right thing to do. I believe there’s something about each of us that stands outside the societal norm and many systems have been built to be exclusive in nature. Unfortunately, we have been active players within those systems for fear of what could be lost for those of us with privilege, and gained for those without privilege, instead of what could be gained for everyone.

We cannot be afraid to make mistakes. It is through our mistakes that we continue to learn, grow, and develop. Even on the most challenging days, it is important to keep moving forward. Our past is a history that we cannot change. But we can re-examine it to make new meaning and transform our current moment. Instead of being in competition with each other, we need to construct a new society grounded in inclusion. We separate ourselves from each other out of fear and routine. It can be done. At this institution, we imagined a place where diversity and excellence were partners in every aspect of campus life. We have achieved this goal by working together as a multicultural team. And my part in this was made possible because I re-examined my historical context and experiences. Through that process, issues of inclusion moved from existing only in my mind to becoming a part of my heart as well. We must first understand who we are as people to become the most effective leaders. It was through understanding myself as a
White person that I was able to develop into an inclusive leader who is living inclusiveness on a daily basis.

*NML: It’s challenging to break out of a routine and take a risk to better understand who we are as racial beings. If the current system is working for those who identify as White, why would anyone want to dismantle that system?*

*IDEAL WIL: Because no one actually wins when oppressive systems are maintained. You could argue that most White leaders on campuses don’t actively engage in maintaining the system of White privilege and they just don’t want to “rock the boat.” We must remember that our silence and inaction perpetuate exclusion. Striving for inclusiveness means we all get a chance at reaching our full human potential. If we don’t, we not only undermine our own potential, but we’re contributing to a system that undermines everyone’s potential.*

*NML: As we conclude our time together, I have many thoughts and emotions that I am experiencing. I want to thank you for your time today and for sharing your journey with me. Your story has inspired me to continue to strive for living inclusiveness on a daily basis.*

*IDEAL WIL: I have enjoyed our time. I look forward to our continued work together in this life-journey to develop into more inclusive human beings. Once the mind is connected with the heart the two can never be separated. Inclusiveness and leadership, just like diversity and excellence, are interconnected. Without one you cannot successfully have the other.*

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This content came directly from the individual interviews with WILs as well as from the two group interviews and was intended as a reference guide for White leaders, and a catalyst for their personal journey to inclusive leadership. It is offered as a reminder that we are not alone on this challenging path to become more inclusive human beings.

**Implications**

This study has several implications for future research and practice to better understand the interconnectedness between personal identities and professional practice. First, a framework emerged to understand inclusive leadership for White college administrators at PWIs. While the focus of this study was on race and ethnicity, the inclusive leadership framework can be used to critically explore other privileged identities (e.g., males, social class, ability, heterosexuality) to support leaders to become more inclusive personally and professionally. Further, the framework serves as a visual guide to revisit historical context and experiences to make new meaning of their current contexts.

Future research might empirically test the processes (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, praxis) and the four developmental phases of inclusiveness (i.e., normalizing, performing, embracing, living), resulting in a continuum of inclusive leadership for the purpose of educational and professional training for leaders in higher education.

For that purpose, the next section outlines a practical guide to explore in more detail possible implications for training and development for inclusive leadership. Although the guide is focused on race and ethnicity, it can be adapted to critically explore
other privileged identities and their impact on professional roles. The practical guide serves as a resource for leaders to continue to connect their mind with their heart in striving to embrace and live inclusiveness.

The next section provides tangible suggestions on how to implement the processes (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning making, and praxis) that are critical to the growth and transformation from one phase to another for WILs.

**A Practical Guide for the Processes**

This following information is not intended as a one-size-fits-all plan. Each person’s journey and her or his historical context and experiences are unique. It is presented as an opportunity for White college administrators to further explore becoming inclusive leaders who strive to move from theory to practice on the road to Inclusive Excellence. It may also serve as another resource for inclusive leaders to inspire other administrators in becoming more inclusive, both personally and professionally.

This practical guide offers recommendations on how to implement the processes of the inclusive leadership framework in a WIL’s personal and professional practice. The information presented focuses solely on each process (i.e., discourse, self-reflexivity, meaning-making, and praxis) to promote growth and development through the phases for current administrators working at a PWI. As previously explained, the processes are essential to transition between the phases (i.e., normalizing inclusiveness, performing inclusiveness, embracing inclusiveness, and living inclusiveness).
Discourse Process

It is critical for WILs to facilitate discourse within their department/division by creating space for challenging dialogues in which conversations that inspire growth and development can occur. The following is a list of recommendations, generated by the WILs in this study, for this purpose.

**Personal.**

1. Pose weekly questions to staff to generate dialogue. Sample questions are:
   a. How do you understand your racial/ethnic identity?
   b. How does your identity as a White person influence your experience at a PWI?
   c. Describe how your personal identities influence your professional practice.
   d. What are three to five personal goals to be more inclusive of all identities?

2. Purposefully question the labels that are intentionally or unintentionally assigned to people instead of listening to how they identify themselves.

3. Re-examine issues of intent verses impact. Often, in discussions, people explained that being offensive or excluding someone with their actions were not their intent; however, the impact had consequences. WILs are encouraged to examine the intent verses impact that might apply to any decision in an effort to be more inclusive.

4. Remember that political correctness is a method to have a respectful dialogue, but should not be used as an excuse to avoid difficult dialogue.

5. Be transparent in communication used to build trust to engage in difficult dialogue.

**Departmental.**

1. Create an environment that encourages constructive feedback regarding inclusive practices.
2. Integrate Inclusive Excellence as a core value within the department/division, especially in the strategic plan. Make it public as another form of accountability.

3. Encourage dialogue about the influence of privileged identities on professional practice. This can be facilitated through: (a) professional development opportunities, (b) individual feedback sessions, and (c) by integrating discussion of inclusive practices into staff meetings.

4. Explore language to streamline communication as a means for everyone in the division/department to integrate Inclusive Excellence in their personal and professional practice. Re-examining language provides an opportunity to unmask exclusive perceptions in an effort to create a more accurate reality.

5. Review the division/department’s written materials (including the website) to discover if the language is inclusive of all identities. Employ the expertise of Disability Services, the International Office, Multicultural Affairs, and Gender and Women’s Studies Department in this effort.

**Institutional.**

1. Eliminate language that universalizes the experiences of any racial/ethnic group. Remember that everyone has a unique journey as well as unique contexts and experiences.

2. Challenge messages that focus on rhetoric and not action. An institution that espouses inclusiveness without making appropriate changes will continue to perpetuate an exclusive environment.

3. Identify the external factors that contribute to discourse about issues of race/ethnicity (e.g. media, beliefs/values of stakeholders who control resources).

4. Inspire an environment in which people engage in self-reflexivity as part of the dialogues that take place.

**Self-reflexivity Process**

The WILs in this study identified that who we are as people influences who we are as leaders. Therefore, it is essential to engage in self-reflexivity to better understand the interconnectedness between our personal histories and our professional lives. The
following are recommendations to purposefully engage in a deeper level of self-reflexivity as a means to develop a critical race consciousness.

1. Intentionally re-examine the messages learned in your historical context and experiences that shaped your initial understanding of Whiteness and your personal racial identity. This type of self-reflexivity can be explored through conversations with colleagues, journaling, commenting on one’s own and others’ biases and assumptions about race/ethnicity, and, narrating your story in professional development workshops, conferences, etc.

2. Consider a time when you were constructed as the outsider in society based on identities of gender, social class, sexual orientation, religion, and other as a means to better understand issues of discrimination. There is always something about each of us that stands outside the exclusively constructed societal norms. If you cannot identify such an experience, you may be able to recognize a situation in which you noticed someone experiencing the outsider status.

3. Purposefully explore the transformative life experiences that have served as a catalyst to becoming more inclusive.

4. Identify ways to keep racial privilege visible on a daily basis in an effort to recognize how personal beliefs/values influence professional experience. For example, wake up each day asking the question: what does it mean for me to be a White person working to be more racially/ethnically inclusive in a predominately White environment?

5. Keep in mind how your intersections of identity (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, social class) have influenced your worldview and sense of reality.

6. Be intentional about unlearning exclusive socialized messages that manifest in current contexts. For example, locking your car doors in certain neighborhoods due to the race/ethnicity of the residents (i.e., people who are not considered White).

7. Do not be afraid to make mistakes as part of this process. Learning about our mistakes and experiences inspires continued personal growth and development. Keep in mind that we are all works in progress trying to grow and develop through a challenging journey together.

8. Do not use guilt as an excuse to avoid exploring the construction of Whiteness and one’s own personal White racial identity. Each of us as
individuals are not responsible for changing history, however, we have a shared responsibility to transform present and future contexts.

9. Keep in mind that the responsibility for education should be on yourself, not on others. Seek out professional development and educational opportunities to challenge yourself to grow and learn.

10. Identify your role as a White leader to take shared responsibility for and shared ownership in transforming predominately White environments to be more inclusive.

11. Through the process of self-reflexivity, learn how to engage the mind with the heart in making new meaning in working toward embracing and living inclusiveness.

**Meaning-making Process**

The WILs in this study emphasized the critical need to balance the process of meaning-making at the intellectual/political/professional level with the emotional/personal. Many White people find it challenging to connect the mind with the heart regarding racial inclusiveness. The following list provides practical recommendations to assist in making inclusiveness the right thing to do, and to develop inclusiveness into a culture of habit.

1. Narrate your story, either through journaling or conversations, to understand yourself as a White racial being without contrasting yourself to individuals not considered White. For example, learn about your ethnic background through questions such as: where are your ancestors from? what was their experience when they immigrated to the United States? why do you identify racially as White?

2. Identify and understand your participation in systems of racial privilege in a predominately White environment.

3. Avoid only participating in inclusiveness during the work day (i.e., performing inclusiveness) and purposefully commit to identifying ways to be more personally inclusive.

4. Don’t take breaks from working toward Inclusive Excellence. Taking breaks can be disguised in a variety of attractive excuses, including self-
care. Once the meaning-making is connected to the heart, breaks are no longer an option.

5. Make an intentional checklist of inclusive practices and commit it to memory until the behaviors develop into habit. Develop a toolkit to continually address bringing diversity and excellence together in your personal and professional experience.

6. Allow your transformative life experiences to be the doors and windows into greater and deeper understanding by intentionally engaging in critical discourse and self-reflexivity about these experiences.

7. Integrate your historical context and experiences with your current context and experiences to make new meaning. Remember that an unexplored past may continue to perpetuate exclusive behavior in the present and future.

8. Learn how to continuously engage in reflection and action based on your personal and professional experiences through the praxis process.

**Praxis Process**

Through the praxis process, WILs engaged in constant reflection and action in an effort to become more inclusive. It is critical to remember that inclusiveness and leadership are interconnected. The following list offers suggestions to purposefully: (a) walk your talk (i.e., personal accountability), (b) take shared ownership in and shared responsibility for inclusiveness (i.e., professional accountability), and (c) navigate politics (i.e., locate a sphere of influence, take intentional risks, make compromises, and build alliances).

**Personal accountability.**

*Walking the talk.*

1. Find financial resources to move the Inclusive Excellence agenda forward.

2. Role model inclusive behavior and continuous learning by engaging in professional and educational development opportunities about the impact of personal identities.
3. Set aside time each day to reflect upon the messages espoused about Inclusive Excellence and the actions that do or do not occur to transform your department/division.

4. Intentionally explore and eliminate your expectations that people of color assimilate to the dominant culture at a PWI.

5. Build credibility through understanding your personal identity as a White person to have a voice in working toward embracing and living inclusiveness with other issues of discrimination.

**Departmental/Institutional.**

*Shared responsibility and shared ownership (professional accountability).*

1. Empower your staff members to engage in working to achieve Inclusive Excellence through professional development as well as educational opportunities.

2. Create individual Inclusive Excellence plans for each member in the department/division to continuously reflect upon their personal and professional actions.

3. Establish an Inclusive Excellence Task Force to elicit feedback from the entire department/division to create a blueprint or practical guide on how everyone can integrate inclusiveness in their personal and professional experience.

4. Develop and constantly evaluate markers of progress to achieve Inclusive Excellence on a consistent basis. Reward progress with financial resources for additional education, training, etc.

**Navigating politics.**

*Locating a sphere of influence: personal.*

1. Find a place and a role for your privileged identity as a WIL to make change as an insider within a predominately White environment.

*Locating a sphere of influence: departmental/institutional*

1. Use a variety of levels of action to build momentum in order to make change. For example, include Inclusive Excellence in job descriptions and performance evaluations, encourage and support staff in attending professional and educational development opportunities, and be
purposeful in establishing achievable goals in working toward inclusiveness.

2. Role model Inclusive Excellence in the department/division to inspire change in the larger campus community.

3. Identify opportunities to promote breakthroughs and plant seeds to keep momentum building in making sustainable change within the department/division, then use those pockets of influence to make change throughout the campus.

**Intentional risks and compromises.**

1. Recognize that transforming an environment to be more inclusive is a gradual journey. Therefore, it is important to take intentional risks and compromises to chip away at the status quo on a daily basis.

2. Negotiate challenging the system while working within the system. Remember, it is about rocking the boat without getting kicked out of the boat, because it is important to make change by remaining an insider.

3. Balance educating yourself with educating White colleagues on the need to intentionally explore personal racial identities to become a more inclusive leader.

4. Identify the tension between finding commonality against discrimination and recognizing the complexity with the multiple layers of privilege and oppression.

**Building alliances.**

Human connectivity is essential in working to achieve Inclusive Excellence.

Therefore, it is important to develop alliances in order to have a critical mass to inspire transformation throughout the institution.

**Personal.**

1. Surround yourself with people who are also being purposeful about deconstructing their privilege and personal racial identity who can provide constructive feedback to inspire continued growth and learning in reference to issues of power, privilege, and discrimination.

2. Develop a support system to continue to stay engaged with personal and professional transformation.
1. Identify colleagues and develop partnerships throughout the department/division and campus community who are working toward Inclusive Excellence to build sustainable momentum for change.

2. Listen to fears/concerns/feedback from others as a means to integrate those voices into alliances to make change.

**Personal Reflection/Concluding Thoughts**

This research study has been a personal journey for me in learning to become a more inclusive leader in higher education. Throughout this research, I have been reminded of the necessity to continue to examine the historical context and experiences that manifest in my current practice. As awake as we become to issues of power, privilege, and oppression, there is always more work required to deconstruct the past as a means to reconstruct a more inclusive present and future.

The interview with the IDEAL WIL illustrated that we do not have to take this journey alone. Working together may help inspire personal as well as professional growth and development for educators trying to create learning environments where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

The inclusive leadership framework serves as an example to understand the journey of White college administrators who have been identified as inclusive leaders at a PWI. Although each journey is individual and unique, this framework came out of a set of common experiences to assist other White college administrators in striving to develop into inclusive leaders. It is through intentional personal commitment to transformation that WILs learn to engage in leadership through phases three and four.
The underlying theme throughout this research study is that the personal is interconnected to the professional. On the journey to becoming a WIL, we must strive to connect our mind with our heart to achieve the essence of inclusive leadership. Since inclusiveness and leadership are interdependent, we must first seek to understand self in an effort to become a more inclusive leader. This is a life-journey that is challenging, risk taking, and, at times, exhausting. It took many lifetimes to construct exclusive systems, and while progress has been made in deconstructing them, there is still much work needed to authentically reconstruct systems that are inclusive of all identities. Institutions referred to as predominately White must be replaced by diverse campus communities that welcome and value all identities.

There are no easy answers or solutions to this journey. However, inaction and silence can no longer be an option for White college administrators striving to develop into inclusive leaders as well as inclusive educators. For all of us, our goal should be to actualize the vision of an inclusive environment with the purpose of educating competent, committed citizens in a multicultural society. We should not expect anything from our students that we are not willing to dedicate ourselves to achieve. I am honored to share in this journey with each of you. I hope this dissertation may serve as another resource in remaining committed to making inclusiveness an inherent part of our beings.
References


Parker, L., & Lynn, M. (February 2002). What's race got to do with it? critical race theory's conflicts with and connections to qualitative research methodology and epistemology. *Qualitative Inquiry, 8*(1), 7-22.


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## Appendix A: Summary of White Identity Development Models

|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|

### Abandoning Racist Identity
- **Contact status** - naive to social and historical significance of race and racism.
- **Disintegration status** - initial recognition of White privilege feelings of guilt lead to blaming people of color.
- **Reintegration status** - may address feelings of guilt by demonstrating pride in being a member of the dominant group and accept messages about race and racism while focusing anger toward other racial groups.

### Achieving Non-Racist Identity
- **Immersion-emersion status** - shift from trying to change people of color to changing white individuals.
- **Autonomy status** - comprehensive understanding and balance of white identity because race is internalized and not just intellectualized. Commitment to continue learning about racism and other cultures.

### Unachieved Racial Consciousness
- **Avoidant type** - lack of acknowledgment of one’s White identity and choice to ignore race.
- **Dependent type** - looking to family members or significant others to shape analysis of racial issues.
- **Dissonant type** - open to new information and experience. Dissonance with previous beliefs and new experiences.

### Achieved Racial Consciousness
- **Dominative type** - have Eurocentric worldview thus justifying dominance of the majority White culture-demonstrate ignorance grounded in stereotypes.
- **Conflictive type** - struggles between opposing overt discrimination while also opposing policies and practices that would eliminate racism for fear of what would be lost.
- **Reactive type** - can identify racism as a central component in American society and that Whites benefit from racism.
- **Integrative type** - actively engaged in social change through demonstrations or through contributions to anti-racist organizations.

### Diffuse
- Limited awareness of one’s own ethnic identity.

### Foreclosed
- Limited exploration but heightened awareness of one’s ethnic identity.

### Moratorium
- Exploration of one’s ethnic identity and limited understanding of one’s ethnicity.

### Achieved
- Clear awareness of one’s own ethnic identity.
## Appendix B: Summary of Transformational Learning

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Transformative Learning in Adult Education</th>
<th>Constructive-Developmental Approach to Transformative Learning</th>
<th>Inequality, Development and Connected Knowing in Transformative Learning</th>
<th>Transformative Learning as Ideology and Critique</th>
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</table>
| Critical awareness-                      | Centrality of epistemology-in transformative learning        | Growth over time-it is imperative to understand how individuals | Critical reflection-individuals must be able | Future directions-learning process that needs | Challenging Meaning-perspectives-
| becoming aware of one’s own assumptions and expectations. | focused on meaning forming by which individuals shape coherent meaning. | to develop their meaning structures over time. This type of meaning-making is how individuals learn to construct their knowledge. | to identify hegemonic assumptions and deconstruct this socialized way of knowing. | that needs to recognize the significant influence of context, the catalyst of the process, the interdependence of critical reflection, and ways of knowing and relational nature of rational discourse. | provide an opportunity for individuals to reframe their current understanding of cultural assumptions and biases. |
| Frames of reference-                     | Reforming Meaning-changing the way individuals make meaning. | Development—many adults have yet to develop the skills and capabilities to challenge the assumptions in their own thinking as well as the ability to analyze the thinking of others. | Developmental learning is transformative when hegemonic assumptions are challenged and counter-hegemonic beliefs are developed. | Cultural diversity—additional research is needed on how to foster and cultivate diversity through transformative learning. | Setting the stage—refers to the fact that individuals come to intercultural experiences with former events, beliefs, and assumptions that have influenced the learning. |
| transforming frames of reference to be more inclusive | Constructive developmental transformation will be better understood and facilitated if its history is better honored and future better appreciated. It is important to understand present epistemologies as well as the complexity to transforming learned epistemologies. | Equality—many assume that there is equality among participants in reflective discourse—individuals tend to choose not to struggle with injustice. | Ideology and critique—refers to the process by which individuals recognize how uncritically accepted dominant ideologies are embedded throughout every aspect of society. In order to challenge ideology, individuals must be aware of how it lives within. | Cultural disequilibrium—is the catalyst for changing current assumptions. | Cultural orientations—non-reflective orientation involves little or no questioning about prior values and assumptions. |
| 1). Habit of mind-set of assumptions.    | Stages of learning are influenced by the dominant epistemologies. | Silenced voices—it is essential to develop skills of critical thinking because it is important to question authorities, traditions, and assumptions that have perpetuated inequity. |                             | Reflective orientation involved deep critical thought. | Reflective orientation involved deep critical thought. |
| 2). Point of view—comprises clusters of meaning schemes. |                             |                                                                 |                             |                             |                             |
| Objective reframing-involves critical reflection on the assumptions of others. |                             |                                                                 |                             |                             |                             |
| Subjective reframing-critical self-reflection of one’s own assumptions. |                             |                                                                 |                             |                             |                             |
| Critical reflection-essential to transformative learning. |                             |                                                                 |                             |                             |                             |
| Critical discourse-involved constructively participating in discourse in order to find one’s own voice—it is the willingness to seek to understand in order to negotiate and act on one’s own purpose, values and feelings instead of those uncritically assimilated by others. |                             |                                                                 |                             |                             |                             |
| Imagination and action-central to understanding the unknown and then making change. |                             |                                                                 |                             |                             |                             |
### Appendix C: Summary of Leadership Theories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Traits</th>
<th>Leadership Categories</th>
<th>Critical Leadership</th>
<th>Organizational Leadership</th>
<th>Leadership Reconsidered</th>
<th>Inclusive leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenge the process</strong></td>
<td><strong>Power and influence theories</strong></td>
<td><strong>Critical theory</strong> with social justice as a critical component. <strong>Discourse and praxis</strong>-critical components in order to challenge current assumptions about inequitable practices. <strong>Critical analysis of texts and conversations</strong>-opportunity to dismantle the dominant discourse because power is embedded throughout the dominant discourse. <strong>Structural leadership</strong>-focused on the environment, strategies, and policies of the organization. <strong>Human resource leadership</strong>-leaders who are invested in each member of the organization and empower those members. <strong>Political leaders</strong>-focus on distribution of power, interests, stakeholders, and negotiations. <strong>Symbolic leaders</strong>-focused on shared vision through stories. <strong>Self-knowledge</strong>-is the ability for the leader to be aware of personal beliefs, values, and emotions that inspire, change, and transform. <strong>Authenticity/Integrity</strong>-connects the individuals’ actions to their personal values and beliefs in order to develop trust in work with others. <strong>Commitment</strong>-consists of passion, energy, and persistence to motivate individuals to serve. <strong>Empathy/Understanding</strong>-the ability to listen and attempt to understand the views of others. <strong>Competence</strong>-refers to the knowledge and skills for effective and sustainable transformation. <strong>Cultural identity</strong>-influences their communication, perspectives, and treatment of others. <strong>Take risks</strong>-willing to make mistakes, confront issues, deal with conflict and challenge current beliefs. <strong>Self-awareness</strong>-understanding the concepts of culture and cultural identity. <strong>Critical consciousness</strong>-awareness of inequity. <strong>Separating individuals from stereotypes</strong>-need to work to deconstruct stereotypes. <strong>Active listening</strong>-in order to understand another person’s point of view. <strong>Diversity</strong> is seen as an asset not a barrier. <strong>Shared decision making</strong>-everyone is engaged in the process.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inspire a shared vision</strong></td>
<td><strong>Behavior theories</strong>-this focuses on what the leaders actually do. <strong>Contingency theories</strong>-different situations and contexts require different skills, talents, and abilities. Effective leadership is situational. <strong>Cultural and symbolic theories</strong>-emphasizes the role for the leader to stress shared meaning through rituals and ceremonies. <strong>Cognitive theories</strong>-leadership is a subjective act only in the mind of the beholder. <strong>Transactional</strong>-focused on contractual relationships. <strong>Transformational</strong>-focused on purposeful change.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Enabling others to act</strong></td>
<td><strong>others do not ask anything of others they are not willing to do themselves.</strong> <strong>Modeling the way</strong>-leaders do not ask anything of others they are not willing to do themselves. <strong>Encouraging the heart</strong>-the heart keeps individuals motivated throughout the process.</td>
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Appendix D: Recruitment Email

Dear

As you may or may not know, I am working on completing my doctoral dissertation in higher education at the University of Denver. The focus of my research is on inclusive leadership at predominately White institutions.

Inclusive leaders are those individuals who demonstrate a commitment to Inclusive Excellence (embedding diversity and excellence into all aspects of the campus community) and diversity initiatives. This research will provide college administrators with additional resources for best practices of inclusive leadership in higher education, specifically at predominately White institutions.

In selecting a population for this study, I struggled with focusing on all administrators and only focusing on White administrators. It is critical to acknowledge that, historically, administrators of color have assumed the responsibility in promoting diversity. Now the goal of Inclusive Excellence is to shift the responsibility to everyone. Accordingly, I want to further understand the experiences of White administrators who have taken on this challenge.

Since research suggests that White administrators continue to serve in the majority of positions at predominately White institutions, it is important to focus this study on White administrators who work toward Inclusive Excellence and diversity initiatives. In addition, as a White researcher, I chose to focus this study on other White individuals in an effort to continue to reflect on my own identity and practice throughout this process.

I would like to invite 6 to 9 White administrators to participate in a series of three, 90-minute individual interviews, and one, 60-minute focus group. College administrators who will be invited to participate in this research should have the following characteristics:

1. Identify as White.
2. Administrator at the institutional, departmental, or divisional level at Inclusive Excellence University (undergraduate and graduate).
3. Demonstrate a commitment to diversity.
4. Participate in Inclusive Excellence and diversity initiatives.

I would appreciate if you could make your recommendation for a potential research participant at

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=WklS3zk3yMwwJHV5M_2bXVDg_3d_3d

This survey takes approximately 2 to 5 minutes, is anonymous, and will be saved in a password protected database for my use only.

This is an exciting opportunity for me and I look forward to collecting data. This research was approved by DU's Institutional Review Board on December 9, 2008. If you have any
questions about the research, you can contact me at 303-871-2712 or at nlatino@du.edu. You can also contact Dr. Frank Tuitt at 303-871-4573 or at ftuitt@du.edu.

Your time and assistance is greatly appreciated. Thank you for any help you may be able to provide.

Sincerely,
Niki Latino

This email letter was approved by the University of Denver’s Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research on December 9, 2008.
Appendix E: Recruitment Survey

[www.Surveymonkey.com](http://www.Surveymonkey.com)

1. What is your role at Inclusive Excellence University?
   - Administrator (14 responses)
   - Faculty (6 responses)
   - Graduate Student (2 responses)
   - Staff (8 responses)
   - Undergraduate Student (4 responses)
   - Other (please specify)

2. What is your racial and ethnic identity? Please check all that apply.
   - American Indian or Alaskan Native
   - Asian (3 responses)
   - Bi-racial
   - Black or African American (7 responses)
   - Hispanic/Latino (6 responses)
   - Multi-racial (1 response)
   - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   - White (17 responses)
   - Other (please specify)

3. What is your gender identity?
   - Female (24 responses)
   - Transgender
   - Male (9 responses)
   - Other (please specify) (1 did not specify)

4. Please list your recommendation(s) for a potential research participant(s)?

5. Please explain why you have identified this individual(s) as an inclusive leader.

Examples of Comments Made With Recommendations

These are all individuals who are actively attempting to become inclusive leaders on-campus through committee work, research, conference participation, working with the Office of Multicultural Affairs on inclusive practices, etc. I cannot comment on whether or not they are viewed as being inclusive, but their records indicate that they are attempting to become inclusive leaders.

Employment practices, issues with supervision, policies, and practices across the institution, involvement in activities across campus, thoughtfulness and ethics surrounding issues of inclusion.
I have identified these three individuals as inclusive leaders because I think that these individuals look at "inclusiveness" from novel and interesting angles that might be helpful to have defined in a research context.

Each of these individuals in their own unique way are committed to the principles of inclusion of diverse and often marginalized individuals in both the academic and working worlds.

Each person has an opportunity to embed Inclusive Excellence practices in the institutionalized "system(s)" they oversee. This could have a greater impact than individual acts of social justice advocacy.

She is really tuned in to issues of privilege, power, and oppression.

I have had direct contact with each of these individuals and feel confident in their character as a supporting ally.

Working with these two individuals, I have continuously noticed a commitment to inclusiveness in all forms. I believe both individuals could provide an interesting perspective, particularly since they have both been at this campus for quite some time.

They have noticed a shift towards a more inclusive environment, and it may be interesting to hear their thoughts on this.

This online survey was approved by the University of Denver's Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research on December 9, 2008.
Appendix F: Invitation Email

Dear

Through a purposeful sampling process, you have been identified as an inclusive leader at Inclusive Excellence University. As such, I would like to invite you to participate in research for my dissertation. My research seeks to answer the question of how White college administrators describe their journey to becoming an inclusive leader at a predominately White institution. Inclusive leaders are those individuals who work toward Inclusive Excellence and diversity initiatives. Ultimately, this research serves the purpose of providing college administrators with additional resources for best practices of inclusive leadership in higher education, specifically at a predominately White institution.

In selecting a population for this study, I struggled with focusing on all administrators and only focusing on White administrators. It is critical to acknowledge that, historically, administrators of color have assumed the responsibility in promoting diversity. Now the goal of Inclusive Excellence is to shift the responsibility to everyone. Accordingly, I want to further understand the experiences of White administrators who have taken on this challenge. In addition, as a White researcher, I chose to focus this study on other White individuals in an effort to continue to reflect upon my own identity and practice throughout this process.

Participation in this study should take about 90 minutes of your time during each of 3 interviews spread out across 2 to 4 weeks. Participation will involve responding to interview questions about: (1) life experiences that contributed to your success as an inclusive leader at a predominately White institution, (2) awareness of your racial identity and its impact on your practice as an inclusive leader, (3) your understanding of inclusive leadership at a predominately White institution, (4) the meaning you make from your experience as an inclusive leader. Participants will also be invited to participate in a 60-minute focus group, to make sure that your thoughts and comments have been accurately recorded. In addition, the responses from the focus group will contribute to best practices of inclusive leadership at a predominately White institution. The focus group would take place at the conclusion of all individual interviews to provide feedback and additional insights regarding the themes that emerged.

Your responses, job title, and the institution will be identified by pseudonym only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is an exciting opportunity for me and I look forward to collecting data. This research was approved by DU’s Institutional Review Board on December 9, 2008. If you have any questions about the research you can contact me at 303-871-2712 or at nlatino@du.edu. You can also contact Dr. Frank Tuitt at 303-871-4573 or at ftuitt@du.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Niki Latino, MA
Doctoral Candidate in Higher Education

This email was approved by the University of Denver’s Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research on December 9, 2008.
Appendix G: Informed Consent Form for Individual Interviews

“Unmasking Whiteness: A Framework for Understanding inclusive leadership at a Predominately White Institution.”

You are invited to participate in a study that will explore the best practices for inclusive leadership at a predominately white institution. Further, this study seeks to understand the life experiences that have contributed to inclusive leadership and how making meaning of their life experiences influences their current practice. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements for a doctoral dissertation. The study is being conducted by Niki Latino, MA. Results will be used to understand more about the best practices of inclusive leadership, as well as the personal journey of inclusive leaders at a predominately White institution. Niki Latino can be reached at 303-871-2712, nlatino@du.edu. This project is supervised by Dr. Frank Tuitt, Program Director and Assistant Professor of Higher Education, Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver, 303-871-4573, ftuitt@du.edu.

Participation in this study is expected to take about 90 minutes of your time during each of three interviews, spread across three to four weeks. Participation will involve responding to interview questions about the life experiences that contributed to your experience as an inclusive leader at a predominately White institution. In addition, questions will be asked about how your past experience has influenced your current role as an inclusive leader. Further, you will be asked questions about your practice as an inclusive leader. Finally, questions will be posed about reflecting on the meaning of your personal account and the impact on your current and future practice. Participants will also be invited to participate in a 60-minute focus group, as a means of member checking about the common themes that emerged through the individual interviews. The focus group will take place at the conclusion of the individual interview process. Participants will be asked to provide feedback on the themes that will further contribute to the best practices for inclusive leadership. Participants will be presented with a separate informed consent form that provides additional information about participation in the focus group.

Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort, you may discontinue participation at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your responses from the interviews will be identified by pseudonym only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. In addition, all identifiable information will be kept in a password secured database on the researcher’s home computer and in a secured file cabinet in the researcher’s home office. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, the researcher is required by law to report it to the proper authorities.
If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Dr. Susan Sadler, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-3454, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Sponsored Programs, at 303-871-4052, or write to either individual at the University of Denver, Office of Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign and date the following signature page if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.

I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called “Unmasking Whiteness: A Framework for Understanding Inclusive Leadership at a Predominately White Institution.” I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature __________________________________________ Date _________________

(If appropriate, the following must be added.)

___ I agree to be audiotaped.

___ I do not agree to be audiotaped.

___ I agree to be videotaped.

___ I do not agree to videotaped.

Signature __________________________________________ Date _________________

___I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to me at the following postal or e-mail address:

This consent was approved by the University of Denver’s Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research on December 9, 2008.
Appendix H: Informed Consent Form for focus group

“Unmasking Whiteness: A Framework for Understanding Inclusive Leadership at a Predominately White Institution.”

You are invited to participate in a focus group to further explore the themes that emerged through the individual interview process. The focus group will consist of individuals who participated in the interview series for this research study. In addition to a form of member-checking, this dialogue will contribute to the best practices of inclusive leadership for this doctoral dissertation. The focus group will be facilitated by Niki Latino, MA. Results will be used to understand more about the best practices of inclusive leadership at a predominately white institution. Niki Latino can be reached at 303-871-2712, nlatino@du.edu. This project is supervised by Dr. Frank Tuitt, Program Director & Assistant Professor of Higher Education, Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver 303-871-4573, ftuitt@du.edu.

Participation in this focus group should take approximately 60 minutes of your time. Participation will involve responding to questions regarding the themes that emerged from the individual interviews. Themes presented will be representative of all interviews without any reference to specific comments or identifiable information that occurred during the individual interview process. Confidentiality of your identity cannot be maintained during the focus group. However, participants in the focus group are expected to maintain the confidentiality of everyone participating. Further, all transcriptions of the focus group will be by pseudonym only, and kept separate from any identifiable data. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort, you may discontinue participation at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

As previously mentioned, your responses from the focus group will be identified by pseudonym only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. In addition, all identifiable information will be kept in a password-secured database on the researcher’s home computer and in a secured file cabinet in the researcher’s home office. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, the researcher is required by law to report it to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Dr. Susan Sadler, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-3454, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4052, or write to either individual at the University of Denver, Office of Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign the next page if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.
I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called “Unmasking Whiteness: A Framework for Understanding Inclusive Leadership at a Predominately White Institution.” I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature __________________________________________ Date ____________________

(If appropriate, the following must be added.)

___ I agree to be audiotaped.

___ I do not agree to be audiotaped.

___ I agree to be videotaped.

___ I do not agree to videotaped.

Signature _____________________ Date _________________

___ I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to me at the following postal or e-mail address:

This consent was approved by the University of Denver’s Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research on December 9, 2008.
Appendix I: Individual Interview Protocol

The purpose of the individual interview series is to co-construct the stories of 6 to 9 White college administrators’ journey to becoming a successful inclusive leader at a predominately White institution. My research questions will guide these in-depth individual conversations:

**Overall Research Question:** How do White college administrators describe their journey to becoming a successful inclusive leader at a predominately White institution?

**Primary Research Question:** What life experiences contributed to their success as inclusive leaders?

**Research Sub-Question 1:** How, if at all, do inclusive leaders make meaning of the impact of their racial identity in their current role at a predominately White institution?

**Second Primary Research Question:** How do White college administrators describe and understand the roles and responsibilities of inclusive leaders at a predominately White institution?

**Research Sub-Question 2:** What strategies do they use in an effort to promote Inclusive Excellence in their work?

**Additional considerations:** My main research question must struggle with the interrelated issues of the social construction of Whiteness, the invisibility of racial privilege at predominately White institutions, and resistance that may impact inclusive leaders who appear to work toward Inclusive Excellence.

My first meeting with each administrator will address life experiences that have contributed to their success as an inclusive leader, how the social construction of Whiteness may be impacting their role as an inclusive leader at a predominately White institution, and the influence of their family, friends, and community on their journey.

Prior to the first question, I will discuss all sections of the informed consent form with each participant including:

- The focus of my research project
- My interest in hearing their stories
- The methods used to co-construct their stories
- The rationale and significance of the study
- Issues of confidentiality
- Their rights as a research participant

**Questions During the First Interview-Focused Life History**

1. Invite each administrator to share her story about the lived experiences that have influenced her journey to becoming an inclusive leader at a predominately White institution:
   a. *Narrative beginning* that introduces (1) her life experiences that have made the construct of Whiteness visible, (2) her path to administration in higher education, and (3) her transformation into an inclusive leader:

   - Who she is: the life experiences that contributed to her recognizing Whiteness and the ways in which her racial identity has impacted her.
• What is the historical context that shaped her values and beliefs about race, and how, if at all, those values and beliefs transformed over time.
• How she came to work in administration at a predominately White institution.
• How she came to be an inclusive leader.

Transcripts from this interview will be emailed to the participants for review prior to the second interview. I will invite her feedback at the beginning of the second interview.

Questions During the Second Interview: The Details of Experience
2. Invite each administrator to share the details of her lived experience as an inclusive leader at a predominately White institution.

 b. Narrative middle that addresses the administrator making meaning of her current experience with regard to (1) inclusive leadership, (2) construction of White identity at predominately White institutions, and (3) transforming her departments into inclusive environments:
• What her experiences have been as an inclusive leader.
• What are the values and qualities that she identifies as important to inclusive leadership at a predominately White institution, as well as the relationship she sees, if any, between her racial privilege and the qualities required for success as an inclusive leader.
• What does she do on a daily basis to demonstrate inclusive leadership and what challenges does she face when working to achieve Inclusive Excellence.

Transcripts from the second interview will be emailed to the participants for review prior to the final interview. I will invite her feedback at the beginning of the final interview.

Questions During Third and Final Interview: Focus on the Meaning
3. Invite each administrator to share how she makes meaning of her White identity and her success as an inclusive leader at a predominately White institution.

 c. Narrative End that (1) targets the intellectual and emotional connections between personal and professional practice, (2) describes future action, (3) allows the story to continue:
• Given what she said about her journey to becoming an inclusive leader, how does she understand inclusive leadership in her life.
• What are her personal goals for inclusive leadership practices and what are the expectations for professional results of inclusive leadership.
• What has she learned about herself through her journey to becoming an inclusive leader and what is the impact on future practice.

Closing: Thank you for taking the time to share your story with me. I have appreciated our time together. After you review the final transcript, if you have any other experiences, thoughts, and reflections that you would like to share, please email me.

As closure to the process, I will share with each participant via email a written summary of the themes and patterns I have interpreted as emerging from her story. Further, I will invite participants to join in a focus group that will provide feedback regarding the themes that emerged
through the individual interview. The focus group will serve as an opportunity for further
dialogue about inclusive leadership at a predominately White institution. This focus group is
another means of member checking.

*This protocol was approved by the University of Denver’s Institutional Review Board
for the protection of human subjects in research on December 9, 2008.*
Appendix J: Focus Group Protocol

**Purpose:** To give participants an opportunity to provide feedback regarding the themes that emerged about inclusive leadership during the individual interview process. In addition, this focus group serves as another chance for member checking.

With the participants’ permission, this focus group will be digitally recorded (audio) to ensure accurate representation of the comments made during the dialogue. Further, the facilitator will also record thoughts on a flip chart to allow the group to react to what is noted as another means of ensuring accuracy in representation through this process.

At the focus group the following individuals will be present:

Facilitator: The principle investigator of this study will serve as the facilitator for this focus group.

Research participants: Individuals who participated in the individual interviews will be asked to participate in this focus group.

The facilitator will do the following:

- Allow the participants to introduce themselves to each other.
- Re-introduce the purpose of this focus group.
  
  Thank you for participating in this focus group to provide feedback about the themes that emerged regarding inclusive leadership at a predominately White institution. Your feedback today will further inform understanding about the process of becoming a successful inclusive leader at a predominately White institution.
- Answer any remaining questions.
- Read the following ground rules:
  
  All information that is shared in today’s dialogue should remain confidential. This means that no one should tell anyone else about the dialogue that takes place or identify who participated in this study. By honoring this agreement, we maintain the integrity of this study and the protection of each other’s identities.
  
  If you need to take a break, please feel free to leave the room at any time. When you are ready to re-join the discussion, please reenter the room.
  
  To ensure accuracy of the representation of each response, this session will be audio-taped. This means that it is important to speak one at a time so that each word is clearly recorded. In addition, I want to make sure that everyone has a chance to talk.
  
  ***The participants will have an opportunity to react to the guidelines and then to add any that the group can agree upon to make their participation in the dialogue more comfortable.

- Start tape.
- The facilitator starts the focus group.
- At the conclusion, the facilitator will ask for any final comments.
- The facilitator will thank the participants for their time and contributions to this study.

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