REMOVING THE SHADES: EXPLORING RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND COLOR-BLINDNESS OF ADOLESCENTS ENROLLED IN A SOCIAL JUSTICE TRAINING PROGRAM

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Deanna L. Burgess

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The dissertation of Deanna L. Burgess was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Diandra J. Prescod  
Assistant Professor of Education (Counselor Education)  
Dissertation Adviser  
Chair of Committee

Julia Bryan  
Associate Professor of Education (Counselor Education)

Alexandra List  
Assistant Professor of Education (Educational Psychology)

Ashley Patterson  
Assistant Professor of Education (Curriculum and Instruction)

Carlos Zalaquett  
Professor of Education (Counselor Education)  
Professor in Charge of Counselor Education
Abstract

It is important that youth involved in social justice advocacy and allyship have a developed awareness of racial identity and ideology. The purpose of this study was to examine changes in students’ racial identity development and color-blind ideology for high school students participating in a social justice training program. Theoretical assumptions of racial identity and ideological development were grounded in Helms’ White Racial Identity Development model and informed by Bonilla-Silva’s Color-Blind Ideology framework. The study investigated racial identity and color-blind attitudes for high school adolescents who participated in a semester-long social justice training program. The analytical sample included 42 adolescents (15-19 years old) of various racial backgrounds. Repeated measures ANOVAs on pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest were used to examine changes in racial identity and color-blind ideology over time. Group differences (race and previous training) were also examined. Results revealed significant main effects for racial identity and color-blind attitudes across program completion. Significant main effects and significant interaction effects for race and previous training were also observed. Findings demonstrate that participation in a social justice training program can promote racial identity development and ideological awareness for adolescent peer allies. Implications for practice, counselor education training, and future research recommendations are discussed.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Schools are a primary context for facilitating adolescents’ intellectual and socio-emotional growth (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). As such, school success is most often measured by an institution’s ability to foster academic, social, and emotional development among diverse youth. Accordingly, understanding students’ perceptions of and experiences related to school climate has become a critical feat in more precisely conceptualizing school success (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey & Alessandro, 2013; Wang & Degol, 2016). Further, beyond recognizing the function of school climate in predicting adolescent gains among all student groups (Thapa et al., 2013), researchers have also demonstrated a clear association between social identity and subsequent ratings of perceived school climate (Voight, Hanson, O’Malley & Adekanye, 2015). Specifically, students of color generally rank indicators of school climate as relatively low, when compared to rankings of White students (Konold, Cornell, Shukla, & Huang, 2017).

When social conditions are antagonistic, school setting can significantly thwart a youth’s cognitive and affective development (Wang & Eccles, 2012). One strategy for improving diverse youths’ experiences of school climate is to engage students in student-led interventions, such as mobilizing youth as peer allies through peer counseling, peer mediation, or peer advocacy. Such opportunities allow students to actively recognize and interrupt environmental deficits, and to build rapport across their student body (Sherer & Nickerson, 2010). Within school contexts where racialized issues are at the core of threats to students’ perceptions of safety and belonging (Lacoe, 2015), peer allies must effectually recognized both individual and structural biases that are present (McDaniel, 2017). This recognition requires a healthy understanding of one’s own racial identity and ascribed ideologies, as well as an awareness of underlying justice paradigms (Edwards, 2006).
As a result of ongoing segregation across educational institutions, White students often assume such peer support roles. Many White youth who take on allyship roles, however, receive no formal training related to tenets of social justice. Consequently, they are more likely to adopt problematic racial schemas when negotiating sociopolitical content, perpetuating feelings of marginalization for students experiencing negative school climates and resulting in ineffective advocacy (Swalwell, 2013). Considering this, there is an apparent need for training programs that promote racial and ideological development in order for engaged White youth to identify systems of oppression, which they have been socialized to overlook (Kawecka Nenga, 2011).

The present study aimed to address this gap by developing a training intervention, which centered racial identity and ideological development as a primary agent in preparing youth to assume peer allyship roles within their school settings. While the overall aim of the project is to foster a more favorable school climate for all students in general, and students of color in particular, the present study focuses specifically on the efficacy of the training intervention in promoting racial identity development and ideological awareness among adolescent participants.

**Statement of the Problem**

Research has long explored the multifarious challenges faced by Black and Latino/Hispanic youth within academic settings in efforts to address performance disparities between these populations and White youth (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Chavous, Bernat, Schmeelk-Cone… & Zimmerman, 2003; Constantine, Erikson, Banks & Timberlake, 1998; Farahmand, Grant, Polo & Duffy, 2011; Kenny, Gualdron, Scanlon… & Jernigan, 2007; Paik & Walberg, 2007). Factors such as low school funding, high student-teacher class ratios, and limited availability of qualified staff are frequently referenced as substantive issues that negatively influence academic success for students of color (Banerjee, 2016; Constantine et al., 2007; Peske & Haycock, 2006; Reardon, 2016). However, while education research has
traditionally focused heavily on concrete indicators that contribute to differential academic outcomes, more recent scholarship has expanded its scope. Indeed, rather than measuring a school’s success based merely on standardized assessment scores, schools are now seen as multidimensional in needing to promote academic development as well as socio-emotional growth. As such, socio-emotional measures are being utilized more frequently within academic settings in order to adjunctively assess student progress and explain outcome disparities. For this reason, school climate has become a primary construct in further elucidating the academic experiences of young scholars as well as in explaining disparate differences in student outcomes across race and other student demographics (Thapa et al., 2013).

School climate is one variable that helps to explicate the experiences of youth within and across demographical characteristics. This construct is represented across three main facets of students’ socio-emotional experiences: sense of belonging, feelings of connectedness, and perceived safety within one’s school context (Wang & Degol, 2016). In general, various experiences within school contexts influence students’ ratings of perceived school climate, such as the nature of interactions with peers and school personnel, and subjective evaluations of the cultural and institutional school community (Thapa et al., 2013; Wang & Degol, 2016). Moreover, school climate is a predictive variable in helping to explain academic, behavioral, and psychological outcomes for all students (Brand et al., 2008; Eccles & Poeser, 2011; Thapa et al., 2013; Wang & Degol, 2016). Ultimately, investigating school climate is useful in working to: a) understand the association between socio-emotional experiences and academic outcomes, and b) identify effective strategies that promote a more affirmative school experience across student groups.
Racial differences in perceived school climate have been well documented, with Black and Latino/Hispanic youth commonly reporting less favorable experiences within school contexts when compared to White and Asian students (Cook, Purdie-Vaughns, Garcia & Cohen, 2012; Konold et al., 2017; Shukla, Konold & Cornell, 2016; Voight et al., 2015; Yang & Anyon, 2016). Further, school climate has demonstrated a cyclical impact on the development of students of color. As such, adverse conditions within school environments, which disproportionately target Black and Latino/Hispanic youth, are often attributed to relatively lower ratings of school climate (Voight et al., 2015). In turn, differences in school perceptions tend to have more severe implications for students of color beyond the general effect of climate (Cook et al., 2012; Shirley & Cornell, 2012). Factors most frequently attributed to decreased perceptions of climate among Black and Latino/Hispanic youth include discriminatory institutional practices and experiences with bias-based bullying and harassment (Byrd, 2015; Greytak, Kosciw, Villenas & Giga, 2016; Voight et al., 2015).

**Institutional Discrimination.** Inequitable institutional practices are one set of factors that influence school climate disparities across racial student groups (Konold et al., 2017; Pena-Shaff, Bessette-Symons, Tate & Fingerhut, 2019; Seaton et al., 2009; Thapa et al., 2013). Black and Latino/Hispanic youth repeatedly indicate discriminatory practices within their school placements in which students are provided differential treatment in a range of scholarly domains based on race (Byrd, 2015; Pena-Shaff et al., 2019). Further, a strong negative association exists between perception of differential treatment and student ratings of school climate (Hope, Skoog & Jagers, 2015; Thompson & Gregory, 2011). Expressions of institutional discrimination that are most frequently associated with compromised school climate ratings are categorized as: a) biased policies and procedures, involving inequitable tracking and grade retention practices as well as
disciplinary processes that disproportionately target students of color, and b) disparities in access to educational opportunities across student race.

Black and Latino/Hispanic youth are at greater risk of experiencing institutional discrimination associated with bias-based policies and procedures (Konold et al., 2017; Lacoe, 2015; Voight et al., 2015). Tracking practices is one such example of discriminatory school procedures, which creates inequity by differentially assigning racial student groups into low- and high-tiered classes (Grissom & Redding, 2015). That is, Black and Latino/Hispanic students are significantly more likely to be tracked into lower tiered courses than are White students, despite their academic aptitude (Lleras, 2008). Indeed, according to education data provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Black youth constitute the lowest percentage of students enrolled in advanced placement or international baccalaureate (IB) courses for any racial group (8%), including White (16%) and Asian (40%) students (de Brey et al., 2019). Further, in 2016, Black and Latino students tied for the highest enrollment in low-tiered math (24%) and science (50%) courses, while Asian and White students maintained highest percentages of enrollment in high-tiered math (45% and 18%, respectively) and science (40% and 16%, respectively) courses (de Brey et al., 2019).

In the same manner, students of color experience high rates of grade retention compared to their White and Asian peers, an additional contributor to low perceptions of school climate (Irwin et al., 2016; Koth, Bradshaw & Lead, 2008). On average, Black and Latino/Hispanic students are nearly twice as likely to be retained during primary or secondary school than are White youth, even when controlling for a range of factors such as rates of student poverty and school urbanicity (de Brey et al., 2019; Irwin et al., 2016; Peguero, Varela, Marchbanks, Blake, & Eason, 2018). Moreover, Peguero and colleagues (2018) concluded that, specifically within
majority White school settings, students of color held significantly higher rates of retention when compared to White students.

Discriminatory discipline practices is an additional moderator of low school climate ratings, as Black and Latino/Hispanic students on average receive disproportionately high frequencies of disciplinary infractions when compared to White youth (Bottiani et al., 2016; de Brey et al., 2019). Black youth in particular are up to four times more likely to receive disciplinary referrals than are White youth (de Brey et al., 2019; Office of Civil Rights, 2016). Specifically during the 2015 school year, Black adolescents constituted the highest percentage of students who received one or more out-of-school suspensions, at 13.7 percent, in comparison to White (3.4%) and Asian (1.1%) students (de Brey et al., 2019). In one analysis of disciplinary practice frequencies for 58 high schools, researchers noted that over 90% of schools that were sampled suspended Black students at significantly higher rates than White students (Bottiani et al., 2016). Similarly, Hispanic/Latino youth are up to two times more likely to be suspended from school than are White youth (Morris & Perry, 2016).

Beyond encountering bias-based policies and practices, youth of color often experience disparities in access to educational opportunities (Chapman, 2014; Marx, 2008). Specifically, students of color are frequently less likely to be identified for scholastic opportunities, including participating in academic endeavors and receiving quality services from counselors and other support personnel (Bottiani et al., 2016; Hope et al., 2015; Marx, 2008; Maurizi, Ceballo, Epstein-Ngo & Cortina, 2013; Seaton et al., 2009; Voight et al., 2015). To illustrate, Voight and colleagues (2015) noted that Black and Latino/Hispanic students were offered significantly fewer opportunities for meaningful participation within their school context compared to their White peers. Similarly, students of color attending one predominantly White high school asserted that
school counselors frequently recommended them for less rigorous courses and set lower expectations or their academic and long-term success than with White students (Chapman, 2014). In similar fashion, Francis and colleagues (2019) observed that strong academic transcripts with Black female names were 20% less likely to be recommended for AP courses by their school counselor than were transcripts with neutral names. Conversely, academic transcripts with White female names were three percentage points more likely to be recommended than were neutral names. Further, for strong and weak transcripts, those with a Black female identifiers received lowest ratings of preparedness for advanced coursework compared to those with White and male names.

Accessibility to scholastic opportunities can also be measured indirectly by the percentage of racial student groups that enroll in post-secondary institutions (National Academics of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019). Indeed, this indicator provides additional evidence of considerable educational inequities between White students and students of color. Specifically, immediate college enrollment rates differ significantly based on race. As such, 71% of White students enrolled in a degree-granting college or university immediately following high school completion in 2016, compared to 56% of Black students (de Brey et al., 2019). Moreover, while immediate college enrollment rates have grown steadily over the past decade for White youth, this indicator has decreased by ten percentage points between 2010 and 2016 for Black students, and continues to be the lowest percentage of enrollment for any racial group.

Discriminatory practices that disproportionally target Black and Latino/Hispanic students have a strong association to low perceptions of school climate (Bottiani et al., 2016; Pena-Shaff et al., 2019; Shukla et al., 2016). For instance, Shukla and colleagues (2016) have
connected disciplinary processes to school climate perceptions by suggesting that youth of color who perceive schools to have less equitable disciplinary practices also report less positive school climate. Similarly, Bottiani et al. (2016) demonstrated that perceptions of educational institutions as unequal were strongly linked to Black students’ low ratings of school climate. Structural discrimination may influence low school climate perceptions across student groups of color by inhibiting students from trusting educational institutions and causing students to regard school environments as adversarial (Helibrun, Cornell & Konold, 2018; Konold et al., 2017). Similarly, perceptions of bias in specific domains can compel students to perceive the school as a whole as unfair or unsupportive, thus lowering school climate ratings (Bottiani et al., 2016).

**Bias-Based Targeting.** While discriminatory practices are often concealed within performative processes of an institution, high prevalence of bias-based targeting during interpersonal exchanges is also reported by youth of color (Bottiani et al., 2016; Hope et al., 2015; Lacoe, 2015). Black and Latino/Hispanic youth report regular encounters with peers and school staff in which their racial identity is directly and indirectly denigrated (Goldweber, Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2013; Greytak et al., 2016). Further, exposure to bias-based targeting within educational institutions has been strongly associated with unfavorable school climate ratings for youth of color (Voight et al., 2015). Such adverse experiences are often in the form of discriminatory interactions with school personnel as well as bias-based bullying and harassment from peers.

Students of color have reported significantly high rates of teacher-initiated stereotyping and discrimination based on race (Douglass & Umaña-Taylor, 2017; Hope et al., 2015; Pena-Shaff et al., 2019). As an example, Pena-Shaff and colleagues (2019) sampled a large population of diverse high school students and noted that Black students were significantly more likely than
White and Asian student to perceive negative differential treatment based on student race. Similarly, students often describe witnessing discriminatory exchanges between students of color and school personnel (Riel, 2019). For instance, about 15% of students in one sample indicated hearing teachers and school staff make negative remarks about a students’ race (Greytak et al., 2016).

Most frequent experiences of discrimination for youth of color involve bias-based interactions with peers (Greytak et al., 2016). Over 135,000 youth reported bias-based harassment and bullying during the 2015-2016 school year, with nearly a quarter of these incidences concerning a student’s race (U.S. Department of Education (DOE), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), 2018). Likewise, one study noted that more than 1 in 3 youth indicated witnessing bias-based harassment within their schools, with over 15% specifically reporting race as the target (Russel, Sinclair, Poteat & Koenig, 2012). In line with racial patterns, Black and Latino/Hispanic students experience higher incidences of biased-based bullying and harassment compared to other racial/ethnic student groups (Goldweber et al., 2013; Mendez, Bauman, Sulkowski, Davis & Nixon, 2016; Musu, Zhang, Wang, Zhang, & Oudekerk, 2019; U.S. DOE, OCR, 2018; Russel et al., 2012). According to data collected by the Office of Civil Rights (2018), Black youth made up the largest percentage of students who reported bullying related to race at 35%, with Hispanic/Latino students accounting for the next largest category of reports (20%). In addition, a higher percentage of students of color in rural areas, where the populace of Black families tend to be low, report being bullied in school (27%) compared to those in urban communities (18%) (Musu et al., 2019).

Encountering bias-based targeting was found to predict students’ ratings of school climate, as Black students who indicated higher rates of discrimination and bullying also held
less favorable perceptions of school communities (Pena-Shaff et al., 2019). Targeted bias-based bullying impacts students’ ratings of school climate by posing a direct and anticipated threat to students’ physical and emotional wellbeing and, ultimately, diminishing the safety experienced by students (Cook et al., 2012; Lacoe, 2015). Further, instances of bias-based targeting also lower students’ morale and sense of belonging within the community, direct predictors of school climate ratings (Wang & Degol, 2016).

Adverse conditions within school contexts, which disproportionately target Black and Latino/Hispanic youth, occur across school urbanicity as well as within high and low diversity schools (Chapman, 2014). However, the argument can be made that such experiences often pose a greater degree of risk for students of color who attend majority White schools (Carter, 2010; Lleras, 2008). This may be because Black and Latino/Hispanic students are less likely to have trusting allies and are more likely to experience race-based bias due to limited opportunities for cross-cultural interaction (Riel, 2019; Salerno & Reynolds, 2017). This may also be due to the fact that White advocates in predominantly White communities are less aware of potential inequities that are experienced by students of color as a result of social distancing (Bottiani et al., 2016). Either way, it is well documented that over-exposure to antagonistic school climate contexts can have negative outcomes for short- and long-term development of marginalized students.

**Associated Outcomes of Low School Climate.** In general, students who report low ratings of school climate relative to their peers are less likely to exhibit healthy adjustment related to academic and socio-emotional development (Sulak, 2016; Thapa et al., 2013; Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, & West-Bey, 2009). For students of color, unfavorable academic and socio-emotional outcomes can be exacerbated by ongoing exposure to antagonistic school
environments, most often in relation to institutional discrimination and bias-based targeting (Kotok et al., 2016; Thompson & Gregory, 2011; Voight et al., 2015). Moreover, negative school climate perceptions are linked specifically to less favorable outcomes in: academic disposition, academic performance, externalizing symptoms, and psychosocial wellbeing.

On average, ratings of perceived school climate are associated with characteristics of one’s academic disposition, marked by a variety of indicators such as academic attitudes, school engagement, and school attendance. (Byrd, 2015; Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Maurizi et al., 2013; Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Academic attitudes are related to students’ motivation, expectations, and self-evaluation, and often influence short- and long-term performance (Maurizi et al., 2013). Black and Latino students who report less favorable climate perceptions also reported lower motivation to complete scholastic tasks and decreased expectancy of one’s academic aptitude (Byrd, 2015; Cook et al., 2012). Indeed, Seaton et al. (2009) noted that students of color who described less favorable school environments also indicated lower levels of self-esteem when compared to youth who did not share such adverse experiences. An additional indicator of diminished academic disposition includes decreased school engagement, as Black students in one study who experienced adverse school climates demonstrated significantly lower classroom engagement during the following academic school year (Thompson & Gregory, 2011). In like manner, students of color experiencing a negative school climate are at an increased risk of expressing disinterest in school-related tasks (Cook et al., 2012; Dotterer, McHale & Crouter, 2009). Finally, Black and Latino/Hispanic students who experience adverse school contexts also have a higher likelihood of missing school or dropping out (Kotok et al., 2016; Lacoe, 2015).

Over the past two decades, dropout rates among Latino/Hispanic (28%) and White (7%) high
school youth have reached a 21 percent difference (de Brey et al., 2019). A similar difference in dropout rates has also occurred between Black (13%) and White (7%) youth.

Not surprisingly, students of color who demonstrate low academic dispositions as a result of negative school climate experiences are also more likely to exhibit lower scores on academic indicators, such as grades, GPA, and standardized test scores (Byrd, 2015; Cook et al., 2012; Voight et al., 2015; Wang & Degol, 2016; Wang & Holcombe, 2010; Yang et al., 2016). National education statistics reveal a 30-point White-Black achievement gap in standardized math scores for secondary students (de Brey et al., 2019). Similar patterns exist for reading score differences with White secondary students scoring 30 points higher than Black students and 20 points higher than White students during the 2015-2016 school-year (de Brey et al., 2019). Further, Voight et al. (2015) examined associations between school climate and academic achievement across racial groups, and concluded that schools with a larger Black-White gap in student ratings of school climate also exhibited larger Black-White achievement gaps. Similarly, Cook and colleagues (2012) described a link between Black and Latino students’ climate ratings and their academic performance over time, as students with low rating indicators of school climate also maintained lower academic scores over the course of their academic careers.

An additional consequence that has been associated with low perceptions of school climate among students of color is a higher prevalence of externalized symptoms, including physical altercations and engagement in risky behaviors (Bottiani et al., 2016; Konold et al., 2017; Shirley, 2012; Shukla et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2016). Shukla and colleagues (2016) noted that Black students in their study who reported more adverse academic environments also held higher frequencies of discipline referrals. Similarly, according to Yang et al., (2016), Black and Latino/Hispanic students who reported lower school climate ratings were also at higher risk for
engaging in risky behaviors such as physical altercations and substance use. Indeed, a higher percentage of Black (13%) and Latino/Hispanic (9%) high school students reported that they had been in a physical altercation on school property during the 2015-2016 school-year than did White (6%) youth (de Brey et al., 2019).

Finally, perceptions of school climate among Black and Latino/Hispanic youth have also been associated with students’ psychosocial wellbeing (Cook et al., 2012; Foster et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2016). Psychosocial wellbeing among students of color with low climate perceptions includes increased symptoms of anxiety as well as decreased life satisfaction and emotional regulation (Maurizi et al., 2013; Seaton et al., 2009). Maurizi and colleagues (2013) found that Latino/Hispanic youth who reported less favorable perceptions of belonging within their school community also demonstrated elevated levels of depression. It is apparent that significant, multifaceted intervention is required in order to buttress the effects of school climate experiences for minoritized youth.

**Considerations for Intervention.** Teacher and counselor preparation programs in higher education have begun to adopt a top-down approach to interrupt discriminatory practices that disproportionately target Black and Latino/Hispanic students attending by embedding social justice ideology into their curricula (Paone, Malott, & Barr, 2015; Peters, Margolin, Fragnoli & Bloom, 2016; Theoharis, 2010; Utt & Tochlk, 2016). These efforts have served two purposes, with the first being to establish a greater understanding of racial relations within academic contexts. Secondly, these efforts have begun to introduce strategies of social change among school personnel (Beare, Caldwell, & Millikan, 2018; Chang, Anagnostopoulos, & Omae, 2011). Indeed, Chang and colleagues (2011) point out that after engaging in a series of service learning sessions, pre-service teachers demonstrated sizable growth in their awareness of bias and in
cross-cultural competence. However, these outcomes may have limited transferal effects on student populations (Agarwal, Epstein, Oppenheim, Oyler, & Sonu, 2010). Such finite effects could be due in part to the inherent difficulty of impacting an entire school climate through macro-level interventions (Agarwal et al., 2010).

Incorporating micro-level initiatives within the school context is one alternative approach in working to foster a more just milieu among secondary educational institutions. Enlisting students as peer supports, including individuals who take on the role of peer mentor, peer mediator, or peer advocate, has been a successful approach in allowing youth to support their peers in a variety of matters, including conflict mediation, academic tutoring, and promotion of pro-social behaviors (Blad, 2014; Collins, Hawkins, & Flowers, 2018; Dunn, Shelnut, Ryan & Katsiyannis, 2017; Katz, Heisterkamp, & Fleming, 2011; McWilliams, 2010). While many peer support programs enlist students to support the needs of the general student body, a select subset of social justice peer ally programs work to influence systematic, equitable change within their school environment (Kawecka Nenga, 2011).

Social justice peer supports include individuals from privileged groups who work alongside their peers from marginalized populations in order to disrupt formal and informal systems of oppression (Edwards, 2006). Within secondary school settings, this most often includes White adolescents assuming the role of peer ally. Similar to teacher training programs, however, these initiatives may not elicit change to their full potential (Kawecka Nenga, 2011; Swalwell, 2013; Wernick, 2012).

Having a desire to engage in social justice work is not fully sufficient, as White youth, in particular, also require intervention that expands their racial awareness and challenges ideologies embedded in bias. Indeed, White individuals may find it challenging to see themselves as racial
beings due to a lack of racial socialization within their immediate environments (Brown, Alabi, Huynh & Masten, 2011; Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009). For White adolescents pursuing social justice peer allyship, having an unexplored racial identity impedes their abilities to more fully engage in racial discourse and provide adequate advocacy (Gaztambide-Fernández, & Howard, 2013; Kawecka Nenga, 2011; Swalwell, 2013). To that end, transformational learning opportunities can allow youth a more comprehensive understanding of the issues that they aim to impact (Gaztambide-Fernández, & Howard, 2013; Kawecka Nenga, 2011; Swalwell, 2013; Umaña-Taylor, Douglass, Updegradd & Marsiglia, 2018).

Social justice training programs, such as integrated racial dialogue in classroom curricula (Anagnostopoulos, Everett, & Carey, 2013; Brown, Bloome, Morris, Power-Carter & Willis, 2017; Williamson, 2017), module lessons for youth who engage in volunteer initiatives (Kawecka Nenga, 2011; Suyemoto, Day, & Schwartz, 2015), and other formal interventions that expose adolescents to racial and social justice discourse (Cammarota & Romero, 2011; Tauriac, Kim, Lambe Sariñana, Tawa & Kahn, 2013; Wernick, 2012), have been employed to increase adolescents’ awareness of racialized and social justice matters. These approaches have yielded moderate success in exposing White youth to more complex understandings of racial and socio-political content (Brown et al., 2017; Kawecka Nenga, 2011; Suyemoto et al., 2015). One limitation is that a majority of these initiatives do not supplement subject matter with skills-based modules for practical application. Furthermore, most do not exceed precursory introductions of White racial identity and ideology (Kawecka Nenga, 2011; Swalwell, 2013).

Although there is a growing body of research on White identity development (Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009; Helms, 2007; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2018; Zucker & Patterson, 2018), which includes an emphasis on color-blind ideology (Apfelbaum, Norton, & Sommers, 2012;
Neville, Awad, Brooks, Flores & Blumel, 2013; Thomann & Suyemoto, 2018), little is known about the influence of social justice training programs on racial identity and ideological development among high-school students. The current study addresses this knowledge gap by exploring whether a training intervention could be successful in fostering racial identity development and increased awareness of color-blind ideology for youth who engage in a social justice allyship program.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to 1) explore changes in White racial identity for White youth engaged in a social justice training program (SJTP), 2) examine changes in racial identity and adherence to color-blind ideology for racially diverse adolescents participating in a SJTP, and 3) investigate whether differences existed between racial groups and students with previous social justice training versus those with no previous training. This convergent mixed methods study uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the three variables of interest. A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to examine changes in variables of interest over time and across participant race. In addition, a-priori qualitative themes were utilized in order to further inform conclusions from quantitative analysis. While not investigated directly, the ultimate goal of this social justice training program was to mitigate discriminatory-based challenges by training a select group of high school youth to take on peer allyship roles within their school.

**Research Questions**

RQ1. What are the associations among variables of interest (White racial identity, color-blindness, and racial identity)?

RQ2. Do within group differences exist across time among White participants in White racial identity, based on participation in a social justice training program?
RQ3. Do between group differences exist in racial identity based on participation in a social justice training program? Specifically, do differences exist in racial identity from pretest to posttest and delayed posttest? Do differences exist in racial identity across race? Do differences exist in racial identity from pretest to posttest and delayed posttest across race?

RQ4. Do between group differences exist in color-blindness, based on participation in a social justice training program? Specifically, do differences exist in color-blindness from pretest to posttest and delayed posttest? Do differences exist in color-blindness across race? Do differences exist in color-blindness from pretest to posttest and delayed posttest across race?

RQ5. What are students’ perceptions of the social justice training program?

Significance of Study

Racial identity is a feature of one’s self that differentially defines the lived experience of all groups within society (Miller-Cotto & Byrnes, 2016; Rivas-Drake, Seaton, Markstrom… & Ethnic and Racial Identity in the 21st Century Study Group, 2014a; Rivas-Drake, Syed, Umaña-Taylor & Ethnic and Racial Identity in the 21st Century Study Group, 2014b). While race has been socialized as a universal characteristic within U.S. culture, not all racial groups are analogous in their understand or experience of the impact of race. Further, such higher order thinking of racial identity and its social implications is often examined during adolescence and early adulthood, as this marks a developmental period when individuals begin to acquire both concrete and abstract ways of understanding their socially constructed selves (Loyd & Gaither, 2018; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014a; 2014b; Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, Bámaca-Gómez, 2004).

Research suggests that racial identity development does not occur uniformly across racial groups, however, as by the time they reach adolescence, White youth are significantly less conscious of their racial identities, in comparison to youth of color (Brown et al., 2011; Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009). Despite this, few scholars have formally examined how
White adolescents come into awareness of their racial selves, and how this awareness implicates one’s social ideology (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2018; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Exploring processes of White racial identity development among high school youth engaged in a social justice training program contributes to the literature in three critical ways. First, the current study informs research approaches for counselor educators and school counselors who assess the identity development of White adolescents and adults as they engage with racial discourse. Second, the structure of this study may provide a framework for programmatic approaches for school counselors working to integrate social justice into their school communities. Finally, outcomes of the study can help to inform educators and administrators of curricular approaches for K-12 students.

The American Counseling Association and the American School Counseling Association have declared that counselors have an obligation to ensure equity within the communities that they serve through advocacy and other social justice efforts (ASCA, 2012; Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2016). In 2009, Manivong Ratts presented social justice as the “fifth force” of counseling, further emphasizing the professional duty that counselors have to infuse justice efforts as standard practice. As a result, counseling scholarship has aimed to educate counseling trainees on social justice tenets and encourage school counselors to integrate social justice efforts within their school communities (Burnes & Singh, 2010; Lemberger & Hutchison, 2014; McMahan, Singh, Urbano & Haston, 2010; Ockerman & Mason, 2012; Presseau, Luu, Inman & DeBlaere, 2019; Ratts et al., 2016). In particular, school counselors have been emboldened to engage K-12 students in advocacy and activism (Dixon, Tucker & Clark, 2010; Feldwisch & Whiston, 2015; Marbley, Malott, Flaherty & Frederick, 2011). The
current study adds to this expansive literature by outlining a program that utilizes school-based counselors in directly engaging youth in social justice initiatives.

Developing and employing social justice efforts often falls on the responsibility of the school counselor within K-12 settings (Dixon et al., 2010; Marbley et al., 2011). Indeed, school counselors have begun to utilize peer-driven initiatives to support school climate efforts in recent years, engaging youth in peer management interventions, peer advocate initiatives, and peer mediation programs, to name a few (Dart, Collins, Klingbeil, & McKinley, 2014; McWilliam, 2010; Midgett & Doumas, 2016; Sherer & Nickerson, 2010). Further, while school counselors often endorse student-driven initiatives in efforts to cultivate a positive school climate (Sherer et al., 2010), they are much less likely to report competence in topics related to race and social justice (Chao, 2013). Since school counselors may not acquire sufficient training to facilitate justice-related initiatives (Bemak & Chung, 2008; Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butler, Collins & Mason, 2009), they can feel ill prepared to identify and address the emotional reactions that often accompany racial and social justice discourse (Brown et al., 2017; Chao, 2013; Rothman, Malott, & Paone, 2012). Through regular journaling, participants of the present study will be asked to reflect on the cognitive and emotional reactions that surface as they engage in the training. The thematic analysis of such processing may provide insight for school counselors and counselor educators who aim to take on similar endeavors. First, it can help facilitators to better prepare to guide student processing. In addition, it can allow them to normalize such reactions as they present within the training.

Social justice approaches are becoming more integrated within counseling curriculum. However, many White counselors in particular continue to lack competence in responding to the emotionality of racial discourse (Chao, 2013; King, Borders & Jones, 2019; Rothman et al.,
Chao (2013) reported that White counselor trainees test significantly lower on multicultural counseling competencies than do trainees of color when both groups have been exposed to at least one course on multiculturalism. Many other counselor educators have evaluated the social justice and cultural competence of White counselor trainees and have concluded that these students often require advance multicultural training in order to confront privilege and biased ideologies (Chao, 2013; Paone et al., 2015). While the present study does not investigate counselor trainees specifically, its framework may also provide a template for training White counselors in social justice and racial content.

Similarly, White adolescent and adults tend to exhibit similar emotional and reactions when they lack experience engaging in racial discourse, including defensiveness, disengagement, and guilt (Brown et al., 2017; King et al., 2019; Paone et al., 2015; Watt, Curtis, Drummond… & Rosas, 2009). However, it is not clear what mental and emotional processes underlie these reactions (King et al., 2019; Rothman et al., 2012). By examining the processing that participants in the present study employ as they matriculate through the social justice training program, counselor educators may also garner valuable insight into the mental progression of counselor trainees as they engage with social justice and multicultural content.

The current project may also provide valuable considerations for educators and administrators. Similar to the call for counselors, K-12 educators and administrators have also been challenged to incorporate social justice principles into general academic curriculum (Kumashiro, 2015; Dover, 2009). This has presented some challenges for educators working to broach provocative topics with students who hold varied worldviews and beliefs (Dover, 2013). The present study may be useful in providing a training template for large groups of adolescent students to explore racial selves within the context of education. Moreover, this research can
provide a rationale for the utility of engaging youth in racial discourse by demonstrating processes of identity development and awareness that occur as a result of participation.
Definition of Key Terms

*Color-blind ideology*

Ideology is defined in social science research as the schemas and beliefs that one holds regarding a particular phenomenon or set of phenomena (Shelby, 2003). Given this, diversity ideology includes the nature of endorsing social identity paradigms, ascription to these paradigms, and the ways in which ascription to various paradigms informs ones awareness and understanding of social justice matters (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). Two primary schools of thought exist within diversity ideologies, including multiculturalism ideology and color-blind ideology (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). In general, *color-blind ideology* is grounded in diversity ideology and is defined as a set of beliefs and actions that work to amplify cross-group similarities and deemphasize distinctions between social groups (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). This definition is grounded in the designation of color-blind ideology as a branch of diversity ideology.

A variant understanding of color-blind ideology is grounded in critical race theory. In this way, color-blind ideology can also be understood as a racial framework based on the superficial extension of the principles of liberalism to racial matters that results in “raceless” explanations for race-related affairs (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). This definition is employed by Bonilla-Silva (2018) in order to rationalize the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dispositions of various individuals in regard to racial matters. This final definition of color-blind ideology is employed in the present study to understand how individuals evolve in their awareness and posture towards racism and racial matters. To that end, racism is understood as a “network of relations at social, political, economic, and ideological levels that shapes the life chances of various races” (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011).
People of color

Presently, the U.S. Census Bureau maintains five racial categorizations, White American, Black or African American, Asian American, Native American and Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. The common nomenclature of *people of color* represents members of any racial group that are not categorized as White (Smelser, Wilson, & Mitchell, 2001). The term was originally introduced to refer to individuals’ darker complexion skin tone, which differed from the fair skin tone of individuals labeled as White. This early terminology of people of color was created due to the fact that skin tone has historically been used as the primary means of distinguishing across racial groups within the United States (Haney-López, 2006).

The phrase ‘people of color’ is frequently used synonymously with “racial minority,” as both terms are used as a label for non-White racial groups. Further, grounded in critical Whiteness theory is the notion that various racial groups experience differential degrees of marginalization based on their social hierarchical position within society, with White at the top of the hierarchy and black at the opposite end (Smelser et al., 2001, p. 250). Therefore, because this terminology is used to not only describe phenotypic characteristics of groups but also social statuses, people of color is generally understood as groups with lower status. When investigating outcomes across domains of society, Black and Latino/Hispanic racial groups most often exhibit lower scores on indicators of success than other minoritized racial groups, including Asian and Pacific Islander. This especially holds true for the domain of education. Therefore, because the present study is particularly interested in addressing racial group disparities related to education contexts, ‘people of color’ is used to exclusively define individuals belonging to Black and Latino/Hispanic racial groups.
Racial identity

The construct of race is most commonly defined in scholarship as a social construct determined by physical characteristics, including skin tone, facial features, hair texture, and stature (Haney-López, 2006). Thus, in its simplest form, racial identity is described as the categorization of self and others according to assumed race, as well as the degree of awareness and affinity that one holds in relation to the ascribed racial category (Smelser et al., 2001). Further, while scholars do not ascribe to uncommonly endorsed biological understanding of racial identity, where race is argued to be rooted in genetic markers and determine predisposed differences across groups, racial identity is often, at a minimum, defined in the United States by one’s country of origin, namely Africa, Europe, Asia or Latin America (Smelser et al., 2001).

Grounded in social identity theory, racial identity is delineated as a social identity category that groups individuals based on contrived physiological markers, primarily including skin tone, hair texture, facial features, and stature (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Based on this premise, race is understood as the principle means of categorization for peoples within the United States context. Thusly, racial identity is arbitrarily determined based on categorization of self and others into particular groups based on assumed markers (Leonardo, 2009; Omi & Winant, 2015).

An additional branch of social identity theory examines racial identity as it relates to a society’s tendency to establish hierarchies across social groups and allocate resources to groups based on these socially accepted hierarchical arrangements (Haney-López, 2006). In line with this perspective is Helms’ definition of racial identity, which recognizes race as a social group socially accepted by all members of society. This premise describes racial identity as the practice of differentially allocating resources on the basis of superficial hierarchy, and a group
response to the access of these capital resources (Helms, 1990). This final definition of racial identity is used in the present study in order to understand how social justice paradigms influence one’s awareness of such differential allocation of resources.

**School climate**

School climate is a construct used to characterize psychosocial experiences of youth within school contexts. School climate is defined broadly as “the quality and character of school life” (National School Climate Council, 2007), The National School Climate Council (2007) also provides a more detailed thesis of the construct of school climate in their description of what they identify as ‘sustained school climate’:

A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributive, and satisfying life in a democratic society. This climate includes norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe. People are engaged and respected. Students, families and educators work together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision. Educators model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the benefits of, and satisfaction from, learning. Each person contributes to the operations of the school as well as the care of the physical environment. (p. 4)

School climate generally includes three main facets of students’ socio-emotional experiences: sense of belonging, feelings of connectedness, and perceived safety within one’s school environment. Other empirical evaluations of school climate have also assessed it by investigating sense of support, willingness to engage, and perceived attachment to aspects of the school environment (Bottiani, Bradshaw, & Mendelson, 2016; Konold et al., 2017; Kotok, Ikoma, & Bodovski, 2016; Wang & Holcombe, 2010). In general, school climate reflects the
positive and negative realities that students experience as they matriculate through school, and is ascertained through student self-report as well as through other indicators, such as mental health, academic outcomes, and level of engagement (Thapa et al., 2013; Wang & Degol, 2016).

*Social justice*

Social justice is an overarching term used to describe ideologies and actions that address a range of social, cultural, and political matters (Reason, Broido, Davis & Evans, 2005a). While one school of thought among social sciences assert that social justice principles are rooted in religious, namely Christian, doctrine, others draw its origins to philosophers such as John Rawls (Jackson, 2005; Ornstein, 2017). Further, social justice embodies two distinct features: 1) a virtue held by systems of society, which supports and enacts the just distribution of resources and social positions across all groups, and 2) a political position that aims to illuminate and dissolve poverty and end inequality (Jackson, 2005; Ornstein, 2017). The definition of social justice used in the present study draws from both schools of thoughts and entails ‘the equitable distribution of opportunities and resources across social identities and cultures within a society, and is manifested through the allocation of basic human rights’ (Reason et al., 2005a).

Education and community engagement scholars have developed a range of strategies in efforts to educate members of society in social justice principles and introduce mechanisms for establishing a more socially just society. One broad approach that has been identified as a strategy for promoting social justice efforts includes the employment of social justice training programs. Social justice training programs are defined as a formal or semi-formal interventions that exposes participants to notions of inequity, disadvantage, and injustice related to racial difference and social status in efforts to better understand racialized structures and advocate for justice through various forms action (Fouad, Gerstein & Toporek, 2006, p. 1). The purpose of
social justice training programs is to prepare individuals to assume the role of social justice allies. Further, based on the definition of social justice engaged in this paper, social justice allies are described as individuals holding privileged identities who work alongside their peers from marginalized populations in order to disrupt formal and informal systems of oppression (Edwards, 2006).

*White*

The construct *White* is widely understood as a distinct racial identity group within the United States context (Haney-López, 2006). With that said, several distinct definitions of White exist in academic scholarship. Most generally accepted is the sociological understanding of White, with White describing individuals who exhibit physical characteristics that are generally accepted within the United States as belonging to those of European descent (Smelser et al., 2001). Indeed, the U.S. Census Bureau adheres to this definition by classifying White identity as individuals originating from Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. Similarly, existing bio-cultural definitions of race define White particularly as including those who possess European phenotypic features, including skin color and facial features (Haney-López, 2006, p. 13).

Race scholars provide a distinct definition of White as a racial category, which is grounded in critical Whiteness theory. Broadly speaking, critical Whiteness parallels tenets of social identity theory, denoting racial identity as a strategy for categorizing groups and establishing group hierarchy based on superficial identifiers (Leonardo, 2009). Accordingly, White is defined as individuals who are ascribed social privileges associated with White racial identity, including economic and social capital (Helms, 2008). According to this definition, White identity does not necessarily entail belonging to a particular cultural group but, rather, is
based on Whites shared and (passively or actively) accepted location within the racial structure of society (Lewis, 2004).

**White racial identity development**

Racial identity development theories function to describe developmental processes of people’s awareness of racial identity across individuals and groups. Generally, racial development theories include the following features: a stage-based model of developing gradients of understanding and awareness of racial experiences, a delineation of increasingly complex understandings of one’s own race as well as racial differences across other racial groups, and a description of criteria used to characterize the acquisition of racial awareness and identification (Cross, 1971; Helms, 1995; Kim, 1981; Phinney, 1992; Atkinson, Morton, & Sue, 1989; 1998). These models are grounded in a sociological understanding of race as being a socially constructed means of categorizing groups based on superficial physical features (Smelser et al., 2001).

Grounded in principles that reflect critical race theory, White racial identity development models, in general, define White racial identity development as the cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes that White individuals engage as they mature in racial awareness of self and others (Helms, 1990; Hardiman, 1982; Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994).

Helms’ definition of White racial identity development is informed by critical race theory, a framework that positions race as a critical construct in examining and understanding inequality and structural racism that occurs across education and other societal domains (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This definition describes White racial identity development as the process whereby White individuals “identify with other Whites and evolve a non-oppressive White identity” (Helms, 1990). The present study is grounded in Helms’ theoretical framework
of White identity and, therefore, assumes this final definition of White racial identity development.

*Whiteness*

The term *Whiteness* is derived from critical Whiteness theory, where it is most simply described as a structuring property of racialized social systems in which classifications of racial groupings are understood and organized (Leonardo, 2009). From this framework, Whiteness can also be denoted as either a conceptual paradigm or a racial strategy (Leonardo, 2009; Owens, 2007).

As a conceptual paradigm, Whiteness is established as a framework for defining and interpreting the social construction of race. Accordingly, Whiteness is a mechanism for explaining the ways in which White racial groups are over-privileged within the United States context and, inversely, how other racial groups are under-privileged (Lewis, 2004). Further, Whiteness conceptualizes the varying degrees to which White individuals acknowledge the existence of race as well as the level of participation in individual or structural racism by an individual categorized as White.

As a racial strategy, Whiteness functions to inform ideologies and social practices, namely in creating a perception of White hegemony and White culture as the normative experience (Owens, 2007). Based on this definition, Whiteness is both a mindset and a set of behaviors that reinforce racial hierarchies and, at the same time, minimize the existence of these hierarchies (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Students of color often experience high instances of racial discrimination and inequity, which can go unnoticed by their teachers and White peers (Bottiani et al., 2016; Chapman, 2014; Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). Examining disparate perceptions of school climate based on student race has allowed education scholars to more fully understand the differential experiences of students across social identities (Voight et al., 2015). Indeed such adverse discriminatory experiences can have significant impacts on academic performance and psychosocial development, particularly for students of color (Bottiani et al., 2016; Gordon, 2012; Irvin et al., 2016; Mendez et al., 2016; William & Hamm, 2018).

Education scholars and counselors have begun to explore means of addressing student relations within secondary contexts (Paone et al., 2015; Peters et al., 2016; Utt & Tochluk, 2016). For instance, many teacher and counselor preparation programs are now employing social justice training approaches to prepare educators, and school counselors to better identify and advocate for the needs of historically marginalized youth (Durham-Barnes, 2015; Peters et al., 2016; Singh, Urbano, Haston & McMahan, 2010; Utt & Tochluk, 2016). This approach has generated success in fostering identity development and ideological awareness for White professional trainees (Durham-Barnes, 2015; Peters et al., 2016; Solic & Riley, 2019) and, in turn, providing some respite for the students with whom they engage (Byrd, 2016; Shumate, Campbell-Whatley & Lo, 2012; Singh et al., 2010). White youth who take on similar peer ally roles, however, have few opportunities to explore their racial identities and ideologies, which indubitably limits their abilities to confront biases and effectively advocate for racial equity (Gaztambide-Fernández, & Howard, 2013; Kawecka Nenga, 2011; Loyd & Gaither, 2018).
The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of participation in a social justice training program on high school students’ racial identity and ideological development. The ultimate purpose of the training program was to promote a social justice orientation among students participating in a peer allyship program. Therefore, an additional purpose of the study is to examine students’ perceptions of the training program. This chapter will begin by situating the current research study within a critical Whiteness framework. Following this will be a review of the literature on White identity development, which includes a synopsis of Helms’ model of White racial identity development (WRID), and an examination of empirical findings on White racial identity. Next will be a discussion of color-blind ideology (CBI) tenets, with a primary focus on Bonilla-Silva’s CBI framework, and brief overview of empirical findings on investigations of color-blindness. Finally, the construct of social justice is introduced and defined, including a synopsis of literature on social justice attitude development and summary of key components incorporated into social justice training programs, as well as research demonstrating their effectiveness in promoting racial and ideological development among participants. This chapter concludes with a summary of key findings related to the present study.

**Identity and Ideology through a Critical Whiteness Lens**

The United States (U.S.) is characterized as a racialized social system, or a society whose social, political, and capital infrastructures work to generate and maintain disparities across racial groups within each domain (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Accordingly, these three central domains are positioned as a means of reinforcing racial hierarchies, where race determines the potentiality of status for all members of society across each. In order to effectively frame this systemization of racial hierarchy, the notion of critical Whiteness is presented as a conceptual umbrella under which all variables of interest are organized.
Defined as a structuring property of racialized social systems in which classifications of racial groupings are understood and organized, Whiteness is both a conceptual paradigm for understanding racial dynamics within and across groups as well as a racial strategy. (Leonardo, 2009; Owens, 2007). As a conceptual paradigm, Whiteness informs one interpretation of race, in which White identity is defined as the degree to which White individuals acknowledge the existence of race and racism as well as the level of participation in individual or structural racism (Leonardo, 2009). According to this definition, White identity is not evaluated based on one’s adherence to a particular cultural identity but, rather, based on Whites shared location within the racial structure of society (Lewis, 2004).

Whiteness as a racial strategy functions to shape ideologies as well as social practices, namely in creating a perception of White hegemony and White culture as the normative experience (Owens, 2007). This occurs across domains of time and setting. In other words, despite racial patterns manifesting differently dependent on time period, such as Jim Crowe versus post civil-rights era, or across setting, such as progressive versus conservative enclaves, primary effects of racialization persist (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Owens, 2007). Outcomes of racialization are that of an over-privileged status and over-designation of power for individuals categorized as White and an under-privileged, oppressive status for those who are racially categorized as non-White.

While critical Whiteness serves an organizational function, namely codifying problematic racial exchanges across individual and structural planes, it also provides a means by which to understand and address social injustices that occur on the basis of race and other superficially defined social group qualifiers. For Whites in particular, this undertaking can be synonymous with assuming the role of a White ally, an individual from an over-privileged identity who works
to disrupt formal and informal systems of oppression (Edwards, 2006). This process of recognizing and actively opposing a socially unjust system is captured through the term *social justice*.

The current study positions Whiteness as a critical factor in describing how racial identity and ideology are operationalized within society. To study racial identity and ideological development among White groups, then, is to investigate changes in one’s awareness of and engagement in White hegemony. In this way, Whiteness underlies the process of influencing racial identity and ideological development by way of one’s social justice orientation (i.e. greater orientation represents greater awareness of Whiteness tenets and decreased engagement with White hegemony).

While a range of factors can influence racial identity development and ideological awareness, the present study employs social justice curricula as a catalyst for identity and ideological development. More recently, social justice programming has been extended to adolescents in order to expose them to social justice content and promote a social justice orientation (Ginwright & James, 2002). Indeed, adolescence is an opportune age for social justice engagement because it marks a developmental milestone when individuals are cognitively able to understand abstract and complex sociopolitical concepts (Piaget, 1976). Further, in adolescence, youth begin to explore ways in which they can establish a sense of existential purpose and identity (Ginwright & James, 2002). Many accomplish this through civic engagement and activism (Flanagan, Syvertsen, Gill, Gallay, & Cumsille, 2009). In brief, this process often resembles adolescents assuming a social justice orientation, whereby youth experience both an ideological shift in how they make sense of sociopolitical phenomena as well as a greater understanding for how they, themselves, can become agents of social change.
Ultimately, the construct of “social justice” is framed as the mechanism in which individuals develop an understanding of and activate a stance towards antiracism. Thus, this study assumes that both a) statuses of racial identity, and b) ascribed ideologies, are influenced by ones adherence to social justice tenets, referred to hereafter as assuming a social justice orientation (Figure 1). Two primary theoretical frameworks are employed in order to represent this process: Helms’ White Racial Identity model and Bonilla-Silva’s Color-Blind Ideology model.

**Theorizing Racial Identity Development**

Many industrialized nations have a longstanding history of establishing systems of hierarchy across social groups (Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, & Levin, 2004). While these systems differ across region, all social groups within a given society experience differential outcomes based on relative group status. In other words, membership in a particular social identity group most commonly has deterministic effects on the lived experiences of citizens across various domains of a society. Social identity theory is first introduced and explained in efforts to
elucidate patterns of social inequity particularly within the United States context and situate race as a salient social group category.

Social psychologists Tajfel and Turner (1986) theorized that social groups form systematically across societies and that individuals acquire differential outcomes based on membership in particular groups. Denoted as Social Identity Theory (SIT), their seminal work defined a social identity group as “a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership in it” (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 15). In this regard, individuals within a given society create social groups according to superficial traits, and determine membership to these groups based on individuals defining themselves or being defined by others as a member of the group (Tajfel, 1974). Ultimately, the formation of social groups serves two primary purposes: providing kinship among individuals within a society, and providing a basis for comparison among individuals within a society.

Social Identity Theory rests upon three main assumptions: 1) one’s self-evaluation or self-concept is contingent upon the valuing of his/her assigned group membership, 2) societal evaluations of any given social group creates universally accepted positive or negative valuations of that group, and 3) maintaining or enhancing self-concept is a primary driving force for humans (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Accordingly, individuals within society categorize self and others as in-group and out-group members based on social identities and, in doing so, accentuate the similarities of themselves with others in the group and also accentuate differences among those in the out-group (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Further, individuals create and reinforce stereotypes about in- and out-group members, and assign valuation to these
stereotypes, in order to typify groups. Categorizing individuals in this way promotes justification of group hierarchies and creates a rationale for differentially allocating social, economic, and cultural capital based on the relative valuation of each group (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel, 1982).

One function of social identity group construction is to allocate varying degrees of social status and power across groups. Furthermore, stereotypes that have been generated and reinforced over time provide members of society with implicit and explicit narratives about the status and power of individuals within any of these group designations (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Ultimately, individual and structural components of society engage groups in either positive or negative ways, based on assumed group assignments and allocated status of each group, eventually impacting to some degree the lived experience and outcome potentiality for members of all groups across social, economic, and educational domains. Indeed, existing disparities across various social groups can be understood through this social identity framework.

Leonardo (2009) defines race as a social identity categorization, describing it as “a particular grouping of individuals into social groups.” Within the United States, race serves as the principle categorical grouping of members of society, and functions as a perfunctory means of determining in- and out-group membership based on one’s phenotypic characteristics (Omi & Winant, 2015). Therefore, understanding the establishment of race as a particular social group category within society helps to conceptualize how certain racial groups are elevated above others based on contrived membership markers.

**Racial Identity**

By the end of the 17th century, British settlers had colonized the now United States, enslaving African peoples and subjugating certain European groups into indentured servitude
(Omi & Winant, 2015). At that time, racial labels were introduced to create distinctions between in-group members, or those individuals who were considered free, and out-groups (Nobles, 2000). Further, economic and social capital was allocated differentially based on one’s racial group assignment (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Notably, racial labels that existed by 1820 included “Free Whites,” describing individuals with British, Dutch, Germans, Scandinavian, and Scotch-Irish origins, “Slaves,” “Free Colored persons,” including peoples of Asian descent, and “other persons, except Indians not taxed”, such as Irish, Jews, Italians and Polish ethnic groups (National Research Council, 2004).

As greater numbers of individuals immigrated to the United States from European, Asian, and other nations over the 1800s and early 1900s, individuals who were denoted as in-group members of White racial groups expanded to also include Irish, Jews, Italians and Polish ethnic groups who were once denied White identity (National Research Council, 2004). Concurrently, groups of color, who were distinguished primarily by their darker skin complexions, were denied power, status, and even the most basic of human rights, Black Americans being the most marginalized of these groups (Nobles, 2000). Even with the ending of slavery in 1863, Black Americans, as well as other ethnic groups such as American Indian, South American, and Asian populations, were classified under the same general out-group membership designation of “non-White” and denied many of the social privileges of White groups (National Research Council, 2004). While, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the United States presently claims five racial classifications, distribution of social and economic capital continues to be largely separated based on White versus non-White racial group membership (McDonald, 2011; Reich, 2017).

As stated by Tajfel and Turner (2004), racial categories were developed in attempts to substantiate differences between groups based on phenotypic features, including skin tone, facial
features, hair texture and physical stature. That is, race is generally accepted as a social construct whereas racial identity is arbitrarily assigned based on contrived physical characteristics (Haney-López, 2006). Moreover, the notion of social identity group membership as a mechanism for establishing group hierarchy has become a working paradigm for many Americans. That being said, individuals are not born with the innate understanding of themselves as racial beings. Rather, awareness of one’s racial group membership involves a process of socialization over time, whereby individuals learn to categorize self and others into particular racial groups, understood as racial identity development (Phinney, 1996).

**Development of Racial Identity.** Several theoretical models exist, which describe developmental processes of racial identity across racial groups (Cross, 1971; Helms, 1995; Phinney, 1992; Atkinson, Morton, & Sue, 1998). In general, these theories assert that individuals matriculate through stages of racial identity in order to obtain a mature, or healthy, identity, denoted as a comprehensive understanding of one’s own race as well as an understanding of differences existing across other racial groups. Other commonalities of racial identity development theories include: proposing a stage-wide progression of identity development; asserting that individuals in lower stages exhibit less mature understandings of racial dynamics within and across racial groups; and predicting that individuals grow in racial maturity as a function of socialization and social learning. In addition, many suggest that individuals’ understandings of their racial group membership are determined by their interactions with the social world, where they learn about racial groups and racial group differences.

Despite theoretical similarities, racial development models pertaining to specific racial groups exhibit distinct differences (Atkinson et al., 1998; Phinney, 1992; Phinney, 1996). Specifically, criteria used to describe the acquisition of racial awareness and identification holds
notable distinctions for individuals categorized as White versus identity groups categorized as people of color. For instance, Atkinson and colleagues (1998) assert that racial groups of color share a sense of identity that is rooted in the experience of oppression, and suggest that developmental models for such groups must account for these experiences. Therefore, identity development models for non-White groups often include a process of first describing oneself in relation to the experience of being oppressed and, second, generating positive narratives about one’s identity group despite its oppressed status (Worchel & Austin, 1986). Phinney (1996) describes these distinct processes in the following way:

The models of minority ethnic identity and White identity are quite different because of the underlying fact of power differential and the history of relations between Whites and non-Whites. For ethnic minorities of color, identity formation has to do with developing an understanding and acceptance of one’s own group in the face of lower status and prestige in society and the presence of stereotypes and racism. On the other hand, White racial identity formation involves becoming aware of the existence of racism and the privilege associated with being White and developing a nonracist White identity that incorporates this awareness (p. 144).

Accordingly, White individuals are unique to other racial groups in that they are least likely to acknowledge the existence of racial differences despite manufacturing, perpetuating, and being the primary beneficiaries of this hierarchical system social identity (Helms, 2008). Thusly, White racial identity models have been constructed in order to represent the unique process of racial identity development among individuals categorized racially as White.

**White Racial Identity.** The racial classification of “White” describes individuals belonging to this racial group on the basis of social or biological characterization. According to
the biological definition, individuals of the White race include those who hold European phenotypic features, including skin color and facial features (Haney-López, 2006, p. 13). Similarly, the U.S. Census Bureau adheres to this definition, distinguishing “White” identity as individuals originating from Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. According to the social definition, criteria for individuals belonging to the White race includes peoples who have been socialized to understand themselves as White based on privileges afforded to them through individual, collective, and institutional interactions (Helms, 2008). This entails a more progressive delineation of White identity whereby membership is assumed based on physical and socially constructed traits.

Various models have been developed to contextualize empirical investigations of White racial identity, which ground White racial development in paradigms of critical Whiteness. Such models include Hardiman’s (1982) White Identity Theory, Helms’ (1990) White Racial Identity Theory, Rowe and colleagues’ (1994) White Racial Consciousness Theory, and Sue’s Descriptive Model of White Racial Identity (Sue, 1998, p. 56), an integrated model that taps tenets of Helms (1990), Rowe et al. (1994), and Hardiman (1982). Helms’ model of White Racial Identity Development is a widely referenced and studied theory of White identity according to scholarly search engines, and is used in the present study to conceptualize processes of racial development.

**Helms’ Model of White Racial Identity Development**

Helms introduced a model of White Racial Identity Development (WRID) as an extension of Cross’ Black identity development model of Nigrescence. The WRID model includes stages of White identity development, and was originally formulated to inform cross-racial interactions among counselors and clients (Helms, 1984). The five original stages of this
model included: 1) Contact, denoting lack of awareness of one’s White identity; 2) Disintegration, characterized by a conscious awareness of one’s White race, 3) Reintegration, defined by an active reemergence into White culture and one’s denigration of non-White identities, 4) Pseudo-independence, which signified an initial pursuit of a non-racist White identity, and 5) Autonomy, the final stage of White racial identity described as an authentic acknowledgement of Whiteness (Helms, 1984; 2008).

Since its initial edition, Helms’ model has evolved in order to better represent the complexities of White identity development. For one, Helms’ model was modified to include a sixth stage of Immersion/Emersion in order to represent the more gradual redefinition of White identity that occurs between Pseudo-independence and Autonomy (Helms, 1990). Additionally, the term “stages” was later replaced by “statuses” in order to better depict them as independent categories used to represent cognitive-behavioral strategies employed by Whites during racialized interactions. Rather than reflecting junctures of progress, this new classification suggests that individuals have the capacity to enlist any one of the six statuses at any given time (Helms, 1995; Helms, 2007).

Presently, the six statuses represent mutually exclusive, rather than linear, conditions in which individuals can exhibit emotional, cognitive, and behavioral processes that reflect one or more status at any given time (Helms, 1995, p. 183). Emotional processes are defined as affective reactions to racial stimuli, which can either reinforce or conflict with a person’s current White status. This may include, for example, an individual feeling uncomfortable by being the only White student in a classroom. The emotion of discomfort may reinforce to the student that cross-racial interactions are not “natural,” thus indicating the students’ positionality in less sophisticated statuses such as contact or disintegration (Helms, 1990).
Similarly, cognitive processes represent the degree to which a person is able to interpret and respond to complex racial information within his or her environment. This may include a person believing that he or she has been wronged in some way by being placed in a classroom where there are no other White individuals. Furthermore, behavioral processes entail manifestations of one’s cognitive awareness of racial stimuli. Behavior processes are the actions that one displays as he or she responds to racial situations. This may include, for instance, an individual deciding to read about racial interactions in order to better understand the source of his or her discomfort (Helms, 1995). Finally, based on how the individual interprets this information, he or she may undergo a shift in cognitive and emotional processing. This shift indicates a change in one’s White racial identity developmental status. As such, one’s increased ability to understand the schemata of multiple statuses demonstrates more complex processing of racial information. Helms describes this process as ‘maturation’ (Helms, 1995).

The White Identity Development Model maintains that healthy White identity involves “the capacity to recognize and abandon the normative strategies of White people for coping with race” (Helms, 1995 p. 188). As such, this model intends to delineate archetypes of White identity, which are characterized by the degree of one’s awareness of Whiteness, or participation in White hegemony. Moreover, the final status represents a procurement of a healthy White identity, as characterized by acknowledgement of White hierarchy situated within societal structures, and a rejection of such privilege (Helms, 1990). Ultimately, Helms argues that White racial development is denoted by two distinct processes: 1) an abandonment of perceived entitlement and, in turn, 2) an incorporation of complex, non-racist processes in order to make sense of and respond to environmental stimuli (Helms, 1995; 2008).
The WRID model is a useful framework for conceptualizing the racial identity development of White adolescents engaging in social justice allyship because it investigates White identity from the premise that race and racism are social structures situated within a racialized society, rather than mere interpersonal traits (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Helms, 1990). This perspective moves away from an individualistic categorization of “racist” versus “non-racist” to promoting an awareness of structural racism in which individuals are social actors (Helms, 2008).

**Critiques of Helms.** Helms’ model of WRID has been critiqued for theoretical and methodological issues, despite being the most utilized theory in operationalizing White racial identity (Myers, Speight, Highlen… & Hanley, 1991; Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994; Helms, 1995). Rowe and colleagues (1994) provided one of the earliest criticisms of Helms’ model, challenging its reliance on developmental stages for describing White identity. Specifically, authors question whether the theory yields itself to a developmental stage-wise progression, stating that the argument of incremental awareness of racial identity seems arbitrary and may not accurately represent processes of identity development. Further, Rowe and colleagues (1994) contend that this model outlines various levels of sensitivity to other racial groups with little discussion about understandings of Whiteness independent of differing races. Additionally, the model is criticized for its exclusive focus on Black/White racial interactions, which limit generalizability to other racialized minority groups (Rowe et al., 1994). Others have criticized identity development models such as the WRID model for implying that identity development is a reactionary process that occurs as a result of an environmental event. This position contends that such frameworks minimize the capacity of the individual in developing a sense of identity (Myers et al., 1991).
Methodological critiques assert that significant instrumentation issues exist, as the primary scale used to measure White racial identity development, the White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (WRIAS), has demonstrated low construct validity in past empirical studies (Behrens, 1997; Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007). Helms’ developed the WRIAS as a means of operationalizing her theory. This scale determines respondents’ positioning at one of the five original stages of White identity (Helms & Carter, 1990). While this measure is grounded in the theoretical model, it, along with other identity development scales, has been criticized for its low internal validity and lack of construct clarity (Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007). Lee and colleagues (2007) addressed these critiques by revising the White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R) in order to more effectively measure White racial identity progression through Helms’ six proposed statuses. This does not, however, eliminate the issue of social desirability. Construct measurement of racial identity relies heavily on self-reported racial attitudes held by White individuals, which have the potential to be skewed by social desirability (Krysan & Couper, 2003). Caution must, therefore, be taken when applying the WRID model to empirical investigation (Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007).

Helms’ theory of WRID is the most widely accepted model for describing White identity development within social science research, and has been applied to many empirical studies that investigate features of White identity across groups (Croll, 2007; Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009; Loyd & Gaither, 2018; Peters et al., 2016; Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007; Ponterotto et al., 2006). Further, the WRID model has also been used as a framework to inform models of social justice, including the Social Justice Ally Identity Development model, making it a desirable framework for the present study (Edwards, 2006; Tauriac et al., 2013).
Alternative Models of White Identity. Other models of White identity development have been introduced in efforts to address some of the above critiques to Helms’ model, including Hardiman’s model of White Identity Development (Hardiman, 2001) and Ponterotto’s White Racial Consciousness Developmental Model (Ponterotto, Utsey, & Pederson, p. 96). These models have a shared aim of describing mechanisms of racial identity development for individuals categorized as White within the United States context. Moreover, these models attempt to address limitations of Helms’ model by disentangling the racial identity development processes of White groups from those of racial groups of color.

Hardiman’s (2001) stage-based White identity development (WID) model focused on racial development by describing how individuals mature in their understanding of racial issues and ways in which racism affects racial groups. This model suggests that White individuals progress through five stages of awareness in making sense of their racial identity as a privileged group. Despite being praised for its unique methodology and theoretical contributions, however, this early model was criticized for its prescriptive, rather than descriptive, nature (Hardiman, 2001; Ponterotto et al., 2006).

The White Racial Consciousness model is an additional White identity theory, which has been heavily cited in empirical investigations of White racial development (Ponterotto et al., 2006). This model codifies characteristics of White identity into archetypes based on expressed racial attitudes (Rowe et al., 1994; Rowe et al., 1995). Similar are Integrated White Identity Developmental models, which combine elements of Helms’ and Hardiman’s identity models with Ponterotto’s racial consciousness model and other White identity frameworks (Ponterotto et al., 2006; Sue 1998). While the latter models have worked to capture the dynamic experiences of White individuals across societal domains, White racial scholarship most often cites Helms
(Helms, 2014) and Rowe et al. (1994) as seminal contributors to the understanding racial development of White individual. Furthermore, used in conjunction, the White racial Identity Development model and White Racial Consciousness model provide a more comprehensive understanding of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dispositions of White groups as they mature in their racial awareness (Leach, Behrens, & LaFleur, 2002).

**White Racial Identity and Consciousness.** The White Racial Identity Development model (Helms, 1990) and White Racial Consciousness (Rowe et al., 1994) framework hold several fundamental similarities in describing White identity (Leach et al., 2002). As such, both models work to generally explain phenomena associated with the social experiences of White groups within the United States. Similarly, at their core, both models aim to describe the racial posture of White groups by focusing on expressed ideologies or attitudes held by Whites as they relate to in-group comparisons with groups of color. In this way, each model asserts that attitudes or ideologies are grounded in cognitive racial schemata, which influence individuals’ interpretations and judgments of selves versus others. Moreover, according to both Helms (1995) and Rowe et al. (1994), social learning undergirds the development of racial attitudes. As a result, both identity and consciousness are dynamic processes, susceptible to change based on experiences that challenge previously established notions of in-group and out-group characteristics and create dissonance.

Investigating White identity by way of racial consciousness provides a concrete means of measurement. Accordingly, racial consciousness considers the expressed attitudes of White individuals, which are substantive but reflexive, based on each particular status of identity. Further, one of the assertions of White racial identity is that in order to develop a healthy, antiracist stance, one must grow in their attitudes pertaining to the existence of Whiteness and
the racialized system and, afterwards, demonstrate non-racist behaviors. Employing racial consciousness as a characteristic of White identity and Whiteness helps to endorse attitudes as a key attribute that hallmarks racial maturity (Owens, 2007).

Ultimately, each theory systematically represents aspects of Whiteness as they are manifested in Whites’ cognitions, affective responses, and behavioral actions, and infers association between individual manifestations of White norms to structural systems of Whiteness. As a result of significant theoretical commonalities, research on White identity development utilizes both White Racial Identity Development and White Racial Consciousness frameworks to inform empirical analyses (Leach et al., 2002; Loyd & Gaither, 2018; Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007). Further, the current study employs Rowe’s White Racial Consciousness approach to operationalize tenets of Helms’ (1995) White identity development model because it addresses some of the significant criticisms to Helms’ model, provides a concrete means of measuring the construct of interest, and measures a specific aspect of the convergent ideas of White identity and Whiteness, namely racial attitudes. Specifically, the revised version of the White Racial Consciousness Development Scale (Lee, Puig, Pasquarella-Daley… & Parker, 2007) is employed to assess changes in racial development for White participants across time. Although mixed findings have been reported in instrument reliability (Croll, 2007; Helms, 2007), it is argued that this measure is more strongly validated compared to Helms’ White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale in measuring the phenomenon of White racial identity (Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007).

**Empirical Research on White Identity Development**

There has been a growing athenaeum of research on White racial identity development over the past few years, despite a majority of identity literature focusing on marginalized
populations (McDermott & Samson, 2005; Loyd & Gaither, 2018; Priest, Walton, White… & Paradies, 2014; Spanierman & Soble, 2010). Primary findings assert that White populations as a collective are not aware of themselves as racial beings (Brown et al., 2011; Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009), although some suggest that White individuals are presently more aware of their White identity than in past times (Hartmann, Gerteis, & Croll, 2009). Grossman & Charmaraman (2009) examined White adolescents’ racial centrality utilizing a mixed-methods design and indicated that a large minority of the sample reported spending no time reflecting on their racial identity. Additionally, White adolescents’ recognition of race remains lower compared to racial awareness in people of color (Brown et al., 2011). Further, while some suggest that gender influences White identity and racial attitudes (Bonilla-Silva, 2018), with females having a more developed identity than males (Tuch & Hughes, 2011), others argue against this notion (Hughes & Tuch, 2003).

A variety of demographical factors are also associated with particular stages of White identity development, including level of parent education (Grayman & Godfrey, 2013; Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009) and degree of parent racial identity development (Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Zucker and Patterson (2018) provide evidence that children demonstrating limited racial awareness have parents who, similarly, hold less developed racial identities.

**Development of Racial Identity in Adolescence.** An investigation of factors that influence White identity development suggests that socialization is a key determinant of White identity development (Hagerman, 2016; Loyd & Gaither, 2018; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Whites are socialized to understand themselves as racial beings in particular ways, which begins in early childhood (Loyd & Gaither, 2018; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Sources of socialization are primarily identified as parents (Vittrup, 2018; Zucker & Patterson, 2018) but also include
peer groups, which become considerably influential as youth enter into adolescence (Loyd & Gaither, 2018). Zucker and Patterson (2018) observed that White parents in their qualitative study reported refraining from discussing race and racism to their children and that their children learned to avoid acknowledging their racial identities. Similarly, another study found that White parents were significantly less likely than Black and Latino/Hispanic parents to discuss prejudice and topics of inequality with their youth (Flanagan et al., 2009). However, all youth who indicated higher awareness of systemic barriers and prejudice also indicated greater degrees of racial/ethnic awareness.

Racial development is widely accepted as a mutable process and is, therefore, activated by various stimuli (Helms, 2008). Adolescents’ White identity can be expanded by dialogues about race and difference (Brown et al., 2017), and by exposure to interventions that challenge their attitudes and awareness of race (Brown et al., 2017; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2018). Indeed, one study found that high school students (37% White) participating in an intervention to promote racial identity development demonstrated increases in racial awareness throughout all time-points of the 18-week program (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2018).

Exposure to diverse environments also promotes White identity development for many individuals (Paone et al., 2015; Rieger, 2015), but, in some cases, can regress racial maturation for others (Peters et al., 2016). For instance, Peters and colleagues (2016) demonstrated declines in pre-service teachers’ White racial identity statuses after working in a multiracial classroom for one school year. Conversely, other, similar empirical studies on White school personnel describe increased awareness of and sensitivity to their Whiteness as a result of immersion into multicultural scholastic settings (Bloom, Peters, Margolin & Fragnoli, 2015; Groff & Peters, 2012; Paone et al., 2015; Rieger, 2015).
Contradictory outcomes on indicators of White racial identity development have prompted researchers to look towards other, seemingly more objective methods of investigating racialized phenomena (Bloom et al., 2015; Groff & Peters, 2012; Paone et al., 2015). Ideological models of social structure have become a useful secondary framework for investigating individuals’ awareness of critical Whiteness because they rely on systematic definitions of race, which are grounded in one’s employment of racist schema (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). Furthermore, such models emphasize one’s ability to develop a more sophisticated understanding of structural inequalities that oppress certain groups and over-privilege others.

**Theorizing Ideological Development**

Ones awareness of systemic injustices within society and motivation to address them through advocacy and activist efforts are not only informed by racial identity statuses, but also the socio-political ideologies to which one ascribes (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). Socio-political ideology describes a system of ideals and ideas related to cultural, political, and social factors, which guide an individual’s beliefs and societal interactions (Sidanius, 1985). Similar to racial identity, ideology dictates one’s perceptions and understandings of social order, and is a byproduct of socialization and social learning (Knowles, Lowery, Hogan & Chow, 2009).

Researchers have long employed sociopolitical ideology to organize and predict distinct processes in which individuals engage with their social environments, based on social group status (Knowles et al., 2009; Long, 1976; Sidanius, 1985). More recently, ideological endorsement has been investigated to help predict adherence to racial paradigms and engagement in social justice especially among White groups within the U.S. context (Apfelbaum et al., 2017; Levin et al., 2012; Plaut, Thomas, Hurd & Romano, 2018). Diversity ideologies include one particular school of sociopolitical ideology, which specifically examine social identity
paradigms, ascription to these paradigms, and the ways in which ascription to various paradigms informs one’s awareness and understanding about matters of social justice (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). Specifically, diversity ideologies function to explicate schemas that individuals use in deciphering intergroup interactions and differential social group outcomes (Ryan, Hunt, Weible, Peterson & Casas, 2007). They also allow scholars to consider diversified strategies for engaging justice (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). The two primary schools of thought among diversity ideologies include: a) multiculturalism ideology and b) color-blind ideology.

Multiculturalism ideology describes a system of beliefs and values whereby individuals are prompted to understand and acknowledge the distinct histories, cultures, and experiences of distinct social groups (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). Further, this approach asserts that, by taking on this approach, members of society will more effectively attain equality and diversity. Empirical scholarship has demonstrated that members of minoritized social groups, including peoples of color, are more likely to assume a multicultural ideological stance, as compared to members of majoritized groups (Apfelbaum, Grunberg, Halevy & Kang, 2017; Ryan et al. 2007).

The beliefs and actions that amplify cross-group similarities and deemphasize distinctions between cultures and experiences of social group members are represented as color-blind ideology (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). This position maintains that by ignoring attributes that differentiate various social groups and by regarding each individual person as idiosyncratic, society as a whole can become more integrated and equal (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). Perspectives of color-blindness are most frequently endorsed by majoritized groups, especially White individuals, although tenets of this ideology can also be observed among minoritized groups (Plaut et al., 2018; Ryan et al., 2007).
In short, color-blind ideology, in comparison to multiculturalism ideology, is most frequently endorsed by Whites and frequently employed by individuals of color, although it is suggested to have adverse effects on establishing equity and reducing bias (Levin et al., 2012; Plaut et al., 2018; Ryan et al., 2007; Wolsko, Park, Judd & Wittenbrink, 2000). Further, degree of adherence to color-blind ideology, in particular, has been established as a strong indicator of maturity in social justice orientation, as less adherence is associated with more developed pro-social beliefs (Hartmann, Croll, Larson, Gerteis & Manning, 2017; Levin et al., 2012).

Therefore, color-blind ideology is presented as the second theoretical framework in structuring and evaluating changes in participants’ proximity to tenets of racial maturity and social justice orientation.

**Color-Blind Ideology**

A social strategy for exploring structural inequality, color-blind ideology provides a critical framework for empirical research regarding sociopolitical phenomena. Color-blind phraseology is thought to have originated as a formal construct within legal rhetoric, eventually entering social science research over the past three decades (American Psychological Association (APA), 1997; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000). Within education research, in particular, color-blindness has been most frequently described as avoidance of racial dialogue and unwillingness to acknowledge racial difference (APA, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993; Schofield, 1986). This definition was operationalized in order to provide foundational descriptive information about adherence to color-blind notions within predominantly White populations.

One of the earliest empirical investigations of color-blindness examined color-blind attitudes of members of a desegregated school (Schofield, 1986). This study provided a major contribution to color-blind research by summarizing three strategies through which color-blind ideology is
employed by White populations: perceiving race as invisible, as taboo, and as individualistic rather than informed by systematic outcomes of racial socialization (Schofield, 1986).

Subsequent research on color-blindness has built from this foundational premise.

Frankenberg (1993) published a seminal study on racial attitudes of White women, using color-blind terminology to characterize participant responses. Following this, Carr (1997) documented the first known quantitative investigation of racial prejudice and color-blind attitudes, using a self-designed, one item measure of color-blind attitudes. In an effort to expand empirical examination of the color-blind construct, Neville and colleagues (2000) developed the Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS), the first formal quantitative measure of color-blind attitudes. This resulted in a rapid expansion of research on color-blindness, mainly focusing on White populations as the subject of analysis (Neville et al., 2013). Up to this point, there had been no formal theoretical framework to conceptualize color-blind ideology but, rather, researchers often used it as an independent variable to further support research on racial bias (Neville et al., 2013).

With the publication of his book *Racism without Racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America*, Bonilla-Silva (2003) presented a foundational model of color-blind ideology by expanding upon earlier assertions of what he described as a “new racism” (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; 2015). Much later, Neville and colleagues (2014) presented their theory of color-blind racial ideology (CBRI), which synthesized past literature on color-blindness into two primary domains, color-evasion and power-evasion. Indeed, researchers continue to generate models that capture the complexities of color-blindness within a dynamic sociopolitical society (Mazzocco, 2017; Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). The most recent codifies color-blindness into four categories, which are informed by level of prejudice (high versus low)
and level of awareness of racial inequality (high versus low; Mazzocco, 2017). Even with the ongoing expansion of color-blind literature, however, Bonilla-Silva’s framework of color-blind ideology continues to be one of the most comprehensive in defining prejudiced mechanisms of color-blindness (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; 2002; 2003; 2015; 2019; Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011; Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, & Embrick, 2004).

**Bonilla-Silva’s Model of Color-Blind Ideology.** Helms’ model of WRID is grounded in the premise that White individuals must regularly and actively abandon compliance with racist structures to begin developing a healthy White racial identity (Helms, 1990). As a dynamic phenomenon, the manifestation of racism has transformed over the course of the past few decades. In order to effectively resist racist structures, therefore, individuals must first understand the characteristics of present-day racism (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). Bonilla-Silva introduced the framework of Color-Blind Ideology (CBI) to describe this “new racism” and delineate the ways that it functions within society to maintain racial hierarchies (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Bonilla-Silva, 2003). The CBI model explains how contemporary racial inequality is manifested in new, subtle practices (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). This model describes ideology as a “political instrument” used to organize and justify structural racism through socialization of what are believed to be racial norms, and outlines how ideologies are acted out through four primary frames as well as four linguistic styles (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p. 54). The present study focused exclusively on the four central frames in order to organize color-blind ideologies expressed by study participants.

Color-blind ideology characterizes the nature of racial relations within the U.S., whereby certain racialized groups are benefited over others (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011). In order to construct the four proposed frames of CBI, Bonilla-Silva (2001) conducted comprehensive
interviews with college students and adult residents of a metropolitan mid-western city (termed DAS respondents). Both samples were asked to provide their opinions on topics related to cross-racial interactions and relationships, prevalence of racial discrimination, school and residential segregation, including desegregation efforts, affirmative action, and racial differences in social status of groups, including educational and career outcome disparities. Transcripts from these interviews were used to determine and codify linguistic frames used by White populations to obscure racial structures. These frames also demonstrate the stylistic ways in which racial undertones are embedded in niceties and seemingly neutral exchanges expressed by White Americans (Bonilla-Silva, 2002). The CBI framework organizes racial ideologies into four central frames, based on these interviews: 1) abstract liberalism, 2) naturalization, 3) cultural racism, and 4) minimization of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; 2018).

Abstract liberalism involves the application of conceptual, liberal economic and political principles to describe and rationalize racial injustice. This frame is most representative of the core tenets of color-blind ideology, thus, is arguably the most influential of the four frames (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p.54). An example of this frame is found in one participant’s supposition about the validity of the racial opportunity gap, stating, “You can do it, it doesn’t matter who you are” (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p. 60). Rhetoric that is categorized as abstract liberalism conceals structural inequality through arguments of equal opportunity, meritocracy, and advocacy of the status quo.

Naturalization includes claims that attempt to explain racialized tendencies through biological or organic patterns of social order. Statements such as “people naturally gravitate towards likeness,” which was presented in one participants interview to justify residential segregation based on race, are forms of naturalization (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, p. 150). This frame
obscures learned processes of social convention as being universal or natural phenomena, despite social science research disproving this argument (Betancourt & López, 1993; Zuckerman, 1998). Further, individuals that adopt naturalization rhetoric often do so in a way that relinquishes blame of racism both on an individual level as well as the broader system of society. Although this was the least employed frame in the original study’s sample, at least 50% of respondents still verbalized naturalistic explanations when discussing a range of topics, including segregation in schools and neighborhoods, White Americans cross-racial social contact, and opposition to cross-racial romantic relationships (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p.64).

Claims that rationalize racial disparities by suggesting that certain minoritized populations have an inferior culture illustrate cultural racism. The following statement made by an interviewee is representative of this frame, stating, “right now I think our minorities are lazy. They don’t have the patience to keep going” (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p. 69). Cultural racism implies that deficiencies in the values, practices, and beliefs of people of color produce discrepancies in education, socio-economic status, and career attainment. In his initial study, Bonilla-Silva (2001) found that 88% of DAS respondents used this frame in providing explanations for racial differences in jobs, income, and housing among White and Black populations. Bonilla-Silva contends that this frame is dangerous because “it is regarded by Whites as fixed or as something very hard to change,” thus activating the assumption that there is nothing that can feasibly be done to change the social status of Black Americans (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, p. 148).

Finally, minimization of racism is the most overt frame. This framework describes the denial of discrimination’s systematic nature by classifying discrimination strictly as isolated incidences performed by individuals. An example of such utterance includes “I think sometimes it’s an excuse because… people felt they deserved a job…” (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, p. 151).
Individuals with this mindset do not recognize racism as an excuse for outcome disparities and believe that minoritized groups over-emphasize matters. At least 70% of DAS respondents used direct and indirect strategies to minimize the existence or centrality of discrimination in dictating lived outcomes for people of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p. 72). The minimization of racism frame also encompasses assertions of “reverse racism” and “reverse discrimination” by White populations. Modica (2015) found that a large minority of White adolescents expressed experiencing reverse racism as a result of being excluded from receiving affirmative action benefits because of their White race. According to the CBI framework, this notion is problematic because it dismisses the power differential between White and non-White within U.S. society. This power differential is the very essence of systemic racism (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011).

The Color-Blind Ideology model summarizes how frames are used to obscure racist structures by creating the false perception of universality amongst all race groups within a social system. Additionally, the CBI framework demonstrates that racial rhetoric often comes across as neutral or even sympathetic and amiable, making it even more difficult to articulate its problematic nature. The following response given by a student when asked about her thoughts on affirmative action is indicative of this: “There might be, I guess, some minorities do get uh schools aren’t as well-funded as others” but later stating “I don’t think you should discriminate against one group to give another a better chance,” referring to White groups being discriminated against through affirmative action policies (Bonilla-Silva, 2002). This quote illustrates a common frame of color-blindness, whereby the speaker expresses sympathy towards individuals within this group, while simultaneously suggesting that equitable policies as creating unfair advantages for minoritized groups. This position ignores structures of racism that have worked to create and maintain racial disparities over time.
Color-blind ideology has become a standard measure of racial development among White populations because it provides researchers with concrete, subsidiary evidence for early stages of White racial identity (Apfelbaum et al., 2012; Chao, 2013; Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009; Lewis, 2004; Loyd & Gaither, 2018). Furthermore, it outlines both in-group and out-group attitudes and beliefs among members of diverse social identity groups, such as race, ethnicity, and nationality, as well as how these tenets inform intergroup exchanges (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). Although this framework offers a comprehensive scope of cross-group dynamics, however, extant research does demonstrate distinct limitations.

**Critiques of Bonilla-Silva.** Despite CBI’s widespread application as a means of categorizing present-day race relations, it has received criticism for its overgeneralization of White ideology, deficit focus, and oversimplification of racialized phenomena. To begin, many argue that this model is too strict, thus not accounting for the large percentage of White individuals that do endorse the belief that contemporary racial inequality does still exist (Doane, 2017; Mayorga-Gallo, 2019; Omi & Winant, 2009; Wimmer, 2015). Further, while Bonilla-Silva specifically outlines the problematic qualities of adhering to a color-blind system, his model does not thoroughly articulate how one might characterize anti-racist advancement (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; 2003). In addition, Marorga-Gallo (2019) argues that the CBI model dismisses or de-emphasizes data that contradicts with its core, axiomatic tenets. Similarly, this model is criticized for focusing exclusively on the Black/White dichotomy experience racial advantage and disadvantage, thus dismissing experiences of other racial groups. Moreover, the model has been further criticized for minimizing present efforts to decrease racial inequality (Omi & Winant, 2009; Wimmer, 2015) and essentializing racial relations into “winners,” or those persons who are identified as White, and “losers,” consisting of Black populations (Omi & Winant, 2009). By
doing this, the CBI framework does not allow for a complete acknowledgment of the complex systems that are at play within social structures.

Noteworthy methodological issues for measuring color-blindness are also cited, including the empirical approaches used to determine the four frames of color-blindness (Wimmer, 2015). Specifically, Bonilla-Silva’s development of the CBI framework based on two conservatively-sized population samples incite doubt in the validity and generalizability of the model (Wimmer, 2015). Further, Doane (2017) notes the difficulty in researching the complexities of color-blindness as it is, by nature, denied by most who employ its rhetoric. In addition, the construct of color-blindness is often defined and researched incongruously (Doane, 2017). As theorized by Bonilla-Silva, color-blindness examines one’s denial of racial structures and practices that reproduce racial inequality (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). In more recent analyses, however, it has been examined as one’s tendency to not see race. (Hughey, Embrick & Doane, 2015; Mazzocco, 2017; Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). Hughey et al. (2015) adds that there is a lack of empirical evidence to link color-blind strategies with disproportionate racial outcomes that exist and that much of the research is missing the “why and how” of this relationship. Moreover, definitional inconsistencies exist among of those studies that do investigate color-blindness as a variable (Doane, 2017; Wimmer, 2015).

Whitley and Webster (2019) called attention to the varied ways that some researchers have investigated the construct. For instance, much of the empirical research on color-blind ideology relies on an interpersonal interpretation of color-blindness, where individuals’ color-blind attitudes are assessed using qualitative and quantitative approaches (Apfelbaum et al., 2012; Carter, Lippard & Baird, 2019; Knowles et al., 2009; Neville et al., 2014). This approach investigates individualistic reactionary mechanisms utilized in response to racialized stimuli
Conversely, others examine awareness of structural racism that exists across systems of society, thus mirroring Bonilla-Silva’s CBI conceptualization of color-blindness (Offermann, Basford, Graebner, Jaffer, De Graaf & Kaminsky, 2014). Collectively, however, the aggregation of both veins of research has informed a more thorough understanding of color-blind ideologies that exist across populations of society.

**Empirical Research on Color-Blind Ideology.** Color-blind ideology has been operationalized in a variety of ways and assessed using qualitative and quantitative approaches (Apfelbaum et al., 2012; Bartoli, Michael, Bentley-Edwards, Stevenson, Shor & McClain, 2016; Neville et al., 2013; Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). There are few formally developed instruments used to measure color-blind ideologies, despite its growing utility within social science research (Neville et al., 2013). The Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville et al., 2000) has, therefore, been the most utilized quantitative measure for assessing color-blind mechanisms. Qualitative methods of inquiry are most frequently used and examine color-blindness in relation to other factors (Bloom et al., 2015; Carter et al., 2019), and are especially useful in revealing underlying attitudes of those engaged in social justice work. Moreover, while much of the empirical research examines the construct as an interpersonal trait, others have mirrored Bonilla-Silva’s conceptualization of color-blindness by investigated it from the perspective of one’s awareness of structural racism (Bartolli et al., 2018). Furthermore, the four frames of CBI are most frequently used by researchers to thematize qualitative discourse when examining White racial identity (Apfelbaum, Pauker, Sommers & Ambady, 2010; Bloom et al., 2015; Spanierman, Beard, & Todd, 2012).

Empirical investigation of color-blindness reveals useful information about the function of color-blind ideology in society. For instance, individuals in earlier stages of White racial
identity tend to exhibit greater color-blind attitudes (Bloom et al., 2015; Peters et al., 2016; Spanierman et al., 2012), are less aware of instances of overt discrimination (Apfelbaum et al., 2010), but are more likely to act in blatant discriminatory ways (Carter et al., 2019). Similarly, many Whites use color-blind frames to appear less racist (Apfelbaum, Pauker, Ambady, Sommers & Norton, 2008; Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009; Vittrup, 2018), although the opposite is often true (Apfelbaum et al., 2008). Others acknowledge endorsement of color-blind frames to avoid feeling uncomfortable, as many White individuals report experiencing high levels of distress when engaging in race talk (Modica, 2015). Additionally, certain factors can predicate adherence to color-blind attitudes, including racial identity gender, family income status and age. Specifically, individuals who have been socialized as White, male, and high income are more likely to ascribe color-blind ideologies (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Hagerman, 2016; Hartmann et al., 2009).

**Development of Color-Blind Ideology in Adolescence.** Similar to racial identity development, adherence to color-blind frames is influenced by the socialization process, which begins in early childhood (Hagerman, 2016; Vittrup, 2018). Vittrup (2018) found that seventy percent of the White mothers in their study indicated utilizing color-blind approaches when discussing racial matters with their children. Youth model the rhetoric of significant adult figures in their lives and, in regards to racial discourse, learn to codify their speech by utilizing ambiguous jargon (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Modica, 2015). As such, Apfelbaum and colleagues (2008) suggest that children are likely to adopt color-blind frames as they age, and that they employ these frames at increasing rates as they develop. In general, avoidance of racial discourse is the most common strategy in which White adolescents exhibit color-blindness, with more
complex color-blind utterances being exhibited over time (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009; Modica, 2015).

Altogether, empirical findings for this framework help to demonstrate a clear association between developmental stages of White racial identity and one’s adherence to ideologies of color-blindness. Moreover, findings for both models help to inform predictions of racial development for White individuals engaging with cross-cultural matters.

**White Racial Identity Development and Color-Blind Ideology**

The frameworks of WRID and CBI are used complementary in the present study. As such, CBI helps to: 1) describe racial rhetoric that is used in contemporary society and, 2) illuminate racist ideologies that one must become aware of and actively choose to disengage with in order to develop a healthy White racial identity (Lewis, 2004). The process of establishing a healthy White identity is especially imperative for individuals engaging in social justice efforts.

Historically, the measure of social justice attainment has been driven by a misrepresentation of the civil rights’ mantra to focus solely on the “content of a person’s character” (DiAngelo, 2018). This motto continues to be embraced today by even the most adamant social justice allies. However, as the literature has demonstrated, this ideology is counter-productive in improving racial and other social relations because it leads to a denial of one’s history and present realities.

Re-shifting to focus on race as an impetus to injustice allows for a more sincere recognition of ongoing systems that replicate inequity. Ultimately, this reframe permits an authentic exploration of effective strategies for lasting social justice change.

**Social Justice**

“Social justice” entails the equitable distribution of opportunities and resources across social identities and cultures within a society, and is manifested through the allocation of basic human rights (Reason et al., 2005a). Social justice has been a growing phenomenon in settings of
research, professional training, and community intervention development over the past few decades as scholars work to define (Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill & Gallay, 2007; Thomann & Suyemoto, 2018; Zaff, Malanchuk & Eccles, 2008), theorize (Broido, 2000; Broido & Reason, 2005; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Edwards, 2006; Goodman, 2000; Munin & Speight, 2010), and operationalize features of this construct (Austin, Duffy & Allan, 2017; Dessel, Rogge & Garlington, 2006; Graybill, Baker, Cloth, Fisher, & Nastasi, 2018; Kim, Kahn, Tawa & Suyemoto, 2017; McDaniel, 2017; Suyemoto et al., 2015; Tauriac et al., 2013). Moreover, social justice efforts aim to eradicate structures of inequity by creating a shared understanding of the features that create and maintain social hierarchies, and by engaging change agents in civic activism (Broido, 2000; Edwards, 2006; Kraft, 2007; McDaniel, 2017; Tauriac et al., 2013; Thomann & Suyemoto, 2018; Wernick, 2012).

This section outlines tenets of social justice in relation to the present study by first reviewing literature on social justice models, mainly highlighting models that describe social justice development among youth and adolescents. After, elements of these models are synthesized into a conceptual framework that depicts the association among development of a) a social justice orientation, b) one’s racial identity, and c) a sociopolitical ideology. A final construct of the conceptual framework utilized in the present study, this section then defines elements that work to promote a social justice orientation. Next, I provide a review of social justice training programs that have operationalized this conceptual framework in order to formally foster social justice dispositions among youth. Here, I discuss effectiveness of training programs in their ability to promote a social justice orientation and to foster racial identity development and ideological awareness. Finally, I describe the social justice training program that is used in the present study, which was informed by all aspects of this literature review.
Social Justice Models

Social justice models provide a framework for activating a social justice orientation among adolescent populations (Broido, 2000; Edwards, 2006; Goodman, 2000; Portman & Portman, 2002). These models can be separated into three main categories, a) social justice education models (Dover, 2009; Dover, 2013; Hackman, 2005; Kraft, 2007), b) conceptual models for allyship (Broido, 2000; Broido & Reason, 2005; Edwards, 2006; Munin & Speight, 2010), and c) models for activism and action (Dessel et al., 2006; Goodman, 2000; McDaniel, 2017; Portman & Portman, 2002).

Social Justice Education Models. Social justice education models provide a framework for integrating social justice content into curricula as well as utilizing pedagogical strategies to foster critical thinking skills and social consciousness among learners (Dover, 2009; Hackman, 2005; Kim et al., 2017; Kraft, 2007). Hackman (2005) presented an early model for social justice education, which summarized five essential components that inform effective social justice instruction, which include: culturally relevant content, stimulation of critical thinking, tools for action and social change, opportunities for personal reflection, and ongoing awareness of cultural dynamics that impact the learning community. The ultimate aim of this model was to promote greater awareness of sociopolitical ideologies among students. An ancillary outcome proposed that utilization of the model would expand students’ awareness of racial and other cultural identities, including a greater understanding of how experiences among members of society differed based on these identities.

Subsequent models have replicated these core foundations of learning and student outcomes. Specifically, Kraft’s (2007) model for social justice education also asserts that culturally reflective content, elicitation of critical thinking skills, self-reflection and exploration,
and attention to classroom culture all work in conjunction to cultivate social justice attitudes among learners. In this way, social justice attitudes are described as an expanded awareness of differential experiences of social identity groups as well as a greater endorsement of ideologies that promote equity. This model presents strategies for teaching social justice across cultural groups in order to promote greater awareness of students’ own social identities and increase social consciousness regarding the identities and experiences of others. Other education models build on these precepts by discussing specific processes and challenges associated with employing social justice within school contexts (Dover, 2009; Dover, 2013).

**Conceptual Models for Allyship.** Allyship models describe social and environmental attributes that promote the development of social justice ally identities among White individuals (Broido, 2000; Broido & Reason, 2005; Edwards, 2006; Munin & Speight, 2010; Reason, Roosa Millar, & Scales, 2005). Broido’s (2000) seminal study presented a model of the development of social justice allies using White college students. This work summarized three central elements that promote activism among allies: a) acquiring information on concepts of privilege, oppression, the social construction of identities, and mechanisms for change; b) utilizing cognitive processes of meaning-making through discussion, self-reflection, and perspective taking exercises; and c) engaging with stimuli that allow for an increased sense of self-confidence, often including activities that take place prior to entering college and those that reinforce one’s cultural competence.

Other models have expanded these core principles by summarizing cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors that also contribute to allyship development (Bishop, 2002; Munin & Speight, 2010). Specifically, Bishop’s social justice ally framework recommends six cognitive and behavioral foci that inform development, mainly focusing on one’s willingness to confront
oppression through self-education and activism. This model positions maturity of racial identity and consciousness of social ideology as primary outcomes of allyship development. Finally, Edwards (2006) organized social justice allyship based on motives that inspire individuals to assume ally roles, and how these motives inform effectiveness of their advocacy.

**Empowerment for Activism and Action.** Empowerment models of social justice describe factors that motivate individuals to engage in activism and other forms of action in efforts to disrupt systems that recreate social hierarchy (Dessel et al., 2006; Goodman, 2000; McDaniel, 2017; Portman & Portman, 2002). Portman and Portman (2002) present specific guidelines for training youth in social justice paradigms for the purposes of intervention and activism. This eight-module curriculum aims to prepare students for social justice action by focusing on three main criteria: knowledge of sociopolitical systems, awareness of identities among self and others, and skills for advocacy within the primary and secondary school contexts. Other models that have since been developed replicate and build upon these fundamental themes of self-awareness of social identities, knowledge acquisition regarding ideological approaches, and preparation for action (Goodman, 2000; McDaniel, 2017; Dessel et al., 2006). For instance, Dessel and colleagues (2006) contend that interpersonal stimuli can work to activate social justice activism, and presents intergroup dialogue as one such example for expanding awareness and mobilizing action. In addition, Goodman (2000) asserts that internal sources of motivation, including heightened empathy, moral values that align with justice, and self-serving interests, also incite action among individuals.

In sum, social justice models outline associations among the constructs of social justice content, racial identity development, and ideological awareness. Accordingly, greater adherence to social justice tenets informs racial identity development and increased awareness of
sociopolitical ideologies. Additionally, these models theorize factors that can be utilized in conjunction in order to foster an orientation towards social justice among youth. Specifically, synthesis of this literature reveals three primary components that promote development of a social justice orientation among youth: 1) knowledge of socio-political concepts, 2) awareness of self and others, and 3) engagement in advocacy and activism.

**Social Justice Orientation Development**

Cultivating a social justice orientation is seen as a critical task in fostering short- and long-term equity across various domains of society. Social justice orientation, in this sense, refers to one’s inclination to endorse tenets that advocate for the equitable distribution of opportunities and resources across social groups within society as well as a disposition to engage in advocacy and allyship to this end (Reason et al., 2005a). Positioned as a stimulus for racial identity and ideological development in the present paper, social justice orientation is thought to develop through intentional and meaningful engagement with conceptual and procedural data (Figure 1). Indeed, social justice models assert that social justice orientation can be fostered by activating one’s theoretical and practical competence in the following areas: 1) knowledge of socio-political concepts, 2) awareness of self and others as social beings in relation to society, and 3) identification of the need for and strategies of promoting social action in the form of advocacy and activism. Particulars of this process are described below.

Increasing individuals’ knowledge of socio-political concepts is foundational in fostering students’ social justice orientation (Hackman, 2005; Kraft, 2007; Portman & Portman, 2002). This involves establishing a clear, consistent, and shared understanding of the meaning of social justice as well as constructs that are related to race, ideology, and social justice tenets (Broido, 2000; McDaniel, 2017). From a pedagogical perspective, this process also includes providing
individuals with opportunities to learn concepts across multiple planes of comprehension (Bishop, 2002), including understanding, application, analysis, and evaluation (Bloom, 1965).

A second task in cultivating a social justice orientation among youth is to increase one’s awareness of self and others as beings that interact within and across social designations (Kraft, 2007; Portman & Portman, 2002). Social justice training models highly emphasize awareness of self and others as a prerequisite for identity development (Kraft, 2007; McDaniel, 2017; Suyemoto et al., 2015). Awareness in this sense is defined as an active consciousness of one’s social identities and a working understanding of the social interplay of identities across structures of society (McDaniel, 2017). This also involves a cognizance of one’s ideological lenses, including understanding how these lenses have been formed and how they currently function to influence the ways in which one interprets their social environments (Aldana, Rowley, Checkoway, & Richards-Schuster, 2012; Cammarota & Romero, 2011; Dessel et al., 2006).

Fostering a social justice orientation also includes expanding one’s understanding of the need for social action and presenting strategies for effective advocacy and activism (Edwards, 2006; Portman & Portman, 2002). This involves identifying issues that exist within society, which differentially impact individuals’ experiences based on their social identities (Bishop, 2002). Further, this process also involves promoting an understanding of how ideologies influence the ways in which social problems are conceptualized (McDaniel, 2017). Additionally, a final step includes empowering individuals to develop and employ effective advocacy strategies in order to address social issues (Cammarota & Romero, 2011; Katz et al., 2011; Suyemoto et al., 2015).

In short, activating individuals’ awareness in relation to these three areas can foster development of racial identity and ideology by promoting critical reflexivity in relation to one’s
social interactions. This occurs most effectively by involving adolescents in structured social justice training programs, which provide opportunities for critical engagement with socio-political discourse as well as concrete opportunities for action (Dessel, 2006; McDaniel, 2017; Tauriac et al., 2013; Wernick, 2012). When grounded in core tenets of social justice models, existing training programs have demonstrated empirical success in cultivating a social justice orientation among youth, as well as in promoting racial and ideological development.

Social Justice Training Programs

Social justice orientation does not occur spontaneously within adolescents, but rather is cultivated through both deliberate and incidental exposure to environmental inputs. Social justice training programs are formal interventions that expose students to education and strategies in order to “challenge, confront, and disrupt misconceptions, untruths, and stereotypes that lead to structural inequality” (Nieto, 2010, p. 46). These programs aim to promote critical thinking, self-exploration, and social agency among youth (Harrell-Levy, Kerpelman, & Henry, 2016).

Many programs that aim to introduce social justice themes and train individuals to adopt values related to social justice principles are targeted to college student populations (Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Kraft, 2007; Munin & Speight, 2010; Presseau et al., 2019). In recent years, however, there has been an increase in social justice training programs for adolescents. Some programs are aimed at preparing youth from marginalized populations to become activists within their environments and on behalf of their own cultural communities (Cammarota & Romero, 2011; Harrell-Levy et al., 2016; Suyemoto et al., 2015). Several others have assumed the undertaking of educating White and privileged youth in order to become allies in social justice action (Katz et al., 2011; Kawecka Nenga, 2011; Tauriac et al., 2013; Wernick, 2012). Further, training programs come in many different forms, including course-based instruction (Brown et
al., 2017; Williamson, 2017), community-based initiatives (Katz et al., 2011; Cammarota & Romero, 2011), and virtual interventions (Kornbluh, Neal, & Ozer, 2016).

While program structure may differ across intervention type, social justice training programs converge in their adherence to the three precepts of social justice orientation development in fostering ideological growth as well as racial identity development. That is, effective training programs include aspects of each of the three features, fostering an awareness of self and others, enhancing knowledge of socio-political constructs, and promoting activation of advocacy and allyship.

**Effectiveness of Social Justice Training Programs.** Training programs that adhere to the above social justice orientation model report success in fostering a range of benefits among adolescent participants (Aldana et al., 2012; Cammarota & Romero, 2011; Harrell-Levy et al., 2017; Kawecka Nenga, 2011; Suyemoto et al., 2015; Tauriac et al., 2013; Umaña et al., 2018). While these benefits can be described as intrapersonal as well as social and collective gains within a program or organization, the primary focus of this review investigates individual changes in latent developmental constructs. According to this scope, efficacy of training programs can be best summarized in terms of ability to: a) promote ideological understanding and b) promote racial development among participants.

**Effectiveness of SJTPs in Promoting Ideological Understanding.** Many social justice training programs have also demonstrated efficacy in expanding participants’ understanding of socio-political content (Aldana et al., 2012; Cammarota & Romero, 2011; Kawecka Nenga, 2011; Wernick, 2012). Furthermore, increased knowledge of sociopolitical topics is related to a decrease in youth’s adherence to ideologies that reinforce racial disparities and a more effectual ability to challenge racial privilege (Aldana et al., 2012; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013).
Kawecka Nenga (2011) provided a direct example of such gains through investigating the experiences of adolescents who participated in a range of volunteer opportunities, over time. This study concluded that a majority of youth began their volunteer initiatives with deficit mindsets about groups with whom they engaged during their work. Towards the end of their volunteer term, however, youth who completed formal social justice training sessions throughout their work were more likely to challenge and reconstruct these ideologies.

An ultimate goal of many social justice training programs is to empower action among participating youth. Accordingly, many of these programs are effective in fostering a heightened desire among participants to take action as well as in promoting activist behaviors of participating adolescents (Katz et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2017; Suyemoto et al., 2015). For instance, Katz et al. (2011) found that students exposed to their training program were significantly more likely to recognize and intervene in instances of injustice than were control group students. Moreover, nearly 20% of students in a similar study indicated that participation generated a desire to take steps in order to actualize program goals (Tauriac et al., 2013). Youth have also reported experiencing a deepened sense of responsibility and preparedness as a consequence of participation, with some even taking on leadership and advocacy roles after training completion (Kawecka Nenga, 2011; Kim et al., 2017). Suyemoto and colleagues (2015) found that many of the adolescents in their study assumed activism roles after concluding their training. Finally, students who participate in SJTPs often express more positive outcomes when they do engage in action than do those who do not first complete a training program before taking on advocacy roles (Kawecka Nenga, 2011). This was indeed the case with adolescents in Kawecka Nenga’s (2011) study, which found that youth who received more training before
taking on roles reported feeling more equipped, and experienced higher rates of satisfaction in their volunteer work.

**Effectiveness of SJTPs in Promoting Racial Development.** Social justice training programs elicit increased self-awareness and awareness of identity within participants by providing students opportunities to explore aspects of their social selves (Cammarota & Romero, 2011; Harrell-Levy et al., 2016; Suyemoto et al., 2015). One primary effect for adolescents who have engaged in training programs is a deeper exploration of self as a result of participation (Aldana et al., 2012; Harrell-Levy et al., 2016; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2018). As such, Tauriac and colleagues (2013) found that about 40% of students who participated in their intergroup dialogue workshop reported having a greater understanding of the perspectives of others. Similarly, after offering an intervention aimed at increasing adolescents’ racial development, Umaña-Taylor and colleagues (2018) concluded that treatment group participants reported significantly higher rates of racial exploration than did those in the control group. In like manner, Aldana and colleagues (2012) reported that high school students in their social justice training workshop demonstrated a statistically significant increase in racial identity exploration over time. Ultimately, these programs have demonstrated success in influencing a more sophisticated racial identity development among adolescent adolescents.

Although much of the research described in this review included populations of youth from “privileged” identities, including White youth and economically advantaged youth, there are only a few known studies that purposefully investigate color-blind attitudes and racial development among White participants (Thomann & Suyemoto, 2018; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2018). Thomann and Suyemoto (2018) use a qualitative approach to explore how White middle school youth develop in their understanding of structural racism over time. Similarly, Umaña-
Taylor and colleagues (2018) conducted a pilot study to examine identity development of racially diverse adolescents involved in a training program. Further, Kawecka Nenga (2011) categorized responses of volunteer youth as they exhibit one of the four frames of CBI, suggesting that over three quarters of interviewed youth utilized color-blindness to describe their volunteer work with marginalized populations. Moreover, the author notes that youth who refrained from employing these frames were also more likely to have participated in intensive and ongoing social justice training programs throughout their volunteer work.

While research on social justice training programs provide some narrative regarding participant effects, much of this literature does not explicitly examine participant outcomes. Instead, current literature focuses primarily on program descriptives (Brown et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2017; Suyemoto et al., 2015; Tauriac et al., 2013; Williamson, 2017). This creates a major limitation in being able to systematically assess program outcomes generated by participation. Moreover, for studies that did evaluate participant gains, many relied almost exclusively on qualitative methods that concentrate on the trainees’ anecdotal descriptions of program outcomes (Cammarota & Romero, 2011; Kats et al., 2011; Kawecka Nenga, 2011; Wernick, 2012).

Providing an empirical assessment of participant outcomes through both qualitative and quantitative methodology would address this limitation by demonstrating measurable effects of the training intervention. Furthermore, incorporating an experimental research design would also be advantageous in allowing researchers to investigate cumulative changes in variables of interest over time.

The studies outlined in this review have provided valuable preliminary information about processes that inform racial and ideological development for youth. However, a gap exists in understanding identity development and adherence to color-blind ideology for White adolescents
and adolescents of color engaging in social justice training programs for the purposes of preparing youth to on peer allyship roles. The current study aims to fill these gaps by examining the development of racial identity and utilization of color-blind ideologies among adolescents engaged in a social justice training program, the Social Justice Summer Institute, whose ultimate aim functioned to prepared students to assume the role of peer allies within their educational context.

**Components of the Social Justice Summer Institute**

The structure of the present social justice training program, the Summer Institute, is organized into two distinct parts: 1) racial identity discourse and 2) ideological rhetoric. Informed by a comprehensive review of literature regarding social justice orientation development, the present program utilizes a range of approaches in integrating content for these two primary components in order to shape student development.

**Racial Identity Discourse.** Racial identity discourse was the first component integrated into curricula for the Summer Institute, and was included in order to promote racial development among participants. A variety of strategies were employed in order to introduce content and allow space for student processing throughout each day of the program. Further, the presentation of this content was grounded in the three primary tenets of social justice orientation development, which emphasize materials that promote: 1) knowledge of socio-political concepts, 2) awareness of self and others as social beings in relation to society, and 3) strategies for promoting social action in the form of advocacy and activism.

The first objective was to increase students’ understanding of racial constructs. This involved providing clear, concise definitions of critical terms, including: identity, race, racial identity, and racism. Participating students were also provided educational content about the
history and development of race and racial categories, which allowed them to connect present-day social injustices, frequently cited stereotypes, and common acts of discrimination with racial identities and experiences. Education occurred through the use of educational lectures, experiential lessons, and cross-group dialogues. Further, students were provided opportunities to apply their knowledge of constructs to real-life situations in order to deepening understanding of presented content. Strategies to accomplish this included providing students with statistical data to support content, and prompting students to assess aspects of their communities to identify racial injustices. Moreover, the training program provided individuals with opportunities to complete the Implicit Bias Test and other self-assessments, additional strategies in helping participants to acquire a stronger understanding of presented concepts.

The second objective in promoting racial development was to increase participants’ awareness of self and others in relation to one’s social identities. Such awareness was most frequently generated through experiential activities that allowed individuals to critically consider one’s racial classification as well as one’s lived experiences based on their racial identities. Intra-group and inter-group dialogues, which can happen through structured or organic discourse, reflection exercises, including creating genograms and reflective journaling, and media presentations are all examples of strategies used to cultivate greater awareness of racial identities.

The final objective was to increase understanding of the need for and strategies of promoting advocacy and activism. For the racial component, this included exploring how racial identity impacts the lived experiences of the school’s student body in which participants attended, and identifying critical areas of needed change. Students accomplished this by reflecting on the shared narratives of fellow program participants as well as examining climate
survey data provided by school administration. Further, part of participating in the training program meant that students would assume a formalized advocate role within their school during the following academic year. Therefore, students used the time provided during the training program to outline how they could incorporate aspects of racial allyship within their roles.

Ideological Rhetoric. The second component that was integrated into the present program is ideological rhetoric, and is integral in allowing students to understand concrete notions of social justice and allyship. Ideological content was grounded in the three primary tenets of social justice programming, including to foster development in the following domains: 1) knowledge of socio-political concepts, 2) awareness of self and others as social beings in relation to society, and 3) strategies of promoting social action in the form of advocacy and activism.

The first objective of the Summer Institute was to foster a universal understanding of the concept of social justice as well as promote a shared understanding of sociopolitical concepts related to social justice. Core sociopolitical concepts introduced within this program included race, privilege, power, and systemic oppression, as they manifest within the United States. Facilitators introduced definitions of core terms, discussed historical events corresponding to these terms, and explored current hegemonic policies. Content was introduced through didactic lessons as well as experiential activities and interactive discussions among participants and facilitators in order to foster active learning. Specifically, instructors built lessons according to the problem-based learning pedagogy, where students were immersed in problem-solving scenarios in which they had to navigate. These sessions concluded with large group debrief discussions, which introduced concepts that connected to the scenarios.
The second objective was to increase awareness of self and others as social beings in relation to society. To accomplish this, instructors built lessons according to problem-based learning approaches. This format functioned to illuminate ideologies that students unconsciously engage in making sense of scenarios. Following these activities were debrief discussion sessions, which allowed students to identify and process their ideological paradigms and grapple with the degree to which they contradicted or aligned with facets of social justice. Awareness was also promoted through experiential activities that allowed individuals to critically consider conflicting ideologies that they have endorsed.

A final objective of the training programs was to increase understanding and efficacy in social justice advocacy and allyship. This program utilized a variety of strategies in preparing adolescents for action, including embedding messages of empowerment within training curriculum, incorporating role-play exercises to practice advocacy and intervention skills, and, ultimately, involving students in development and implementation processes of a school-wide initiative that promotes justice. These strategies allowed participants to gain a more informed operational sense of activism by creating opportunities to confront and process challenges that frequently arise for individuals engaged in social action.

Put together, the three objectives of training program involved: establishing a shared language for socio-political discourse, promoting exploration of self and others, and stimulating action among allies. Collectively, these strategies worked to foster a social justice orientation within youth and, as a result, prompted ideological and racial identity development.

**Chapter Summary and Conclusion**

In a letter to his African American son, author Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015) scrutinizes the construction and exploitation of race within society:
But race is the child of racism, not the father. And the process of naming ‘the people’ has never been a matter of genealogy and physiognomy so much as one of hierarchy… the belief in the preeminence of hue and hair, the notion that these factors can correctly organize a society and that they signify deeper attributes, which are indelible – this is the new idea at the heart of these new people who have been brought up hopelessly, tragically, deceitfully, to believe that they are White. (p. 7)

The “new idea” that Coates alludes to reflects the socialization of Whiteness that has been embedded in the ideology of White populations within the U.S. While often obstructed from social consciousness, this ideology informs every aspect of civic engagement that occurs within and across the socially constructed categories of race. Moreover, while people of color have a more conscious awareness of the social consequences of race, White individuals have been socialized to overlook these ubiquitous racialized dynamics in order to maintain a hierarchical status quo.

Social justice research examines interventions that aim to disrupt racial injustice across various contexts, as well as their efficacy in accomplishing this objective. Although the focus has long been on people of color as the protagonists in establishing strategies of change, a more recent line of research has inverted this approach by investigating how White allies understand and respond to racial discourse. While a growing number of studies examine the roles of White allies engaging in social justice training and work, this review has demonstrated that very few examine changes in White racial identity development and ideological awareness that occur in response to participation in such initiatives. This project filled the gap by investigating changes in White racial identity development and adherence to color-blind ideology for adolescents engaged in a social justice training program within their high school setting.
This chapter has provided a review of literature, which explicates the complex racial exchanges that inform the experiences of racialized groups within society. Guided by the theoretical frameworks of White Racial Identity Development and the Color-Blind Ideology Model, this review has demonstrated how Whites are socialized to avoid racial discourse. Moreover, this avoidance occurs nearly automatically despite Whiteness being a critical determinant in the lived experiences and worldviews for members of this group. While such racial phenomena occurs across societal domains, this review is bounded within the context of education and, thus, provides an explicit focus on the interactions that occur within institutions of learning, and the subsequent outcomes that are produced. Further, the review examines attempts to disrupt systems of hierarchy that result from White hegemony, categorized as “social justice.”

By first defining White racial identity and color-blind ideology and later describing social justice training programs, the intention of this literature review was to outline the social dynamics that have generated racial injustice before introducing strategies for inciting change. In the next chapter, I describe methodological approaches used in examining the effects of a specific social justice training program in promoting White racial identity development and color-blind awareness among a sample of White adolescent students.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Adolescents are reporting greater motivation to take on social justice advocacy roles within their schools and communities (Wernick, 2012). Many of these youth, however, have had limited opportunities to explore their racial identities or understand how their Whiteness influences advocacy work with people from diverse backgrounds (Loyd & Gaither, 2018). Unexplored racial identities and ideologies can make it difficult for individuals to recognize incidences of bias and discrimination and can even lead to a perpetuation of structural racism (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Carter et al., 2019; Croll, 2013; Hagerman, 2016). The purpose of this study was to 1) explore changes in White racial identity for White youth engaged in a social justice training program (SJTP), 2) examine changes in racial identity and adherence to color-blind ideology for racially diverse adolescents participating in a SJTP, and 3) investigate whether differences existed between racial groups and students with previous social justice training versus those with no previous training. Independent variables of the study include: a) race and b) time. Dependent variables for the study were: a) White racial identity, b) racial identity, and c) color-blindness.

Research Questions

RQ1. What are the associations among variables of interest (White racial identity, color-blindness, and racial identity)?

RQ2. Do within group differences exist across time among White participants in White racial identity, based on participation in a social justice training program?

RQ3. Do between group differences exist in racial identity based on participation in a social justice training program? Specifically, do differences exist in racial identity from pretest to
posttest and delayed posttest? Do differences exist in racial identity across race? Do differences exist in racial identity from pretest to posttest and delayed posttest across race?

RQ4. Do between group differences exist in color-blindness, based on participation in a social justice training program? Specifically, do differences exist in color-blindness from pretest to posttest and delayed posttest? Do differences exist in color-blindness across race? Do differences exist in color-blindness from pretest to posttest and delayed posttest across race?

RQ5. What are students’ perceptions of the social justice training program?

This study explored research questions using a convergent, mixed-methods design. A repeated measure between-subjects ANOVA was employed for quantitative analysis of data and thematic analysis procedures was used for qualitative assessment of data. The convergent mixed-methods design consisted of combining both quantitative and qualitative data in order to glean a more comprehensive understanding of the research results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). For this approach, the researcher collected qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously. After collection, quantitative and qualitative data was analyzed separately and the two sets of results were then converged. The rationale for employing this approach was to establish qualitative themes as further evidence for representing and explaining quantitative results.

This chapter provides an in-depth review of research methods used in the study. I begin by describing participants of the study, including the target population, recruitment procedures, and inclusion and exclusion criteria. I then introduce and describe study instruments, procedures, research design, and data analysis methods.

Participants

The target population of participants consisted of high school students attending one of the two local, public high schools in a large northeastern town, and admitted to participate in the social justice training program (SJTP) for the summer of 2019. The classification of a large town
is defined here as an area that is more than 35 miles away from an Urbanized area (containing more than 50,000 residents) and is within an urban cluster (containing between 2,500 and 50,000 residents) as defined by the National Center for Education Statistics (Geverdt, 2015). This program was ran by the Office of Equity and Inclusivity through the local school district and functioned to train a select group of high school students in social justice and peer advocacy content. Students enrolled in this program took on the role of social justice peer advocates for the 2019-2020 school-year. A more thorough description of the program is included under procedures.

A portion of the approximately 2,500 students enrolled in the high school encompassed students who were eligible for the study, including approximately 1,800 incoming sophomores, juniors, and seniors. A total of 60 students (3.3% of eligible students) were initially admitted into the training program (70% White, 15% Black, 15% of another race), including 46 females (76%) and 5 males (8.3%), with three participants identifying as otherly gendered and six students declining to identify gender. Participants include incoming sophomores (29.3%), juniors (41.4%), and seniors (27.6%).

High-school aged students were selected as the target population for the present study in accordance with socio-emotional and cognitive developmental literature (Ginwright & James, 2002; Piaget, 1976). Specifically, adolescence is denoted as a developmental period when youth begin to explore their existential purpose and identities (Erikson, 1994). Many explore a sense of purpose through civic engagement and socio-political activism (Flanagan et al., 2009). Simultaneously, individuals in adolescence are progressing into a cognitive developmental stage denoted by an increased ability to engage with abstract constructs in a more critical manner.
Considering both, adolescent students are at the ideal developmental period for introducing training matter related to social justice.

**Recruitment Procedures.** Several recruitment procedures were used to gather applicants for the SJTP and study. Office of Equity staff visited classrooms within the high school to announce the program to students and teachers, and a link to the application was projected during the presentation. An email with the program description and application link was sent to all high school students enrolled in the district, as well as to their parents/guardians. Fliers were posted around the high school by Office of Equity staff and a short promotion video about the program, including a virtual link to the application, was created and shared with high school teachers, requesting that they show the video to their classes. Additionally, high school teachers, administrators, and staff were notified about the program and asked to recommend students to apply who they believed exhibited characteristics of a peer supporter, such as leadership, responsibility, and empathy (Appendix A). Email invitations were sent to students based on these recommendations, which included a description of the program and link to the application (Appendix B).

**Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria.** Inclusion criteria included enrollment in high school within the local district during the 2019-2020 school-year, incoming 10th, 11th, or 12th grade status, admission to the training program by the Director of Equity and Inclusivity for the local district, attendance to the week-long training program, and completion of all qualitative and quantitative assessments. Exclusion criteria were as follows: not enrolled in high school within the local district during the 2019-2020 school-year, incoming 9th grade status, non-admittance to the training program by the Director of Equity, absence from the week-long training program for at least one full day, and incompletion of any part of the qualitative and quantitative assessment.
Sample Size. The recommended sample size was calculated using G-Power analysis (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner & Lang, 2009). The parameters used were an effect size of 0.25 (medium effect size); alpha error probability of .05; and power of .80, according to common practice recommendations for education research (Myers, Well, & Lorch, 2010; Richardson, 2011). This provided a sample size estimate of 34 cases.

Experimental Design

This section will describe the overall experimental design of the study, followed by a discussion of advantages and disadvantages of this design, threats to internal and external validity, and strengths regarding internal and external validity. After receiving IRB permission, this study utilized a convergent, mixed-methods, within- and between-group design to examine effects of the intervention over time. For quantitative analysis, and within-group repeated-measures ANOVA was used to compare outcome measures from the three survey instruments (WRCDS-R, CoBRAS, and MEIM-R) over three time points (T1, T2, and T3). Additionally, between-group repeated-measures ANOVA was used to compare outcome measures from the three survey instruments, with race and prior social justice training as between-group factors.

Qualitative responses of students was collected in the form of journal entries, and was coded and thematized to further inform conclusions of identity development and use of color-blind ideological frames. Qualitative analysis was employed an a-priori coding scheme grounded in the thematic analysis approach, which allowed the researcher to organize written data into predetermined themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Ultimately, a side-by-side comparison of qualitative and quantitative outcomes was used to assess each of the three variables of interest among participants (Creswell, 2014).
Advantages and Disadvantages to Research Design

One advantage to the research design for this study was that it included the use of a mixed-methods approach in order to investigate changes in student outcomes as a result of the intervention. This allowed for the researcher to gain a more comprehensive understanding of: 1) whether there was a change in racial identity, including how this change may have occurred, and 2) changes in color-blind ideologies as a result of the intervention. Further, this design offset limitations of independent quantitative and qualitative designs by taking into account the context and participant narrative in interpreting results while minimizing personal biases in interpretation of outcomes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). A second advantage was the collection of data at three time points throughout the study in order to gain more precise and potentially more robust findings. Including a third data point also helped to inform retention of information over a period of time (Creswell, 2014). An additional advantage was the inclusion of color-blind frames to inform racial identity development among participants. Many studies that investigate identity qualitatively include a discussion of the use of color-blindness post hoc, but do not include it as a direct variable of interest (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Cabrera, 2012; Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009 Peters et al., 2016). Previous literature suggests a clear link between identity development and adherence to color-blind ideologies (Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009; Paone et al., 2015).

One disadvantage to the study was having a relatively small sample size and a heterogeneous sample of students that will be participating in the intervention. A large majority (70%) of participants identify as White, with 30% identifying racially as participants of color (POC). There was no known racial identity measure for racial groups of color that has demonstrated comparability to White racial identity measures. Further, the White identity research question did not lend itself to a comparison group of participants of color. Data was,
therefore, collected from White students on measures of White racial identity and color-blind ideology, and was collected from students of color on racial identity development color-blind ideology. This supports prior research that did compare color-blind attitudes of racially diverse samples and suggested that populations of color also engaged color-blind ideologies (Burkard & Knox, 2004; Manning, Hartmann & Gerteis., 2015). One disadvantage to the mixed-methods design was the complexity of employing this research approach, as it often requires more time and resources to carry out than other, traditional research designs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Additionally, it may have introduce additional threats to validity, which must be considered when designing and conducting the research study.

**Internal/External Validity Threats and Strengths**

The convergent mixed-methods design utilized in the present study consisted of combining both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Since each design was collected and analyzed independently and compared at the final stage of analysis, threats to internal and external validity, as well as strengths of internal and external validity, are discussed separately.

**Threats to Quantitative Analysis.** Limitations of the study include threats to internal and external validity. Potential threats to internal validity included: selection bias, attrition, history, and testing. All participants in this training intervention self-selected to be involved, which means that there was a higher likelihood that they have characteristics, which predispose them to certain outcomes. This selection bias could have threaten validity of the outcomes. Attrition was a second potential limitation for this study as younger participants can be more likely to drop-out of studies prematurely than older populations (Edlund, Wang, Berlund… & Kessler, 2002). This intervention was protracted over an extended period of time, which
presented a greater threat to attrition. History was an added threat to validity. Many participants attend the same high school and reside in the same, small town, which means that significant racialized events that occurred within the community could have potentially impact outcomes for all students. One such example could be the recent killing of a Black male by local police. This incident incited public outcry and protests among many youth and adults within the community and fractured a sense of safety from blatant injustices such as this. An additional threat worth noting was testing validity, as participants completed the same surveys at three separate time periods. This could have cause them to become familiar with the measures, making outcomes less robust.

There were two primary threats to external validity within this study, selection and setting. The sample consisted entirely of high school students attending schools in a small district located in a rural community, who have opted to participate in a social justice intervention program. As such, the findings may not be generalizable beyond populations who share similar characteristics with the sample. Moreover, there may also be an inability to generalize beyond characteristics of the setting. This setting includes the parameters of the training program and high school context.

**Threats to Qualitative Analysis.** Potential threats to validity, or credibility, in qualitative methodology include descriptive validity, interpretation validity, research bias, and reactivity (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Jones, 2009). Descriptive validity pertains to the data that is recorded versus that data that is collect out during the data collection phase of a study. Further, interpretation validity includes the imposing of one’s own framework or meaning to data that is captured. This occurs when the perspectives and meanings of the researcher obscures the actual words or meanings of those being studied. Similarly, researcher bias is an additional threat to
validity for the utilized methodological approach in the present study. Researcher bias includes the individual biases that a researcher inevitably introduces to the research process based on their own identities, experiences, ideologies, or observations. Finally, reactivity occurs when the mere presence of the researcher affects the setting and individuals being observed. Validity was increased by fidelity to established data analysis methodology as well as by providing transcribed transparency for all stages of the investigation process. Specific strategies to ensure validity will be described in the next section (Wertz, 2005).

**Strengths of Quantitative Analysis.** There are four main strengths regarding internal validity, including: maturation, regression, testing, and instrumentation (Creswell, 2014; Jones et al., 2014). Maturation was mediated by recruiting participants within a bounded age group, as they are likely to mature in similar fashion throughout the intervention. Additionally, it was assumed that, based on self-selection and common interests of participants, there will be less likelihood of extreme scores that influence the overall mean (Myers et al., 2010). Regression was, therefore, mitigated in this study. Further, there was an extended time interval between administration of the assessment at time points 2 and 3 in order to address the testing threats. Finally, instrumentation was an added strength to internal validity as all participants completed the same instruments for pre, posttest, and delayed posttest measures (Myers et al., 2010).

**Strengths of Qualitative Analysis.** There are four specific strategies that were employed for qualitative analysis to enhance validity, which included triangulation, peer debriefing, inclusion of discrepant content, and researcher reflexivity (Creswell, 2014; Jones et al., 2014). Triangulation was utilized by comparing journal response themes to survey analyses in order to further corroborate results. Further, both sets of data were compared to the theoretical frameworks utilized in the present study as well as results reported by similar literature in order
to interpret and explain outcomes. Peer debriefing was be included to enhance accuracy of data analysis by requesting a peer reviewer to contribute to the analysis. Specifically, feedback was elicited from a researcher who is familiar with the research study, but who was not directly involved. This individual reviewed the themes and converged data, and provided feedback on its coherence. Additionally, discrepant data that did not align with created themes or quantitative results was identified and discussed in order to strengthen validity. This included clearly identifying data that did not fit into the pre-determined themes as well as data, which potentially disproved established themes. Finally, the primary researcher included a reflexivity statement in order to establish transparency regarding potential bias and clarify positionality in relation to all aspects of the study.

**Instrumentation**

The seven measures used in this study include: 1) a demographic questionnaire, 2) the White Racial Consciousness Development Scale- Revised (WRCDS-R; Lee et al., 2007), 3) the Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville et al., 2000), 4) the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure- Revised (MEIM-R; Phinney & Ong, 2007), 5) the Scale of Ethno-cultural Empathy (SEE; Wang et al., 2003), 6) Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (SDS; Crowne & Marlowe, 1960), and 7) the Peer Advocate Program Evaluation Survey (PAPES). Qualitative data was also collected and assessed in the form of journal entries. The following section provides an overview of survey measures and journal prompt information for the present study.
Table 1

Reliability and Validity of Study Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Validity Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WRCDS-R</td>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>Lee et al., 2007</td>
<td>White Racial Identity</td>
<td>α= 0.67</td>
<td>Construct (Lee et al., 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reintegration</td>
<td></td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>α= 0.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pseudo-Independence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>α= 0.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>α= 0.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEIM-R</td>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td>Phinney &amp; Ong, 2007</td>
<td>Racial Identity</td>
<td>α= 0.80</td>
<td>Content and face (Phinney &amp; Ong, 2007; Yoon, 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>α= 0.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoBRAS</td>
<td>Racial Privilege</td>
<td>Neville et al., 2000</td>
<td>Color-blind Racial Attitudes</td>
<td>α= 0.89</td>
<td>Concurrent, criterion, and discriminant (Neville et al., 2000); convergent (Spanierman &amp; Heppner, 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional Discrimination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>α= 0.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blatant Racial Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>α= 0.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEE</td>
<td>Ethnocultural Empathy</td>
<td>Wang et al., 2003</td>
<td></td>
<td>α= 0.39</td>
<td>Concurrent, convergent, criterion, and discriminant (Wang et al., 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDS</td>
<td>Social Desirability</td>
<td>Crowne &amp; Marlowe, 1960</td>
<td></td>
<td>α= 0.30</td>
<td>Concurrent (Reynolds, 1982); Construct (Nicholson &amp; Hogan, 1990)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R), Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R), Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS).

Demographic Information

A demographic questionnaire was used to gather information regarding participants’ race, nationality, gender, age, and grade (Grayman & Godfrey, 2013). Additional demographic questions included school site (site A or B), years residing in current community, number of past
social justice trainings (i.e. through coursework or participation in similar community interventions), and parents highest level of education (Grayman & Godfrey, 2013; Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009).

**White Racial Consciousness Development Scale- Revised (WRCDS-R)**

The WRCDS-R was employed in the present study in order to examine racial identity statuses enlisted by White participants throughout various time-points of the intervention. The WRCDS-R was used to measure statuses of Helms’ (1984) White racial identity model among White individuals on one of the originally proposed stages (contact, reintegration, pseudo-independence, and autonomy; Appendix C). While Helms designed an instrument (White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale; WRIAS) to assess theoretical assumptions of the proposed White racial identity development model (Helms, 1995), this measure has received some criticism for its low reliability. Lee and colleagues’ (2007) revised WRCDS-R scale has been used frequently in racial identity literature as an alternative instrument for assessing stages of Helms’ WRCDS model among White groups (Bloom & Peters, 2012; Paone et al., 2015; Peters et al., 2016; Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007).

The WRCDS-R was originally developed by Claney and Parker (1989) and later revised by Lee et al. (2007). Disintegration items were deleted because of a low alpha coefficient of .26. The revised scale includes a 40-item, four factor analysis of White racial identity, using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). This scale includes four factors, contact, reintegration, pseudo-independence, and autonomy (Lee et al., 2007). Contact includes 8 items. Sample items include “I have Black friends” and “I would feel uncomfortable living near Black people”. Reintegration is measured by 14 items. Sample items include “Reversed discrimination is a big problem for Whites in America” and “Black people have
brought many of their problems on themselves”. Pseudo-Independence includes 9 items. Sample items include “White people think they are better than everyone else just because they are White” and “Dominance over others is a characteristic of White culture.” Autonomy is measured with 9 items. Sample items include “As a White person, I feel it is my responsibility to help eradicate racism and discrimination in our society” and “None of my friends would look down on me for having an interracial relationship.”

The initial WRCDS was revised through a five-phase process, with the generation of new items and elimination of other items with low validity (Lee et al., 2007). The final phase of revision demonstrated sufficient reliability with each of the remaining four subscales: Contact (.81), Reintegration (.86), Pseudo-Independence (.84), and Autonomy (.71) (Lee et al., 2007). Reliability was also demonstrated on an additional sample of 121 White counseling students at: contact (.81), reintegration (.78), pseudo-independence (.75) and autonomy (.76) for posttest scores (Paone et al., 2015).

**Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS)**

The CoBRAS was used to assess participants’ adherence to color-blind ideologies at various time-points throughout the intervention. The CoBRAS assessment is a self-report measure developed by Neville and colleagues (2000) to determine color-blind attitudes (Appendix D). This measure included 20-items with a three-factor analysis of color-blindness using a six-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 6 = Strongly Agree), with higher scores indicating greater levels of color-blindness. The three sub-scales of CoBRAS include: Racial Privilege, Institutional Discrimination, and Blatant Racial Issues. Racial Privilege subscale includes a 7-item measure of awareness of White privilege. Sample item includes “Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.” Institutional
Discrimination subscale includes 7 items that measure awareness of structural discrimination. Sample item includes “Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and adopt the values of the U.S.” Blatant Racial Issues is a 6-item measure of awareness of overt forms of discrimination. Sample item includes “Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.”

Reliability was demonstrated in the initial development of the instrument in a sample of 282 college students and community members from the Midwest and West Coast regions (Neville et al., 2000). The alpha coefficients for reliability reported in original validation of this measure included .91 for the overall scale, Racial Privilege (RP; .83), Institutional Discrimination (ID; .81), and Blatant Racial Issues (BRI; .76) (Neville et al., 2000). Content validity, concurrent validity, and criterion-related validity were also established in the initial development of the measure (Neville et al., 2000). Reliability was also demonstrated on an additional sample of 341 adults with ages ranging from 18 – 84 (M= 35) with the following estimates: RP (.79), ID (.75) and BRI (.73) (Campón & Carter, 2015). Further, criterion validity with the Appropriated Racial Oppression Scale was also established in this study (Campón & Carter, 2015).

**Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure- Revised (MEIM-R)**

The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure- Revised is a 6-item instrument that examined individuals’ sense of affinity towards their own self-identified racial/ethnic groups on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale (Appendix E; Phinney & Ong, 2007). The two subscales of the MEIM-R included: Exploration, a three-item subscale that assessed the degree to which an individual takes action to better connect with their racial/ethnic affinity group, and Commitment, a three-item subscale that assessed the degree to which an individual feels a strong established connection to their racial/ethnic group. The measure was developed and revised by
Phinney and Ong (2007) as a means of assessing how strongly individuals feel connected to their ethnic/racial identities independent of other groups. The measure was validated on a sample of ethnically diverse high school students, with a Cronbach’s alpha of .81, and college students with a Cronbach’s alpha of .90. A sample item includes “I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.”

While it is conventionally used to assess ethnic identity, defined by cultural factors, including nationality, region, ancestry, and language, it can also be used to determine one’s affinity to a racial group, or group of individuals categorized based on physical characteristics (Phinney, 1992). Further, it is one of only few measures, which examines changes in racial identity across diverse racial groups (Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Stracuzzi & Sava, 2003). Therefore, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure- Revised was used in the present study to examine racial identity in diverse youth.

**Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy**

The Scale of Ethno-cultural Empathy was used to assess empathetic attitudes among participants at various time-points throughout the intervention. Ethno-cultural empathy was used as a covariate. The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE) is an instrument that measures three core components of empathy that are expressed towards individuals across cultural settings: intellectual empathy, empathic emotions, and communication of experienced empathy (Appendix F; Wang et al., 2003). The SEE included 31 items measured on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Further, items are organized across four subscales, including Empathetic Feeling and Expression (EFE), Empathetic Perspective Taking (EP), Acceptance of Cultural Differences (AC), and Empathetic Awareness (EA).
The Empathetic Feeling and Expression subscale includes 15-items measuring affective communication in response to instances of discrimination experienced by groups holding differing racial identities from one’s own (.90). A sample item for EFE includes “I share the anger of those who face injustice because of their racial and ethnic backgrounds.” Empathetic Perspective Taking measures an individual’s expressed effort to understand another’s worldview across 7-items (.79). A sample item includes “I know what it feels like to be the only person of a certain race or ethnicity in a group of people.” Acceptance of Cultural Differences is a 5-item subscale measuring one’s intention to accept and celebrate the cultural traditions of another group (.71). A sample item for the AC subscale includes “I feel annoyed when people do not speak standard English (R).” Finally, the Empathetic Awareness subscale includes four items, which measure one’s knowledge of the experience of those from another racial group (.74). A sample item includes “I recognize that the media often portrays people based on racial or ethnic stereotypes” (Wang et al., 2003). Items with a factor load of above .70 were selected, which included six items across the four sub-groups.

**Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale-Short**

The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (SDS) was included as a covariate variable in order to determine participants’ likelihood of responding to items based on social desirability (Appendix G). The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (SDS) is a 33-item instrument used to measure individuals’ tendencies to respond to self-reported items according to societal norms of social decorum (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). Original validation reported an alpha coefficient of .88 for a sample of college students. Sample items include “No matter who I’m talking to, I’m always a good listener” and “I’m always willing to admit it when I make a mistake,” and are assessed based on true/false responses. Following its initial development and
validation, the scale has been shortened into various short-form versions in order to measure the social desirability construct more efficiently (Loo & Thorpe, 2000; Reynolds, 1982).

**Peer Advocate Program Evaluation Survey**

Informed by program goals, participants were asked to complete the Peer Advocate Program Evaluation Survey (PAPES) in order to garner feedback about general participant gains as a result of participation (Appendix H). The survey consisted of five scaling and open-ended questions, and will be administered during the final round of data collection (T3). Survey items were developed by the researcher, based on program goals identified by the program director and sampled by evaluative literature of social justice interventions for youth (Tauric et al., 2013; Wernick, 2012). Sample survey questions include “Based on training components of the program, how prepared do you feel in your ability to recognize instances of bias, bullying, and harassment occurring at school?” and “If your friend were interested in social justice, would you recommend the program to them?”

**Journal Entries**

Journal entry data was collected to elucidate racial identity development processes and adherence to color-blind ideology among participants (Appendix I). Journal prompts were developed by the researcher and informed by literature outlining the development of social justice attitudes among adolescents (Broido & Reason, 2005; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Flanagan et al., 2007; Flanagan et al., 2009; Grayman & Godfrey, 2013; Zaff et al., 2008). Further, analysis of journal responses utilized the a-priori thematic analysis approach and is described in detail in the data analysis section (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
Program Description

The Peer Advocate Program was an initiative that trained a select group of high school students in social justice competencies in order to prepare them in supporting, educating, and advocating for the needs of their fellow peers. Training included attending a week-long, 50-hour Social Justice Summer Institute, with daily lessons focused on increasing knowledge about: awareness of racial/ethnic, LGBTQ+, and other social identities; identification of bias and instances of injustice both within and beyond the school context; exposure to strategies for advocacy and activism; and learning about mental health concerns and practicing basic counseling skills to be able to carry out peer counseling. Five faculty from the local university conducted training sessions in each of these described topics based on their area of expertise. Ally roles within the peer advocate program included: peer counselors, small group facilitators, peer presenters, community liaisons, and peer mediators. Students self-selected ally roles based on personal interest. Beyond this initial training, peer advocates attended a day-long fall retreat and will continue to attend ongoing monthly training in the above topics throughout the school year. Throughout summer and fall training sessions, students also learned skills and strategies for performing these roles.

The primary objective of the Peer Advocate Program was to foster social justice peer allies who are prepared to take on a number of allyship roles within their school context. With this aim in mind, program developers set out to determine the most effective processes of developing and executing the project. The following section details the development of the Peer Advocate Program and clarifies the researcher’s role in designing and executing the initiative. Further, details regarding development and implementation of the program were provided by the program’s director (Chatters, S.J., personal communication, September 23, 2019).
Program Development

The Peer Advocate Program is situated within the school district’s Office of Equity and Inclusivity and was developed by the Director of Equity along with a team of consultants with expertise in related areas. Consultants consisted of: a) faculty from a local research university specializing in topics related to social justice and equity, b) community experts who coordinated community-based programs geared towards matters of equity and diversity, c) district teachers and administrators who have been active in equity efforts, and d) interested district parents. This team contributed to the program by establishing program goals and providing recommendations for content, recruitment of students, program duration, and program processes. This team met a total of five times over the course of six months in working develop the program.

After eliciting input from the consultant team, the Office of Equity and Inclusivity met several times throughout the spring semester to finalize program goals and processes. Overall, the Office of Equity and Inclusivity declares three primary goals in developing the Social Justice Peer Advocate program. These goals include: training a select group of high school students to recognize instances of bias, bullying, and harassment within the school context; equipping students to respond to situations of bias, bullying, or harassment; and providing students with skills for supporting their peers who have experienced bias-based targeting. As indicated by the Director of Equity, “The school climate survey indicated that kids were witnessing and experiencing bullying, especially kids of color and kids that are LGBT” (Chatters, S.J., personal communication, September 23, 2019). As such, program goals were derived out of a demand to address persisting discriminatory issues occurring within the school context.
**Program Design.** The specific program operations of the Social Justice Peer Advocate project and Summer Institute were informed by a thorough review of social justice training program literature. Based on these best practice recommendations, the program coordinator and director created an outline of topics and daily procedures, which included summer training as well as fall and spring sessions (see Appendix J). The training program included three 45-minute informational sessions, five consecutive days of training over the summer, one half-day retreat at the beginning of the school year, four monthly meetings with all students over the fall semester, and four optional training sessions on topics related to the program during the fall semester.

The information sessions were co-conducted by the Director of Equity and the program coordinator, and consisted of three 45-minute presentations, which described the overall program goals, training outline, and role descriptions for students who completed the training and took on the roles of Peer Advocates. These sessions were provided to students who applied to participate in the program as well as their families.

The Social Justice Summer Institute consisted of five, 10-hour days of training for students who applied and fulfilled requisites to participate in the program. Each day started out with an ice-breaker activity, which allowed students to begin building relationships with one another. Following this were three two-hour sessions each day, where students were introduced to various topics related to identity awareness and social justice topics. During this time, students were able to engage with the content in a variety of ways, interact with participants from a range of family and cultural backgrounds, and participate in self-exploration exercises and reflective discussions. Finally, each day also included two large-group debrief sessions, one before lunch and one at the end of the day, where facilitators led participants in an all-group check-in. These periods allowed the group to air any final questions, concerns, or other feedback and provided a
space for the full group to process the day together. Lunch was also provided each day of the week and the final day of the summer institute concluded with a group celebration.

**School Context.** The Peer Advocate Program took place within a predominantly White high school situated in a rural Northeastern college borough. The population of the borough is 82% White, 11% Asian, 4% Black and about 4% Hispanic/Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). According to the district’s website, the district is consisted of about 6,800 White (80%), Black (2.4%), Asian (8%), and multiracial (5%) (State College Area School District (SCASD), 2019b). More specifically, enrollment in the high school during the current school year includes about 2,400 students in grades nine through twelve, with a graduation rate of 93 percent.

The summer leading up to the 2018-2019 school year, the district hired the first Director of Equity and Inclusivity with a goal to “provide more caring and inclusive experiences for every student” (SCASD, 2019b). As a result, the district has begun to employ a variety of strategies to assess and improve the experiences of students and families within the community by adopting a school climate and inclusive excellence policy and assessing the socio-emotional experiences of students across all grades. School climate results from the high school indicate that, of the 35% of respondents, about 40% indicated witnessing race-based bullying (SCASD, 2019a). In a similar school-wide study, students of color responded less favorably to statements probing school climate for every item except for two (n=38). A sample item for this measure included “I feel emotionally safe at my school,” where students of color scored over 13 points lower than did White students (SCASD, 2019a). According to school personnel, current measures reflect of a long history of climate issues existing within the high school (Chatters, S.J., personal communication, September 23, 2019). In short, this program was one of many initiatives by the
Office of Equity and Inclusivity to begin addressing the negative experiences of minoritized students.

**Positionality Statement**

It is imperative that qualitative protocol within mixed-methods research designs are prefaced with a transparent commentary of the researcher’s positionality in relation to the study measures (Jones et al., 2014). This statement provides readers with an exposition of my history of engagement with the research topic as well as my roles and relationships in relation to the development, implementation, and evaluation of the current study. The goal of this statement is to clarify my relationship to the research content as well as elucidate potential biases that may inform my understanding or interpretation of subject data in relation to the content of racial identity, social justice attitudes, and educational experiences of White students and students of color in high school settings.

Working in educational settings for over 10 years, I engaged with children and families of diverse racial backgrounds from early childhood age to 12th grade. Further, I served in various capacities within the school context, including as an instructional support teacher, direct early childhood instructor, school-based mental health counselor, and most recently Office of Equity and Inclusivity intern. Currently, I hold a graduate assistantship position as the Equity Liaison within a rural, northeastern school district under the direct supervision of the Director of Equity and Inclusivity. Within this role, my duties include: supporting the programming and implementation of office projects; helping to create and implement policies and procedures that coordinate with equity efforts across the district; training administrators and staff in topics related to equity, inclusivity, diversity, and identity awareness; and assisting in developing and reviewing staff and programming evaluations. In addition to these tasks, I held the principal role
of Peer Advocate Program Coordinator, where I oversaw the Social Justice Peer Advocate Program. For the purposes of this study, I refer to myself as the “program coordinator” instead of “I” in order to clarify my roles as both the researcher and the program coordinator.

As coordinator of the program of study, I helped to develop, implement, and inform evaluative practices that measure the growth and success of the program. Additionally, I worked directly with students involved in the program in helping to create recruitment efforts, providing informational sessions for students and families about the program, and communicating regularly with students who have been selected to participate in the program. Related, I coordinated with faculty from the local university to act as facilitators for the summer institute and provided content recommendations for summer and fall sessions. Finally, my role as program coordinator also entailed providing direct supervision to students who take on various peer advocate roles across the school year.

It is important to note my supervisory role in relation to the participants, as this relationship implicated an inevitable degree of authority over adolescent students involved in the program. In order to manage the existing power relationships, the project’s research team, including myself, the Director of Equity, and another graduate assistant working within the office, created and adhered to a protocol for data collection and evaluation. This protocol called for the graduate assistant to collect and compile all qualitative data completed by participants and de-identify data before providing it to myself as the primary researcher. Additionally, all participants were provided with a detailed description of the research study, including a discussion of the positionality of myself as the program coordinator and primary investigator.

In addition to my professional proximity with the research project, it is also necessary to discuss my personal connection to the topic of interest as this may, too, introduce a degree of
bias into the study’s methodology. I am a woman of color who has spent a majority of my academic and professional career in predominantly White educational institutions. As a result of the personal and professional experiences that I acquired during this time, I have a great understanding of the challenges that are faced by many other students of color within these spaces.

My worldview as a Black woman situated in majority White schools as both a student and professional has also reinforced biases related to the cultural awareness of many White individuals within these contexts. As such, my experiences suggest that many White students and educators engaged in the education process have limited opportunities to explore their racial identities. Moreover, it is my belief that the racial unawareness that results can have negative and at times even harmful effects on the racially diverse students with whom one engages. While these beliefs have been supported by empirical research, it is important to note that this position can engender a degree of bias as I engage with the narratives and perspectives of White students throughout the research process. In order to account for these biases, I: 1) enlisted in weekly supervision with the Director of Equity to regularly process and reflect on my reactions, 2) invited guest facilitators to provide training to and lead discussions about race with participating students, and 3) utilized a peer debriefer to de-identify and act as a blind reviewer during the analysis phase of research.

**Procedures**

The intervention was a two-phase series that extended throughout the summer and fall semester, and took place at two local high schools. The first phase of the intervention was a one-week, 8-hour per day social justice training program, The Social Justice Summer Institute, that presented to students content related to: race and racism; qualities of other social identities,
including sexual orientation and gender; notions of equity and inequality within education; and basic counseling skills. Guest instructors from the local university facilitated during each day of the training program, based on their particular expertise. Lessons were experiential in nature, with individual, small-group, and large-group process and reflection time built in to each day. The purpose of this training program was to prepare students to take on the role of social justice peer advocate during the 2019-2020 school-year. Sessions were, therefore, focused primarily on topics as they related to interpersonal relationships and issues within the school context.

The second phase of the intervention took place throughout the 2019 fall semester, beginning the first week of the 2019-2020 school-year, and included monthly, 90-minute “booster sessions” on content related to the original training program. During these sessions, the program coordinator presented and discussed topics of race, racism and bias, injustice and inequity, and peer counseling, as they relate to experiences that the peer advocates encountered throughout their work. The purpose of this second-series training was to ensure retention of information as well as to monitor program processes and program ethics. Peer advocates engaged challenging matters presented by fellow students. Regular check-ins helped to ensure that advocates and students were safe and appropriately supported.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected by the Office of Equity and Inclusivity in efforts to assess student change as a result of the training intervention. Data collection took place during three separate time periods (T1, T2, and T3) of the intervention: 1) pre-test (T1), collected prior to the intervention start-date, 2) post-test (T2), collected immediately after completion of phase 1 of the intervention, and 3) post-post-test (T3) collected 15-weeks after the start-date of phase 2. All survey measures were sent electronically to participants via email, which included directions for
the survey, a link to the survey, and a copy of informed consent. The survey was uploaded onto Penn State’s Qualtrics online survey program, and all responses were collected through this software. Students completed survey measures during each session of data collection.

Students who self-identified racially as White completed all items on the demographic questionnaire, WRCDS-R, CoBRAS, MEIM-R, SEE and SDS. Students that self-identified with a race other than White, or those that self-identified as having more than one race, completed all items on the demographic questionnaire and CoBRAS, MEIM-R, SEE and SDS. Research suggests that individuals with two or more races have a greater likelihood of sharing more values and experiences of their non-White identity (Csizmadia & White, 2019). Although this may not always be true, this rationale has informed the decision to separate data procedures in this way. While imputing surveys into Qualtrics, the “skip logic” feature was used to forward students to particular surveys based on selected, self-identified race. Data from participants was collected by Office of Equity staff, de-identified, and finally delivered to the primary researcher of this study for analysis.

Journal entries were also evaluated to further inform identity development processes and use of color-blind ideologies. This data source was collected during both phases of the intervention, and all students were asked to respond to journal prompts. Journal entries were collected beginning the day before the initial intervention and continuing for each day of the five-day intervention, along with journaling throughout fall sessions. Participants were asked to provide a journal response to pre-developed prompts using content, experiences, and reflections from that day’s session to inform their thinking. Journal entries were available during the evening of each day of phase 1 of the intervention and submitted onto the Canvas learning
management site no later than midnight each night. Journal entries were de-identified by Office of Equity staff and provided to the primary researcher for analysis.

**Data Analysis**

A mixed-methods design was utilized to examine research questions in order to determine 1) associations across variables of interest, 2) changes in White racial identity development among White participants, 3) changes in racial identity development among all participants, 4) changes in color-blind attitudes among all participants, and 5) participant perceptions of the training program (see table 2 for description of data analyses). The primary quantitative analyses conducted were a repeated measures ANOVA, and bivariate Pearson’s correlation. A repeated measures ANOVA was used to examine within-group changes in dependent variables across three time points as well as between-group changes in dependent variables across three time points. A bivariate correlation was used to determine relations between scales and subscales of the three dependent variables of White racial identity development, racial identity development, and color-blind ideology. The primary qualitative approached was an a-priori thematic analysis, which was used to categorize journal entry data into pre-determined themes based on adherence to theoretical frameworks of the study. Data analysis of quantitative measures will be discussed first followed by procedures for qualitative analysis.
Table 2

Description of Data Analysis Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>DV</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Analytic Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>WRCDC-R</td>
<td>Bivariate Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MEIM-R</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CoBRAS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>White racial identity</td>
<td>WRCDC-R Journal entries</td>
<td>Within-group Repeated Measures ANOVA</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A-priori Thematic Analysis</td>
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<td>Racial identity</td>
<td>MEIM Journal entries</td>
<td>Within-group Repeated Measures ANOVA</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A-priori Thematic Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td>Journal entries</td>
<td>Between-group Repeated Measures ANOVA</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>A-priori Thematic Analysis</td>
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<td>Race</td>
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<td>Between-group Repeated Measures ANOVA</td>
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<td>A-priori Thematic Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>RQ5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>PAPES Journal entries</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thematic Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R), Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R), Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS).

Time denotes study measures taken at T1, T2, and T3. Race denotes White and POC.

Quantitative Analyses

Data preparation and pre-analysis data screening. Prior to performing the main analyses, data was prepared by pairing survey data for each participant from each of the three data sets, based on self-generated codes. Survey items for each measure were then reverse coded and collapsed into subscales using Microsoft Excel software. Survey measures used to assess the
three dependent variables of White racial identity, racial identity, and color-blind ideology included the White Racial Consciousness Development Scale- Revised (WRCDS-R), Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure- Revised (MEIM-R), Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS), respectively. Survey measures used to assess the covariates of ethno-cultural empathy and social desirability included the Scale of Ethno-cultural Empathy (SEE) and the Social Desirability Scale (SDS).

IBM SPSS was used for all preliminary and primary analyses. First, the descriptive analyses (frequencies and percentages) of each of the variables were conducted in order to provide descriptive statistics of student characteristics for the sample. Next, reliability tests were then conducted to determine internal consistency for each of the five instruments utilized. As a result of low Cronbach’s alpha reliability statistics for the SEE (.39) and SDS (.30) measures, these two measures were not included in the primary analyses.

**Primary Quantitative Analyses**

**Bivariate Correlation.** Pearson’s bivariate correlations were selected for the study in order to assess whether a linear relationship exists between the variables of interest, including the three dependent variable scales and their subscales. Bivariate correlations were assessed in SPSS and were determined based on significance at the .05 level. Correlations were then summarized using a matrix of the correlation coefficients.

**Repeated Measure ANOVA.** The repeated measure analysis of variance was selected for the present study because it allows the researcher to detect changes in group means over multiple time points of the study (Myers et al., 2010). This design allowed the researcher to best analyze multiple data points for each participant in order to determine whether participants demonstrated statistically significant changes across variables of interest between at least two of
the three time points (T1, T2, and T3). For this study, the independent variable was time. The
dependent variables for each research question were White racial identity (RQ2), racial identity
(RQ3) and color-blind ideology (RQ4). Race and previous social justice training were entered as
between-group factors for RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4.

The assumption of sphericity must be examined before computing a repeated measures
ANOVA. This assumption assesses variances of differences between treatment levels when there
are at least three conditions. The assumption of sphericity was assessed using SPSS, where a
Mauchly’s test was produced for each repeated measures ANOVA that was executed. This test
produces a test statistic for differences between variances. For $p$-value test statistics that were not
significant at the .05 level, it was concluded that there were no significant differences in
variances of difference, indicating that sphericity was met. When this was the case, the $F$-ratio
that was produced was assessed as valid with no corrections. For $p$-value test statistics that were
significant at the .05 level, it was concluded that there were significant differences in variances
of differences, indicating that sphericity was not met. When this was the case, the Greenhouse-
Geisser correction was applied in order to produce a valid $F$-ratio. This correction is the most
conservative of the adjustments produced in SPSS and was utilized based on best practice
recommendations (Field, 2009). This corrected the degrees of freedom used to assess the
observed $F$-ratio.

The assumption of normality was also assessed before computing the repeated measures
ANOVA tests. This examines whether the dependent variable is normally distributed within the
sample. The assumption of normality was assessed by computing skewness and kurtosis for each
dependent variable based on the standard range of 1 to -1 (Tabachnick, Fidell, & Ullman, 2007).
The skewness and kurtosis of each scale for pretest, posttest, and delayed-posttest is reported in
Table 3. Q-Q plots and Histograms were also generating and examined for each dependent variable in order to visually assess normality (Appendix K and L, respectively).

**Table 3**

*Skewness and Kurtosis Values for Dependent Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Standard Error of Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>Standard Error of Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WRCDS-R</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Contact</td>
<td>-.85</td>
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<td>-.23</td>
<td>.97</td>
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<td>.50</td>
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<td>.97</td>
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<td>Pseudo-</td>
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<td>-.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
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<td>.50</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEIM</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>1.13*</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoBRAS</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.74</td>
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<td><strong>Posttest</strong></td>
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<td>1.16*</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEIM</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>2.03*</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoBRAS</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delayed Posttest</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WRCDS-R</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>-.58</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>-1.41*</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo-</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>-1.61*</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>-2.32*</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>8.06*</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEIM</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoBRAS</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>-1.20*</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R), Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R), Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS).

* indicates values greater than the defined critical values of -1 to 1.
First, within-subjects repeated measure ANOVA procedures were performed to test the difference in means across the three time points of the study for each of the three variables. Comparisons of contrasts follow-up analyses were then assessed for F-ratio main effects that met significance at the .05 level. Simple contrasts were defined for each variable and post hoc comparison of within-subjects contrasts were used to determine level of significance for F-ratio effects that met significance at the .05 level. Next, between-subjects conditions were included in the repeated measure ANOVA procedures to test difference in means across each of the three time points. Between-subjects conditions included race (White versus POC) and previous social justice training (yes versus no). Third, within-subjects main effects, and follow-up contrasts, and between-subjects main effects and interactions were reported for F-ratio effects that met significance at the .05 level. Finally, if significant differences were found among any of the dependent variables, the effect size, demonstrating the magnitude of difference, was assessed using the partial eta squared value generated in the SPSS output. Interpretation of the effect size benchmarks (.02= small; .13= medium; .26= large) followed best practice guidelines (Richardson, 2011).

Repeated measures ANOVA tests were conducted for each of the four subscales of the WRCDS-R, according to recommended procedures (Lee et al., 2007). Each subscale represents an independent dimension of White racial identity and, therefore, was assessed independently. Additionally, repeated measures ANOVA tests were performed for composite mean scores of the MEIM-R as well as the two subscales of exploration and commitment. Similarly, repeated measures ANOVA tests were performed for composite mean scores of the CoBRAS as well as each of the three subscales of racial privilege, institutional discrimination, and blatant racial
issues. Examining means for total CoBRAS scores as well as for each of the three subscales adheres to recommendations based on initial validation of the instrument (Neville et al., 2000).

**Missing Data**

Missing data were addressed using best practice recommendations (Schlomer, Bauman, & Card, 2010). As such, missing data was first be reported, including the amount and proportion of missing data. The researcher will then examine any patterns of missing data and determined that data was missing at random (Schlomer et al., 2010). Finally, the researcher excluded cases where data was missing.

**Qualitative Analyses**

**Journal data preparation.** Qualitative data were used to support quantitative results using a convergent, mixed-methods approach. Journal entry data for each participant was first collated and imputed into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet by a peer researcher. This data was then de-identified and shared with the primary researcher for the present study.
The final dataset included demographical information for each subject (i.e. subject ID number, race, gender, and grade), as well as text submissions from each student for each of the seven journal prompts. Word count averages for journal entries are outlined in Table 4.

**Primary Qualitative Analyses**

The general process of analysis of journal data included gathering the raw data, organizing data for analysis based on general themes, coding and thematizing the data, as informed by thematic analysis research procedures, and interpreting meaning of themes (Aronson, 1995; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Specifically, the primary coding scheme used to identify codes will be grounded in each of the theoretical frameworks. A thematic analysis approach was used for the qualitative component of this mixed-methods research design as this
approach aligns with the study’s overall objectives by allowing the researcher to categorize data based on a-priori thematic codes as well as generate meaning and descriptive information based on patterns in the data. This form of analysis also allows the researcher to converge findings with quantitative results in order to further inform outcomes. Thematic analysis for each research question is described below.

A-priori themes for RQ2 include contact, reintegration, pseudo-independence, and autonomy, based on Helms’ (1990) White Racial Identity Development model. Although Helms’ model includes a total of six racial identity statuses, thematic analysis for this research question only utilizes the four themes presented in the WRCDS-R. Researchers assert relatively low construct validity and internal consistency for the disintegration status as well as the immersion/emersion status (Lee et al., 2007). Therefore, these two statuses were not utilized in the present analysis. RQ3 is assessed according to the two subscales of exploration and commitment outlined in Phinney’s developmental model of ethnic/racial identity (Phinney & Ong, 2007). The a-priori themes included exploration and contact, in accordance with the two subscales of the MEIM-R. Additionally, a-priori themes for RQ4 were determined based on the four color-blind frames outlined in Bonilla-Silva’s (2018) color-blind ideology model, including: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism. Rather than adhering to the three subscales of the CoBRAS measure, qualitative data analyses were grounded in Bonilla-Silva’s color-blind frames. This is because the subscales for this measure are grounded in Bonilla-Silva’s frames so are not as informative as the actual frames (Hartmann, Croll, Larson, Gerteis & Manning, 2017). Finally, additional themes were examined through thematic analysis for RQ5 in order to assess student perceptions of the SJTP intervention.
Steps taken for assessing and interpreting data, in accordance with thematic analysis methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun, Clarke, Hayfield & Terry, 2018), included: 1) comprehensive review of the data, which entailed reading all entries in their entirety; 2) generating initial codes, through rereading content and establishing “meaning units,” or codes, among data extracts based broadly on the theoretical framework and proposed research questions; 3) examining codes in order to categorize data into a-priori themes; 4) identifying and refining cases that did not fit into pre-determined themes as well as themes for RQ5 such that data within themes cohere while data between themes differentiate in a clear, organized manner; 5) refining and characterizing emerging themes and themes for RQ5 by adding a name and brief description, which summarizes the nature of each individual theme in relation to the study’s research questions; and 6) organizing all themes into a comprehensive narrative and connecting qualitative themes to significant results from quantitative data.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to 1) explore changes in White racial identity for White youth engaged in a social justice training program, 2) examine changes in racial identity and adherence to color-blind ideology for racially diverse adolescent participants, and 3) examine whether differences existed between racial groups and students with previous social justice training versus those with no previous training. The following research questions were addressed:

RQ1. What are the associations among variables of interest (White racial identity, color-blindness, and racial identity)?

RQ2. Do within group differences exist across time among White participants in White racial identity, based on participation in a social justice training program?

RQ3. Do between group differences exist in racial identity based on participation in a social justice training program? Specifically, do differences exist in racial identity from pretest to posttest and delayed posttest? Do differences exist in racial identity across race? Do differences exist in racial identity from pretest to posttest and delayed posttest across race?

RQ4. Do between group differences exist in color-blindness, based on participation in a social justice training program? Specifically, do differences exist in color-blindness from pretest to posttest and delayed posttest? Do differences exist in color-blindness across race? Do differences exist in color-blindness from pretest to posttest and delayed posttest across race?

RQ5. What are students’ perceptions of the social justice training program?

Preliminary Quantitative Analysis

Repeated measures analyses of variance in the current study were conducted using the IBM SPSS 26. Preliminary analyses were conducted to test for assumptions, missing data, and
obtain descriptive data for each of the three variables of interest. See Table 5 for values on missing data.

Table 5

Counts and Percentages of Missing Data in the Current Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unweighted</th>
<th>Missing Count</th>
<th>Missing %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WRCDS-R</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo-Independence</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEIM-R</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CoBRAS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Privilege</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Discrimination</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blatant Racial Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R), Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R), Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS).

The analytic sample used in this study included 42 self-selected participants from high schools in the northeastern region. Of the 60 participants who were originally admitted into the training program, 18 students did not complete the required week-long training, yielding 42 participants for the study. Of the original students who were admitted into the program and who attended the required training, 21 students did not complete the required posttest and delayed posttest, representing a 59.5% retention rate (N=25) in the study. A summary of descriptive data is reported in Table 6. Students participating in the study identified racially as White (64.0%),
Black (12.0%), Asian (16.0%), Hispanic/Latino (4.0%), and Multi-Racial (4.0%). Based on the small sample size, racial groups were assigned based on White (64.0%) and POC (36.0%) categories. The terminology of “White” was used to describe students that self-identified racially as “White.” Similarly, the terminology of people of color, or “POC,” was used to describe students who identified racially as Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, and Multi-Racial, and was selected as a header for descriptive tables for brevity. Further, there were 19 (76.0%) female and 5 (20.0%) male students of the students that indicated gender. Participants were between 15 and 17 years of age with the mean age of the students in the study being 15.96.
Table 6

**Descriptive Data of Sample Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/Hispanic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Racial Classification</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POC</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous Training</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three instruments were utilized to examine whether dependent variables of White racial identity, racial identity, and color-blindness varied as a function of independent variables of time, race, and previous training. The instruments used in the present study included the following: a) the WRCDS-R as a measure of White racial identity development, b) the MEIM-R as a measure of racial identity development, and c) the CoBRAS as a measure of color-blind ideology. For the total sample (N=42), means and standard deviations for the WRCDS-R, MEIM-R, and CoBRAS subscales are reported in Table 7.
Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for all Variables in the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>( \alpha )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WRCDS-R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact (C)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration (R)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo-Independence (PI)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy (A)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEIM-R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoBRAS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Privilege (RP)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Discrimination (ID)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blatant Racial Issues (BRI)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R), Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R), Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS).

WRCDS-R mean scores are based on a 1 (low) to 5 (high) scale. MEIM-R mean scores are based on a 1 (low) to 5 (high) scale. CoBRAS mean scores are based on a 1 (low) to 6 (high) scale.

WRCDS-R items are measured across four subscales, including contact, reintegration, pseudo-independence, and autonomy measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Higher scores on contact indicate greater cross-cultural interaction with people of color. Higher scores on reintegration denote greater accusatory attitudes towards people of color. Further, higher scores on pseudo-independence indicate stronger blame towards White populations. Finally, higher scores on autonomy reflect greater foreclosure of one’s White racial identity. The MEIM-R has two subscales, exploration and commitment, and is assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Higher scores across each subscale reflect a more developed racial identity.
Lastly, CoBRAS items are measured based on composite scores of the scale as well as across three subscales of racial privilege, institutional discrimination, and blatant racial issues, and are rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree). Higher scores on the CoBRAS denote greater adherence to color-blind ideologies. See Table 8 for descriptions of instrument scales.

**Table 8**

*Description of quantitative instrument scaling values*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Scaling Values</th>
<th>Description of Scaling Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WRCDS-R</td>
<td>1 (low) to 5 (high)</td>
<td>Contact: High scores indicate greater degree of White racial identity development as denoted by higher rates of cross-racial interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reintegration: High scores indicate lower degree of White racial identity development as denoted by stronger denigrating attitudes towards people of color.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pseudo-Independence: High scores indicate greater degree of White racial identity development as denoted by greater awareness of whiteness as a mechanism of racism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy: High scores indicate greater degree of White racial identity development as denoted by an authentic awareness of whiteness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEIM-R</td>
<td>1 (low) to 5 (high)</td>
<td>High scores indicate greater degrees of racial identity development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoBRAS</td>
<td>1 (low) to 6 (high)</td>
<td>High scores indicate greater adherence to color-blind ideologies and, inversely, limited awareness of subtle practices that perpetuate systemic racism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R), Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R), Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS). WRCDS-R mean scores are based on a 1 (low) to 5 (high) scale. MEIM-R mean scores are based on a 1 (low) to 5 (high) scale. CoBRAS mean scores are based on a 1 (low) to 6 (high) scale.*
Preliminary Qualitative Analysis

An a-priori thematic analysis design was employed in the current study to assess students’ adherence to each of the three variables. See Table 9 for descriptives of qualitative themes.

Table 9

Descriptives of Qualitative Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Racial Identity</td>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>Pre: 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Reintegration</td>
<td>Pre: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pseudo-Independence</td>
<td>Pre: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Pre: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Identity</td>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td>Pre: 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Pre: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unexplored</td>
<td>Pre: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color-Blind Frames</td>
<td>Abstract Liberalism</td>
<td>Pre: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Naturalization</td>
<td>Pre: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural Racism</td>
<td>Pre: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimization of Race</td>
<td>Pre: 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Primary Analyses

Research results demonstrate that 1) strong correlations were observed between each of the two measures of racial identity and color-blindness, but were not present between the two measures of racial identity; 2) participants demonstrated growth in dimensions of White racial identity, racial identity, and awareness of color-blindness; and 3) race and previous training influenced differences in White racial identity, racial identity, and awareness of color-blindness among participants of the present study. Research findings are further summarized in Table 10.
### Table 10

**Summary of Research Findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Research Results</th>
<th>Description of Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| RQ1 | Correlation between 3 scales of WRCDS-R and CoBRAS  
\(n=21, r=.86, p<.001\)  
\(n=21, r=-.83, p<.001\)  
\(n=21, r=-.51, p<.05\) | Indicators of white racial identity correlated significantly with color-blindness (specifically within WRCDS-R subscales of reintegration, pseudo-independence, and autonomy). |
| | Correlation between MEIM-R and CoBRAS  
\(n=37, r=-.39, p<.05\) | Racial identity correlated significantly with color-blindness (institutional discrimination subscale of CoBRAS). |
| RQ2 | White racial identity developed over time  
Main effect for time in contact subscale  
\(n=21; F(2, 30)= 11.99, p<.001, \eta^2=.44\) | Participants described more mature White racial identities based on training. |
| RQ3 | Various racial identity frames outlined over time | Participants described various of dimensions of racial identity, which evolved based on participation. |
| RQ3a | No main effect for time in MEIM-R  
\(F(2, 46)= 2.23, p=.12, \eta^2=.09\) | No meaningful change in indicators of racial identity. |
| RQ3b | Main effect for race in MEIM-R  
\(F(1, 22)= 6.04, p<.05, \eta^2=.22\) | For composite score as well as exploration subscale. |
| RQ4 | Color-blind frames increased over time. | Participants ascribed to certain color-blind frames increasingly over time. |
| RQ4a | Main effect for time in CoBRAS as well as RP and BRI subscales  
\(F(1.59, 38.10)= 12.70, p<.001, \eta^2=.35\) | Adherence to color-blind ideologies decreased significantly as participants completed the training program. |
| RQ4b | Main effect for race in CoBRAS as well as 3 subscales  
\(F(1, 23)= 12.95, p<.01, \eta^2=.36\) | White participants demonstrated less color-blindness in comparison to participants of color. |
| | Interaction effect in CoBRAS for race and previous training  
\(F(2, 46)= 3.89, p<.05, \eta^2=.15\) | Participants of color demonstrated greater initial color-blindness, which decreased significantly over time, in comparison to White participants. |
| RQ5 | High mean scores for preparedness.  
\(M= 4.50\)  
\(M= 4.27\) | Participants indicated feeling strongly prepared and being equipped with skills for peer support. |
| | Specific components were more and less facilitative in influencing growth. | Participants identified components that were more and less facilitative for identity and ideological development. |
Note. White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R), Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R), Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS).

**RQ1. What are the associations among variables of interest (White racial identity, color-blindness, and racial identity)?**

The first research question investigates associations among variables of interest (White racial identity, color-blindness, and racial identity). A bivariate correlation analysis was used to identify associations among variables of White racial identity (WRCDS-R), color-blindness (CoBRAS) and racial identity (MEIM-R) across scales and subscales of used measures. A summary of correlations for the variables of interest are reported in Table 11.
Table 11

Dependent Variable Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>7. CoBRAS-Institutional Discrimination</td>
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<td>.85**</td>
<td>-.71**</td>
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Note. White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R), Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R), Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS).

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

The results were significant between the subscale of Reintegration for White racial identity and overall color-blindness (n= 21, r=.86, p<.001; see figure 2) as well as subscales of Racial Privilege (RP) (n= 21, r=.80, p<.001), ID (n= 21, r=.85, p<.001), and Blatant Racial Issues (BRI) (n= 21, r=.61, p<.01). Similarly, results were significant between the subscale of...
Pseudo-Independence (PI) and overall color-blindness ($n=21, r=-.83, p<.001$; see figure 3) as well as subscales of RP ($N=21, r=.87, p<.001$), ID ($n=21, r=-.71, p<.001$), and BRI ($n=21, r=-.62, p<.01$). Further, associations were significant between the subscale of Autonomy overall color-blindness ($n=21, r=-.51, p<.05$; see figure 4) as well as subscales of Institutional Discrimination (ID) ($n=21, r=-.49, p<.05$), and BRI ($n=21, r=-.53, p<.05$). In sum, these results indicate a strong association between the variables of White racial identity and dimensions of color-blindness.

Figure 2

*Relationship Between Color-Blindness and Reintegration Status of White Identity*

*Note. White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R), Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS).*
Figure 3

*Relationship Between Color-Blindness and Pseudo-Independence Status of White Identity*

*Note.* White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R), Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS).
Figure 4

Relationship Between Color-Blindness and Autonomy Status of White Identity

Note. White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R), Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS).

Results also indicated a significant correlation between the MEIM-R and CoBRAS subscale of ID, demonstrating a strong association between racial identity and a dimension of color-blindness ($n=37$, $r=-.39$, $p<.05$; see figure 5). Similarly, significant correlations were also observed between the MEIM-R subscale of Exploration and CoBRAS ($n=37$, $r=-.38$, $p<.05$) as well as the CoBRAS subscale of ID ($n=37$, $r=-.45$, $p<.01$). No significant correlation was observed for the measures of WRCDS-R and MEIM-R, suggesting no meaningful association between the variables of White racial identity and racial identity, as defined in the present study.
Figure 5

*Relationship Between ID Subscale of Color-Blindness and Racial Identity*

![Graph showing the relationship between ID subscale of color-blindness and racial identity.]

*Note.* White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R), Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R).

Correlation analyses also investigated associations among subscales of variable measures. Investigating color-blindness, the results were significant between overall color-blindness and the subscales of RP (*n* = 37, *r* = .91, *p* < .001), ID (*n* = 39, *r* = .89, *p* < .001), and BRI (*n* = 38, *r* = .78, *p* < .001). The subscales of RP and ID (*n* = 37, *r* = .66, *p* < .001) and BRI (*n* = 37, *r* = .62, *p* < .001), as well as for ID and BRI (*n* = 38, *r* = .55, *p* < .001). Correlations were also present for subscales of White racial identity, including R and PI (*n* = 21, *r* = -.80, *p* < .001) as well as PI and A (*n* = 21, *r* = .49, *p* < .05). Similarly, the two subscales of the MEIM-R also demonstrated significant correlations (*n* = 21, *r* = .62, *p* < .001).
RQ2. Do within group differences exist across time among White participants in White racial identity, based on participation in a social justice training program?

The second research question assesses whether within group differences exist across time among White participants in White racial identity. This question was investigated quantitatively using repeated-measure ANOVAS based on survey responses to the WRCDS-R, as well as qualitatively based on journal entry data provided by participants. Findings for research question 2 are summarized in Table 12.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for the WRCDS-R

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</table>

Note. White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R). WRCDS-R mean scores are based on a 1 (low) to 5 (high) scale.

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.
**Survey Data.** Results for this question were obtained by computing a repeated measures analysis for each of the four subscales of the WRCDS-R among participants who identified as White over the three time points (T1, T2, and T3). The results indicated a main effect for the subscale of Contact across time: $F(2, 30)= 11.99, p< .001, \eta^2=.44$, corresponding to a large effect size. Post hoc analyses demonstrated a significant increase in mean score ratings between T2 and T3: $F(1, 15)= 31.35, p< .001, \eta^2=.68$ as well as a significant overall increase in mean score ratings of Contact from T1 to T3: $F(1, 15)= 6.07, p< .05, \eta^2=.28$. This main effect indicated that participants who identified racially as White increased in the White identity status of contact from the beginning of phase 2 to the end of phase 2, 12-weeks later. Additionally, White participants reported a substantial increase in the contact status of White identity from the start of the program until the final testing period 6 months later. There were no significant changes across time for the three additional subscales of Reintegration, Pseudo-Independence, and Autonomy.

**Journal Data.** Journal data was also assessed to further describe attributes of students’ White racial identity development over time as they engaged in a social justice training program. Using a top-down coding scheme, journal responses were assessed based on how they corresponded to the pre-determined themes. These themes reflected Helms’ White Racial Identity Development model (1990), specifically employing the four racial identity statuses utilized in the WRCDS-R. In particular, Helms’ model represents aspects of White racial identity as defined by one’s disposition towards in-group and out-group members as well as the degree to which individuals express knowledge of systemic racism.

**Contact.** The first dimension of White identity explored the degree to which students’ racial narratives aligned with Helm’s contact status. This status is delineated by racial schemas
that correspond to one’s level of interaction with people of differing racial identities. Indeed, racial accounts provided by White students in the present study frequently resembled facets of contact, particularly those given at phase 1 of the intervention. For instance, when asked to describe how they conceptualized their racial identity, one student offered the following explanation:

_White people are the people that I have been predominantly exposed to, so it’s always been clear to me that this was the racial group that I belonged to (Student 1)._

This account demonstrates the student’s limited contact with individuals from racial groups that differed from their own. Furthermore, the above description reflects a critical attribute of the contact stage, namely a lack of critical consideration for the social implications regarding one’s racial identity. As this student’s report suggests, individuals in this stage generally exhibit a tacit acceptance of their racial identity.

While, at the surface, this example of contact merely suggests a basic awareness of race, the student goes on to provide an insightful clarification, stating “It was less of my experiences within this group that told me of my identity racially, but more of my lack of exposure of different racial groups.” This explanation demonstrated that the student held a relatively advanced understanding of the construct of race, as evidenced by their ability to describe the impact that being raised in a predominantly White community had on their racial cognizance. In general, such reasoning suggests a more mature comprehension about the nature of in-group versus out-group membership within a racialized society, which is most often observed in more developed identity statuses.
Student narratives offered at the onset of the program also suggested that many participants ($n=6$) recognized their lack of cross-racial contact early on in life. For instance, one student characterized their racial awareness as:

*Being White (the majority) in a town that is not racially diverse, I never really thought about race. I never saw it as a social construct that divided people but only as a characteristic that helped to describe people (Student 15)*

As a contrast, other reports evidenced that some students ($n=4$) have had earlier exposure to people of color, which may have influenced their racial development:

*One black girl I remember from preschool was mean to others around me (in the way children roughhouse) but it caused me to shy away from others that looked like her and more towards White people who look like me (Student 1)*

Furthermore, many students ($n=9$) alluded to having no concrete awareness of race in their early life, which became more developed over time. This was exemplified in reports such as:

*I do know however that my knowledge of race and racial identity wasn't something I was born with and wasn't even a concept I thought about until later on in life (Student 9)*

While not stated explicitly, this student implies that, although they did not think about their race in early childhood, as they aged, they have become more intentional in working to understand their racial identity. Another student described similar experiences, while also reflecting on specific events that catalyzed their racial development. As one student reported:

*Before moving here, I lived in Rochester, New York, and attended a public city school. I was one of the few White students, and I was also in a more privileged economic place than the majority of my peers. When I moved to [current city], I was suddenly attending a school with maybe two or three students of color in my grade. It was kind of a culture*
shock, and it was the first time I remember being aware of my race and the privileges that this new, majority White school had over my urban minority filled school in Rochester

(Student 40)

This increased contact with racial groups outside of their own seemed to stimulate the student’s awareness of distinct racial category characteristics, namely the association of White with privilege and non-White with disadvantage. As such, by attending both predominantly White and majority-minority schools, the student appeared to gain a more concrete understanding of what it meant to be White by allowing them to differentiate between the affordances offered to their White peers versus those made available to their peers of color.

It is important to note that students’ reflections also suggested a degree of mature racial awareness, which has materialized over time. It can, therefore, be inferred that they may no longer occupy the contact status of White racial development. Indeed, one student noted that “I never noticed being White growing up, until I realized that only a few of my classmates were people of color (Student 7).” While the student is unclear of when the realization occurred, one can assume that the student has now progressed to a more mature status of racial identity as a result. Indeed, many of the students in this study (n= 12) described such early racialized experiences during phase 1 of the intervention, which have undoubtedly contributed to their current identity status. Consequently, racial narratives in phase 2 of the intervention were not reflective of this status of White identity.

**Reintegration.** The second status of racial identity, reintegration, represents racial schema predicated by one’s inclination to fault people of color for their social positioning within society. The researcher did not observe attributes of this identity status in either phase 1 or phase 2 journal entries. This may be, in part, due to the influence of social desirability, as accusatory
rhetoric towards minoritized groups is commonly condemned across social justice spheres. Further, such positions may genuinely contradict with the ideals adopted by students within the present sample.

_Pseudo-Independence._ The third status of White racial identity is pseudo-independence, a paradigm that outwardly condemns Whiteness as a racial strategy and endorses non-racist ideology. Representations of this racial status were scarce in phase 1 journal entries (n= 2) but became much more prevalent in phase 2 reports (n= 4). One such indication of this status was provided by a student during the phase 1, in describing the process of their racial awareness as:

...race didn't become a huge topic for me until I got out of elementary school, which is when I started to learn about current events. I think once I dove in I cared more about my race and how others were affected because of their own (Student 34)

This response implies that the student’s increasing knowledge of current events has contributed to their understanding of racial constructs. Moreover, the above quote loosely suggests that such increased awareness has also cultivated a greater empathetic regard for minoritized racial groups. Notably, further investigation of this reflection provides a clearer depiction of pseudo-independence, as this student goes on to explain the following:

I can't really pinpoint when I figured out I was White or that my race mattered. It wasn't a big enough deal for me to realize at a young age, so I want to assume I figured it out before age 10. I think this definitely shows that I was privileged since my race wasn't causing any problems for me (Student 34).

By positioning the constructs of race and privilege as two sides of the same coin, this student’s narration illustrates a distinctly complex attribute of Whiteness. That is, privilege is established both as an object afforded to White individuals as well as a defining trait of White racial identity.
Moreover, the awareness of Whiteness as a determinant of privilege, which other racial groups are not afforded, is a characteristic that distinguishes pseudo-independence from earlier White identity statuses.

The conflation of Whiteness and privilege was further evidenced in another student’s description of racial identity, stating “I am White, not disabled, and financially secure, so it may be more difficult to share the same experiences with those who do not have such privileges” (Student 4). In describing aspects of their social identities, this student illuminated an additional feature of pseudo-independence. That is, individuals are often able to endorse the notion of White privilege, but are limited in their critical awareness of the systemic nature of their privilege.

Finally, it was observed that students’ reflections of racial identity became more developed as they progressed throughout the program. Specifically, many of the racial accounts provided during phase 1 reflected characteristics of the stage of contact \((n=12)\). Over time, however, responses by these same students became more indicative of racial schemas classified as pseudo-independent. For instance, one student describes their racial identity in the following way during phase 1 of the program: “I don't think I remember exactly when I first figured out that I was White, because I always knew I had White skin and most people around me looked like that too” (Student 10). During phase 2, however, they were able to articulate tenets of racial identity in a more sophisticated manner, stating:

*Injustice at my school [is] because of the amount of White people here. The rural areas of PA are generally very White, and that includes [city of residence]. This means in [city of residence] people are living in their own bubble and they form their opinions based on what their parents, teachers, or community leaders say. If White people search out*
people in their community who have the education, facts, and experiences that could help them become more inclusive, then that would be a step forward (Student 10)

This account epitomized the pseudo-independence status by demonstrating an awareness of racial differences and positioning whiteness as the antagonist in creating and maintaining racial injustice.

Autonomy. The final status of White racial identity, autonomy, is represented by a consciousness of one’s White identity as well as an informed awareness of the differing experiences of other racial groups. This status is described in minimum by participants in this study \((n=3)\), but was alluded to in the following description:

I never really had a moment where I "realized I was White;" I've grown up in primarily all-White areas throughout my entire life so far. My freshman year of high school, I did attend a magnet high school on the south side of Nashville, TN with a primarily black student demographic, and that definitely helped me realize how much more diverse the world is outside of the mostly White, suburban bubbles I had grown up in before that point. That experience definitely helped to broaden my mindset past what I had known up to that time... (Student 38)

Responses such as these highlight the student’s racial consciousness and suggests an established sense of appreciation for experiences that allowed them to embrace racial diversity. That is, in contrasting the student’s upbringing in a predominantly White community with residing in a community where they were now in the numerical minority, the student appeared to develop a greater valuation of the presence of identities that varied from their own. This was especially emphasized in their assertion that the experience “helped to broaden my mindset.”
One student who described a foreclosed racial identity also acknowledged the desire to continue expanding their cultural awareness. This was evidenced in the following reflection:

*After the social justice institute, I went to MICA, an art school, for 3 weeks in July. Going there not only help to strengthen my art portfolio but meet so many diverse individuals. There were people of all backgrounds, races, genders, and orientations (Student 34).*

Upon completion of phase 1 of the program, this student continued to take advantage of opportunities to learn more about self and others. Indeed, knowledge and appreciation for the identities and experiences of other groups is one of the core attributes of the *autonomy* status that differentiates it from less developed statuses within the model.

**RQ3. Do between group differences exist in racial identity based on participation in a social justice training program?**

The third research question investigated whether differences exist across time in racial identity development. This question was investigated quantitatively using repeated-measure ANOVAS based on survey responses to the MEIM-R, as well as qualitatively based on journal entry data provided by participants. Findings for research question 3 are summarized in Table 13.
Table 13.

Descriptive Statistics for the MEIM-R

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Note. Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R). MEIM-R mean scores are based on a 1 (low) to 5 (high) scale.

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Survey Data. Quantitative analyses were performed to investigate whether racial identity varied as a function of time, race, and previous training. Results for this question were obtained by computing repeated measures analyses for composite scores of the MEIM-R as well as for the two subscales of the MEIM-R over the three time points (T1, T2, and T3).

Main effect for Time. There were no significant main effects for MEIM-R means scores over time. However, post-hoc examination of contrast revealed a significant increase in the subscale of exploration between T1 to T3, $F(1, 23)= 4.75, p<.05, \eta^2=.17$, corresponding to a medium effect size. This main effect finding indicated that students’ exploration of racial identity increased from pretest to delayed post-test 6 months later.
**Main effect for Race.** Between subjects main effects were also examined across race (White vs. POC), where findings yielded a main effect across such that White participants indicated significantly higher MEIM-R mean scores than participants of color: $F (1, 22)= 6.04$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.22$. Likewise, a significant main effect for race was observed for the subscale of exploration, with White youth rating racial identity higher, overall, in comparison to youth of color: $F (1, 22)= 8.33$, $p< .01$, $\eta^2=.28$, denoting a large effect size. This main effect indicated that White participants reported a more developed racial identity when compared to students who identified as having a race other than White. No interaction effects were observed for raceXtime.

**Main effect for Previous Training.** While there were no main effects for previous training in racial identity, analyses did yield marginal effects for the subscale of commitment, $F (2, 42)= 3.01$, $p= .06$, $\eta^2=.13$, corresponding to a medium effect size. Post-hoc contrasts indicated an interaction effect approaching significance between T1 and T3, $F (1, 23)= 3.86$, $p=.063$, $\eta^2=.16$, demonstrating that participants with previous social justice training exhibited a more robust increase in racial identity when compared to participants with no previous training.

**Journal Data.** Journal data was further analyzed to describe aspects of racial identity development for students of color over time as they engaged in a social justice training program. Specifically, ex post facto analyses were employed to better understand ratings of racial identity for students who identified as Black, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, and Multi-racial. Using a top-down coding scheme, journal responses were assessed based on the two subscales of the MEIM-R (Phinney & Ong, 2007). These included exploration, or an active approach to gain more knowledge and understanding of one’s racial identity, and commitment, reflecting a foreclosed understanding and acceptance of one’s racial identity.
**Exploration.** The exploration phase in Phinney’s racial/ethnic identity developmental model describes an individual who has acknowledged a need to explore the histories and experiences of their racial group. Exploration can occur at any age, given an individual’s cognitive capacity to understand social categories. Indeed, some students \((n=7)\) indicated that they have engaged in the exploration process from early on in their development, such as:

*I read articles, watched news stories and commentary on news stories, read other's experiences, and noticed how people around me felt and responded about these stories and experiences. My parents and grandparents also told me about the history and the stories of the past and how it shaped the present that we have today* (Student 32).

As evidenced in this example, this student has immersed themselves in an exhaustive effort to understand their racial identity group. Further suggested in this report was the active and ongoing effort that individuals in this stage often employ to gain a more thorough understanding of their identities. In particular, this student portrayed a resolute persistence that some take in exploring their racial selves, a venture that often begins early in life and, which can be initiated by family and other significant adults.

Although many students describe a process of racial exploration that is initiated in their early lives, other students \((n=8)\), such as the one below, described a more recent racial exploration:

*I went back to Japan and explored my roots and got to see the culture over there. I also got to learn about how the perspectives are very different than the ones in America* (Student 12).

This student explains a racial identity search that was initiated by engagement with the training program, as this exploration occurred upon the conclusion of phase 1 and during phase 2. As
reflected in this example, this student explored their racial/ethnic identity by immersing themselves in their culture of origin.

One student alluded to confusion regarding core tenets of their racial and cultural identities. In discussing racial exploration efforts, this particular student described uncertainty as a result of being a trans-racial adoptee.

*My identity has always been so hard for me to talk about. Not because I am not proud of where I come from, I just do not know a lot about my culture or the tiny facts many take for granted* (Student 29).

While the student indicated in an earlier entry that they are aware of their race and country of origin, they appear to be longing for a more profound knowledge of their racial and cultural identities. The student also expressed a desire to support others through their exploration process, stating “I truly understood my background and was able to help others know as well.” While stated in reference to the adoption process, this comment points out an important function of racial identity, which was also shared by other students in the program. Specifically, students described a sense of empathy in being able to connect their own identity exploration processes with those of their peers. One student spoke of this explicitly, stating:

*Coming from a racial background, I know how difficult it can be with all the racism that still lingers. I feel that I still need to develop more understanding for the situations of others to gain empathy. To continue growing I can learn more about other people* (Student 24).

Interestingly, the student began with “coming from a racial background…” It can be implied that the student included this phrase in order to identify themselves as a person of color. Indeed, the student self-identifies as Asian. This is meaningful in that it is reflective of a
common narrative as portraying individuals of color, including those from Black, Asian, and Latino/Hispanic backgrounds, as holding a racial identity, while conceptualizing White populations as “raceless.” This also implies that one must hold a marginalized identity in order to hold a preliminary understanding of the presence of racism.

It should also be noted that many of the students \((n=7)\) who expressed notions of racial identity exploration throughout the intervention were students of color. Contrarily, while White students frequently described a lack of knowledge about their racial identities, very few expressed notions that could be characterized as racial exploration.

**Commitment.** The final proposed stage of racial identity development is that of commitment, or establishing an informed awareness of one’s racial identity while also maintaining an informed appreciation for other racial identity groups. This was epitomized in one student’s description of their racial understanding:

*I am a Christian, I am black, I am an artist, and I'm a teenager these help me to see life from different viewpoints. In the black community, there are many different schools of thought, so I can see what people from my community are thinking and the reasons for them thinking that way. From the teenage perspective, I am able to see life from a different point of view than from older people and because most of the people I hang around are not black, I am able to get a glim into their view (Student 32)*

The above quote denotes a mature explanation of their racial identity, denoted by a critical analysis of their experiences with members of their community as well as a discussion of how this identity intertwines with other held identities to inform the individuals awareness and worldviews. Other reflections, while not as elaborate, also allude to a sense of racial commitment that has been influenced by familial socialization, such as:
I am Native American and Hispanic. I reckon that I first knew I was this race when I was very young because my parents wanted to engrain and make sure that we knew our cultures (Student 6).

As reflected in this example, such a position is indicative of an active socialization by one’s family of origin to expose youth to racial artifacts, which can allow youth to solidify their sense of identity.

Similar to the exploration stage, students who expressed a commitment of racial identity also described a sense of ethno-cultural empathy, or empathy and compassion expressed towards individuals during cross-cultural interactions (Wang et al., 2003). This was epitomized in the following statement:

-I also believe that because I am White, it can be hard for me to relate to people of color. There is no way I can take away my White privilege, so I must recognize it, and use it to advocate for the absence of it (Student 15).

While taken during the second phase of the program, this student seemed to not only acknowledge their racial identity, but also described an understanding of how this identity influences their ability to connect with those from other racial backgrounds. Noteworthy, comparing journal entries from phase 2, such as the above narrative, to those provided during phase 1 provide a clear picture of the racial development that occurred throughout the duration of the intervention. Specifically, this student referenced a largely unexamined racial identity during the initial phase of the intervention, stating:

-I identify as White. Being White (the majority) in a town that is not racially diverse, I never really thought about race. I never saw it as a social construct that divided people but only as a characteristic that helped to describe people.
While it is likely that other contextual factors outside of the intervention also influenced racial identity development in this and other students in the program, it is also probable that participation also helped to elicit a more complex understanding of racialized experiences.

**Unexamined Racial/ethnic Identity.** Individuals in the least developed identity status are denoted as having an *unexamined racial/ethnic identity*, as described by limited encounters with or sought out information about one’s own racial group (Phinney, 1996). Such an unexamined identity was commonly observed by participants \( n = 7 \) during phase 1 of the program and reflected in reports such as, “I define myself, in terms of personality, a person who is ambitious, kind, and tries her best. I think I define myself as mixed Asian and White” (Student 25). As suggested in this response, this student gives little consideration to their racial identities, electing to place greater emphasis on describing themselves using idiosyncratic traits.

Indeed, there were a wide range of responses from students, which can be broadly classified as *unexamined*. Such responses spanned from those who consciously acknowledged that they had not taken any steps to explore their racial identities to others who simply express limited understanding or undisputed acceptance of their identities. The former approach was observed by one student who stated that, “I haven't taken any steps to learn more about myself but I spent time focusing on other identities” (Student 31), alluding to not having taken any steps to learn about their *racial* self. In contrast, the latter indicator of unawareness is reflected in the following response:

*Experiences/interactions with others that my family members or I have had relating to racial stereotypes shows how my family is definitely part of a minority group in the United States* (Student 35)
It can be assumed from this statement that the student has not needed additional information to understand their identity or the social positioning of this identity among the racial hierarchy. Instead, the student seemed to have picked up on socialization cues from their environment from an early age. In a similar fashion, many other students of color in the intervention \((n=6)\) described understandings of their racial identities, which were grounded in experiences of discrimination or oppression. Indeed, one student recalls the following about their racial identity awareness:

*Experiences that made me aware of what my race meant happened in Middle School when my elementary started choosing to hang out with White people more than me and start excluding me from the group when all of them still stayed together (Student 19).*

The student describes this incident as critical in prompting their understanding of not only how they identified racially but also what the implications were of this racial identity. Moreover, while this type of racial awareness does not neatly fall into the two subscales of Phinney’s (1990) racial identity model, it denotes a complex consciousness of racial identity, particularly for racially minoritized populations.

**RQ4. Do between group differences exist in color-blindness, based on participation in a social justice training program?**

The final research question assesses whether differences exist in adherence to color-blind ideologies. This question was examined quantitatively using repeated-measure ANOVAS based on survey responses to the CoBRAS, as well as qualitatively based on journal entry data provided by participants. Table 14 summarizes findings for research question 4.
Table 14

*Descriptive Statistics for the CoBRAS*

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*Note.* Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS). CoBRAS mean scores are based on a 1 (low) to 6 (high) scale.

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Survey Data. Quantitative analyses were utilized to investigate time, race, and previous training across the dependent variable of color-blindness. Results for this question were obtained by computing repeated measures analyses for composite scores of the CoBRAS as well as for the three subscales of the CoBRAS over the three time points (T1, T2, and T3).

Main effect for Time. To begin, within-group differences in overall color-blindness (CoBRAS) was investigated across time points (T1, T2, and T3). Mauchly’s test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2(2)= 6.93, p< .05$, therefore degrees of freedom
were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\varepsilon = .79$). The results showed a significant main effect in average the CoBRAS score such that overall color-blindness decreased over time: $F (1.59, 38.10)= 12.70, p< .001, \eta^2 = .35$, indicating a large effect size. Post-hoc analysis of contrasts revealed color-blind mean scores decreased significantly from T1 to T2, $F (1, 24)= 9.46, p< .01, \eta^2 = .28$ as well as from T1 to T3, $F (1, 24)= 19.54, p< .001, \eta^2 = .45$, corresponding to a large effect size. The main effect for time suggests that students’ demonstrated less adherence to color-blind ideologies particularly throughout phase 1 of the intervention as well as, overall, across time. Moreover, changes in overall color-blind scores approach significance between T2 to T3, $F (1, 24)= 4.09, p= .055, \eta^2 = .15$, demonstrating a medium effect size. The moderate effect of time suggests that participants also decreased in adherence to color-blind ideologies during phase 2 of the intervention.

Main effect changes were also investigated for the three subscales of the CoBRAS, Racial Privilege (RP), Institutional Discrimination (ID), and Blatant Racial Issues (BRI). For RP, Mauchly’s test signifying that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2 (2)= 8.95, p< .05$, therefore degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\varepsilon = .76$). There was a significant main effect of time for the subscale of Racial Privilege, $F (1.51, 36.30)= 16.95, p< .001, \eta^2 = .41$, indicating a large effect size. Contrasts revealed significant differences from T1 to T2, $F (1, 24)= 17.63, p< .001, \eta^2 = .42$, and from T1 to T3, $F (1, 24)= 21.01, p< .001, \eta^2 = .47$. Similarly for BRI, Mauchly’s test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was violated, $\chi^2 (2)= 12.96, p< .05$, therefore Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\varepsilon = .70$) was used to adjust degrees of freedom. Based on this analysis, a significant main effect of time for the BRI subscale was observed, $F (1.40, 33.55)= 6.12, p< .05, \eta^2 = .20$, corresponding to a medium effect size. Post-hoc analysis of contrasts demonstrated
significant differences from T1 to T2, $F(1, 24)= 4.47, p< .05, \eta^2=.16$, and from T1 to T3, $F(1, 24)= 8.56, p< .01, \eta^2=.26$. Main effects for the two subscales of color-blindness indicate that students’ utilization of color-blind ideologies related to racial privilege and blatant racial issues decreased significantly throughout the duration of the program. No significant effects were observed for the ID subscale.

**Main effect for Race.** Research question 2 also investigated between-group differences across race in color-blindness. Repeated measure ANOVAS yielded a main effect of race for composite scores of color-blindness, $F(1, 23)= 12.95, p< .01, \eta^2=.36$, as well as for the subscales of Racial Privilege, $F(1, 23)= 7.42, p< .05, \eta^2=.24$, Institutional Discrimination, $F(1, 23)= 10.97, p< .01, \eta^2=.32$, and Blatant Racial Issues, $F(1, 23)= 7.58, p< .05, \eta^2=.25$. In all cases, average mean scores on the CoBRAS scale were significantly lower for White students than for students of color.

**Interaction Effect for Race x Time.** Differences in race were also assessed across the three time points for the composite CoBRAS scale as well as the three subscales. A timeXrace interaction effect was observed for the subscale of Racial Privilege (RP), $F(1.55, 35.67)= 5.79, p< .05, \eta^2=.20$ indicating a medium effect size. Mauchly’s test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2(2)= 7.53, p< .05$, therefore degrees of freedom were adjusted using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\varepsilon=.78$). Post-hoc contrasts revealed that the difference in decrease of mean scores from T1 to T3 is significantly larger for POC than for White participants, $F(1, 23)= 8.66, p< .01, \eta^2=.27$, corresponding to a large effect size. Similarly, mean score differences of RP from T2 to T3 were also significantly larger for students of color than for White students, $F(1, 23)= 7.03, p< .05, \eta^2=.23$. This interaction effect indicated that students who did not identify racially as White reported greater adherence to color-blind
ideologies regarding racial privilege at the onset of the intervention and decreased at a significantly higher rate in comparison to White students. No significance interactions were observed for either of the other subscales or for overall color-blindness.

**Main effect for Previous Training.** Finally, differences in color-blindness were also investigated based on previous social justice training experience (yes vs. no) across the three time points. Repeated measures ANOVAS were utilized to examine whether previous training influenced ratings in overall color-blindness (CoBRAS) as well as for each of the three subsets. While there were no main effects for previous training in overall color-blindness, analyses did yield marginal effects for the subscale of RP, \( F(1, 23) = 3.52, p = .074, \eta^2 = .13 \), demonstrating that CoBRAS ratings were lower across all three time points for individuals who indicated receiving previous social justice training than those who had not received previous training.

**Interaction Effect for Previous Training x Time.** Interaction effects of time X previous training for CoBRAS overall scores as well as subscale scores were also investigated in the present study through repeated measure ANOVAS. An interaction effect was observed for overall CoBRAS means such that previous training had a more significant impact on changes in overall color-blindness across time: \( F(2, 46) = 3.89, p < .05, \eta^2 = .15 \), indicating a medium effect size. Further examination of contrasts show that the difference in mean score decrease from T1 to T2 is significantly larger for those with no previous training than for participants with previous training: \( F(1, 23) = 6.12, p < .05, \eta^2 = .21 \).

An interaction effect for time X previous training was also observed for the subscale of Racial Privilege. Mauchly’s test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, \( \chi^2(2) = 6.34, p < .05 \), therefore degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity (\( \varepsilon = .80 \)). Previous training had a more significant impact on decreases in
the RP subscale of color-blindness as a result of participation in the intervention over time: $F(1.60, 36.79) = 4.81, p<.05, \eta^2 = .17$. Contrast comparisons showed that the difference in decrease from T1 to T2 was significantly larger for those participants with no previous training than those with previous training: $F(1, 23) = 7.33, p< .05, \eta^2 = .24$. Similarly, students with no previous training demonstrated significantly greater decreases in mean scores from T1 to T3: $F(1, 23) = 5.10, p< .05, \eta^2 = .18$, corresponding to a medium effect size. No significant interactions were observed for the ID and BRI subscales of the CoBRAS.

**Journal Data.** Journal data were also examined to further describe students’ adherence to color-blind ideologies over time as they engaged in a social justice training program. Using a top-down coding scheme, journal responses were assessed based on the four theorized frames of Bonilla-Silva’s Color-Blind Ideology framework (2001), abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of race. In general, this framework asserts that greater endorsement of color-blind ideologies is reflective of less mature understandings of socio-political inequities across social groups.

**Abstract Liberalism.** The abstract liberalism frame represents the utilization of conceptual, liberal principles in racial discourse. Student responses that reflected the color-blind framework of abstract liberalism were the most utilized across time, in comparison to the other three theorized frames. This frame was epitomized by the following student response when asked to discuss characteristics that one believes best defines them:

*I follow the Golden Rule (To treat others the way you want to be treated) and because I help around a lot, I feel that "kind" is a good defining characteristic of myself (Student 30).*
This student described an approach to conceptualizing social justice that can be described as abstract liberalism because it does not provide concrete strategies for ensuring equity and does not critically consider sociopolitical structures that can exacerbate social injustice. Implied in this approach is the belief that eliminating inequity can be achieved through individual efforts, such as acts of kindness in this particular example. Although it is not the aim to minimize the importance of kindness as an idiosyncratic trait, such a position dismisses the structural nature of inequity within social systems.

While this frame was minimally endorsed by students early on in the training session ($n=2$), students utilized abstract liberalism rhetoric at considerably higher rates during phase 2 of the intervention ($n=8$). It is important to note, however, that rationalizations of this frame became more sophisticated over time. For example:

*I think that a lot of times when White people say something or do something offensive they don’t want to take [responsibility] for it. Social justice to me would be when people of color and people who are White can come together and respect each other’s cultures* (Student 36).

This quote was provided by a student during phase 2 and is reminiscent of early civil rights mantras that often promoted unity without targeting systemic racism as a root cause of inequality. That said, the student expressed a degree of awareness of the individual acts of majoritized members to discriminate against minoritized groups without assuming responsibility. Framed in this way, however, is the urge for all groups to ‘just get along,’ which inherently ignores social structures that create and reinforce stratification across race. It also ignores the difference in numerical representation or non-numerical power, which causes differential outcomes according to which race and culture is being disrespected. As suggested by Bonilla-
Silva (2018), segregation and denigration of groups of color reinforce racial disparities that oppress these groups. This, however, does not hold true for individuals racialized as White.

**Naturalization.** Naturalization narratives include those that attempt to explain away racial inequities as inherently biological. In his original study of color-blind ideology, Bonilla-Silva (2001) indicated that naturalization is, presently, the least utilized frame. This also held true across narratives provided in the present study, as notions of naturalization were scarce. That is, this frame was only utilized by one participant in the following report:

*I can continue to not discriminate and stand up for others, but it's never gonna truly fix the issue. There are facts and logic that exist showing how people of color are treated and it just gives me a really uncomfortable feeling* (Student 13).

While this account does not wholly reflect the tenets of naturalization, it does argue that efforts to dismantle inequity and injustice entirely are, ultimately, futile. Despite denoting racial discrimination as an “issue,” the student’s sentiments that social justice efforts are “never gonna truly fix the issue” suggest a position that social group inequity is a fixed aspect of society. Similarly to other frames of color-blindness, this position functionally ignores existing structural strategies that reinforce difference and discourage systematic change.

**Cultural Racism.** The cultural racism frame represents claims that particular racial groups experience marginalization as a result of group inferior cultural norms and values. While this frame of color-blindness is commonly referenced when engaging individuals in racialized discourse (Carter et al., 2019), it was not observed within narratives among students of this study.

**Minimization of Race.** A final frame of color-blind ideology describes a tendency to deny the presence of racial discrimination or its’ impact on an individuals lived experience. This
frame was utilized among participants (n=3) in the present study and was exemplified in responses such as, “Americans should be humans, and the entire world should only be humans not divided up into races” (Student 2). As suggested in this example, this ideology emphasizes that a greater focus should be placed on individual differences rather than group differences. Consistent with color-blind narratives, this position downplays the relevance of racial categories that have already been established within U.S. society and which presently influence the lived experiences of racialized citizens. In addition, this framework also illuminates individualistic pretenses, which assume that treatment for all members of society are not predicated on membership to any particular social group.

Minimization of race can also manifest as an attempt to divert focus from racial matters to other topics, such as advocating for a focus on other social identities. This was demonstrated in students’ responses such as:

*In a racial sense, I identify as White... In my opinion, race is not as important as ethnicity, because the vividness of each of our heritage and traditions accounts for more than simply the color of a person's skin* (Student 4).

This student, in describing their own racial identity during phase 1, appears to conceptualize racial identity as insignificant in comparison to culture. It is important to note, however, that the student goes on to explain why the understanding of racial difference is important for social justice advocates, stating “many people tend to judge others based on race, even if they are not aware of their bias.” This student’s reflection denoted a minimization of race juxtaposed with an acknowledgment of racial significance especially for those who are the targets of bias.
Other instances of minimization were less blatantly linked to racial identity but, instead, suggested that other social identities are of supreme importance in determining the experiences of individuals within society. Such a position was demonstrated in one student’s explanation:

*I am a woman and this identity helps me with my work as a peer advocate because I am able to recognize discrimination and be empathetic towards others who have less privilege and opportunities* (Student 10).

In responding to how the student’s social identities might facilitate or hinder their social justice ally role, this student emphasized the significance of gender in providing them with cross-cultural empathy and multicultural awareness. Indeed, experiences that approximate marginalization can allow individuals to better recognize and understand the notion of oppression. However, the underlying assumption is that by having a minoritized identity, one is fully competent in working with racially and culturally diverse groups. This rationale also dismisses the structural impact of racial discrimination, which inevitably differs from that of other social identity groups.

**RQ5. What are students’ perceptions of the social justice training program?**

The study also investigated students’ perceptions of their experiences as they engaged in the program. In particular, journal entries that reflected students’ awareness, knowledge, and preparedness for action during each phase of the intervention were examined. Altogether, this data was used to inform student perceptions of the utility of training components as well as to corroborate outcomes for variables of interest. Further, the information collected below also describes specific aspects of the program that students identified as contributing to their development.
Survey Data. Survey data was collected during the delayed posttest to assess students’ perceptions of the program. Examination of means provided support for efficacy of the training intervention, based on program goals outlined by the program director. Specifically, students were asked to rank program features on a 1 (not at all) to 5 (very) scale. Overall responses indicated that students felt that the program was beneficial in preparing them for peer allyship roles (Figure 6). Mean scores were highest for feeling that the training component of the program prepared students to recognize instances of bias and injustice occurring in their school ($N=22$, $M=4.50$, $SD=.51$). Students also reported feeling that the training program provided them with a range of support and advocacy skills ($N=22$, $M=4.27$, $SD=.77$). However, students rated feeling equipped to respond to issues of bias and injustice to a lesser degree ($N=22$, $M=3.86$, $SD=.56$).

Figure 6

Program evaluation survey responses

![Survey Data Chart]

Note. Responses were based on a 1 (not at all) to 5 (very) scale.

Additionally, participants were asked to indicate whether they would recommend the program to a friend, where all respondents indicated that they would ($n=22$). These outcomes were epitomized in reports such as:
I liked that I am able to have more confidence in approaching people who may be a part of bias, bullying, or harassment issues. I think I can deal with them with more self-conscious and being aware as to not hurt an individual even more.

**Open-ended survey responses.** Anecdotal responses were also collected to examine students’ perceptions of the training program. Specifically, participants described facilitative program components, or aspects of the SJTP that contributed to preparedness for advocacy and allyship as well as unfavorable program components.

**Facilitative program components.** Participants described numerous pedagogical approaches of the SJTP as facilitative in raising awareness and competence related to allyship. For instance, students \((n=5)\) noted that session content and learning exercises introduced in the program allowed students to become more aware of intrapersonal, social and structural processes related to social injustice. This included reports such as “I liked the different speakers and activities to learn how to recognize bias and how to respond to the bias.” A few students \((n=2)\) indicated that session facilitators also supported learning, as one stated, “I liked how open and engaging all of the teachers/speakers were in the program about some of the tougher topics to discuss.” Other pedagogical approaches that were described as facilitative included: introducing content on various types of bias and social inequity, focusing on concrete action that peer allies can engage in, and scaffolding learning of complex topics. This was reflected in quotes like: “…it was super eye opening at times I felt out of my place as a white person, but that uncomfortability furthered my learning.”

Participants also identified programmatic aspects of the intervention that promoted awareness in social justice allyship and advocacy. One student praised the inclusion of diverse instructors to facilitate sessions during phase 1 of the program. Further, students \((n=2)\) indicated
that the immersive structure of the program and the ongoing meetings during phase 1 and phase 2 of the SJTP allowed students to establish a sense of community and continue to develop in their awareness of self and others. This included reports such as “I like the community of people that I was introduced to through this program and that everyone pursues their own interests.”

**Unfavorable program components.** Some students also identified components that seemingly hindered their development as social justice allies, mainly related to programmatic elements of the program. For instance, students \( n = 4 \) noted that the intensive format of phase 1, in particular, made it difficult to stay engaged. This was represented in the following statement: “What I liked the least was that throughout the week during the summer sometimes the day got a little lengthy.” Contrarily, other students \( n = 5 \) indicated that they would have like to have more time dedicated to the program during phase 2 of the initiative, such as “To some extent I feel like it’s been harder to stay as engaged and excited throughout the year.” Other factors that students would have liked to see added included: communicating with other participants and program coordinators more frequently, having smaller, more intimate groups during training sessions, and being provided with more opportunities to actuate knowledge. As such, one student described some difficulty with maintaining a balance in their advocacy work, reporting: “Sometimes feels like there are periods where peer advocates are super busy, and then there’s the grace periods—but that’s with most things.”

**Journal Data.** Data collected from journal entries were examined to assess students’ perceptions of the program by employing a ex post facto analysis of themes. This process yielded three primary themes that represented students’ experiences as they matriculated through the program, including a) identifying what was learned, b) describing processes that facilitated learning, and c) discussing strategies for applying learning as they assume peer advocate roles.
The first theme consisted of learning outcomes described by students a result of participating in the program. As was expected, many students \((n=23)\) discussed specific constructs that were introduced in education sessions during phase 1 of the program. This was epitomized in the following account:

*It was very impactful to learn how these underfunded schools feed into the prison system, showing that even from our earliest education, the racial bias in our system is only perpetuated (Student 20).*

The student described learning about systems of oppression in referencing a lesson on the school to prison pipeline that took place during the Summer Institute program. Similarly, other students \((n=27)\) described such gains in knowledge as they engaged with education sessions throughout the week-long training, such as:

*The most impactful thing today was definitely the stations because looking at those graphs and statistics and videos were super eye opening and impactful. I heard some of the other peer advocates say that we might be moving in the right direction as a generation when it comes to beliefs however the numbers don't lie and that was interesting to hear (Student 11).*

This participant was not only able to discuss what they had learned, referring to a separate lesson on the topic of systems of oppression, but also described a process of reconciling this new information with working narratives of social justice. In other words, the student above realized the fallacy of a common color-blind narrative, which asserts that significant progress towards racial equity has, in fact, been made. Moreover, by investigating empirical data provided in the educational session, the student was forced to accept that this may not be true. Ongoing
responses such as this demonstrate a process of reflexive learning, as participants reflect on their lived experiences and determine how they align with the new information.

It should be noted that not all students indicated significant gains as a result of participation in the intervention. For instance, one student stated, “There really hasn't been any change in how I've understood the topics so far as I really did not have a ton of knowledge entering the institute (Student 9).” This student’s remark, submitted during phase 1 of the intervention, suggests one of two things: 1) that they do not feel they have enough context to be able to successfully comprehend provided material, or 2) that program content has not been meaningful enough to elicit any significant knowledge acquisition. Much later in the program, the student continued to express similar challenges. When asked to identify specific areas where students feel that they still needed to develop in order to be an effective social justice advocate, the student stated “I think that I need to develop my ability to relate with people whose issues I don't experience or possibly know myself.” This suggests that the student may be struggling to grasp the content because they have limited lived experiences.

Students also described learning gains that broadened their cross-cultural awareness. In particular, students were challenged by learning about the lived experiences of their peers, which often diverged from their own realities. White participants most often described this type of learning. This was represented in reports like:

*Hearing the stories from my peers probably held the most impact for me today. Listening to what other people have gone through has reinforced my recognition of my own privilege, and it was awful to think that anyone should have gone through anything like what we discussed today* (Student 23).
This student explains that the narratives provided by students of color in the program forced them to acknowledge their general lack of awareness regarding racialized experiences of others. Indeed, many White students ($n = 6$) described being unaware of racial privileges that they are afforded and conceded to unwittingly engaging their own biases and prejudices in social situations. This was evidenced in the following report:

_The most impactful thing was listening to scenarios and noticing how I assigned a race to the people in the scenario even though it listed no such race. After a long day of mental stretching, I came to believe that I need to start noticing my micro aggressions after realizing how many I had used in just that session (Student 15)._

This student describes becoming more cognizant of their own biases through a process of self-reflection. Importantly, such realizations came primarily from students who identified racially as White. Moreover, students frequently indicated that these instances of realization were often prompted by listening to narratives shared by their Black peers. Indeed, the student above also states the following regarding their increased awareness:

... _I[t] was a bit hard for me to relate to the horror stories that my African American friends shared with me and about incidents involving police, or even just the daily task of going to school and experiencing micro aggressions (Student 15)._

This account highlights a reliance on the narratives of marginalized groups to increase consciousness for majoritized groups. Further, while students are able to identify an increased consciousness of the lived experiences of others, they generally do not acknowledge the emotional toll that is placed on those sharing their experiences. As such, students may require ongoing training in order to engage higher order awareness.
A second theme included processes that facilitated learning. That is, students described a range of mechanisms that were employed in order to promote learning as they matriculated through the program. One strategy described by participants was a pragmatic approach to learning, where students consciously set aside time to ponder their thoughts and experiences in relation to introduced material. This process was best reflected in one student’s account:

*I challenged myself by really thinking and being thoughtful. I went deeper in my thoughts and my biases. I asked myself a lot of questions during the agree and disagree exercise and throughout the day (Student 8).*

While the student connected this strategy to a particular lesson that took place during the phase 1 training intervention, such processes were described by students throughout various aspects of the program.

Another common process that students described as facilitative in learning new material included dialogic learning, where students began to process new information by engaging in conversation with their peers. This approach is described in the following report:

*I think there were a lot of different parts and aspects of the situation that I didn't think about originally until after the greater group discussion. I had to challenge myself by really putting myself into the situation, while also realizing that I still wasn't thinking about all of the possibilities and aspects that went into the situation (Student 28).*

Like many participants, this student’s account implies that they engaged several strategies of learning as they matriculated through the training program. Within this entry, the student also describes reflexive learning as well as empathetic learning.

Empathetic learning, or the practice of intentional perspective-taking in order to better understand a concept or experience, was highly reference by students as they described how they
were able to make sense of program content. This was represented in one student’s processing, as they stated:

_\textit{I usually shy away from thinking about difficult topics that could make me think too much because I am scared of conflict or disagreement. I made a conscious effort to lean into active listening and empathy (Student 25).}_

It is important to note that not all students expressed positive learning experiences throughout the intervention. For instance, one student described environmental factors that may have thwarted their learning:

...\textit{in the student voice activity I felt a little bored and as if I was in a school setting. I feel it’s because the instructor was a White woman and talked like most other White females that teach at school (student 32).}

In this example, the instructor’s race appeared to prevent the Black student from being fully receptive. Environmental issues such as this may be informative in interpreting the experiences of diverse participants. Indeed, other students of color referenced environmental factors that seemed to hinder their learning. For example, one student noted, “The environment of the building was hard to be in it felt very clinical and drab.” It may be that institutional settings, such as the psychological clinic described here, are aversive learning spaces particularly for students of color.

An additional theme summarizes strategies for advocacy and allyship. That is, many students discussed how they aim to exercise their understandings of social justice as a result of participating in the present study.

_\textit{I will apply what I learned today with student voice to work to implement change within the district and help fight to underrepresented minorities within the student body. My}
favorite part of today's presentations was the student voice workshop because it showed me what I could do as a peer advocate and gave me some ideas for what I want to do (Student 18).

Reflections such as these demonstrate specific plans that students formulated in response to participating in the program. Similarly, students also discussed how they can use information provided in the training to inform future plans that they have yet to devise. This is observed in one student’s reflection after participating in a lesson on student voice, stating:

*Learning how my voice can be heard inside of SCASD by analyzing and seeing the flow of how to read the school board through teachers and directors and the superintendent is very empowering. I feel like now I know how to take action and work with the administration to make SCASD a more inclusive and better place* (Student 10).

Alternatively, other students described action goals that were more abstract and interpersonal including:

*I came to understand that for me, I cannot speak for people of other races, but I can support them and use my power to ensure their voices are heard. It is often taught that White people are the saviors somehow and I believe that is wrong, only through collaboration can we hope to achieve equity or equality* (Student 23)

The student suggests that any action taken must engage the perspectives of individuals from various racial identities. Within this account, the student also acknowledges faulty thinking that is often engaged during social justice advocacy and provides an alternative approach that they, as a White ally, can assume.

It is noteworthy that many students continue to describe action steps abstractly, indicating that there is still a degree of uncertainty in what can be done in actuality. Indeed, this position
was explicitly evinced by one particular student, noting “I am still struggling with the HOW. How do we create fast, effective change?” (Student 21). Such a position suggests that while students, overall, discussed positive perceptions of the training program, there is inevitably ongoing development that must occur in order to support students in effectuating systemic, equitable change.

**Summary of Findings**

The present study investigated whether participation in a social justice training program was effective in promoting change in high school students’ white racial identity, racial identity development, and color-blindness. Using a convergent mixed-methods approach with repeated measure ANOVA analyses and thematic analyses, the study sought to explore distinct changes that occurred over time in identity and ideological development for adolescents assuming school-based peer allyship roles. Overall, findings suggest that 1) the intervention was effective in increasing white participants’ white racial identity development with regards to cross-racial contact, 2) participation in the SJTP was effective in increasing participants’ exploration of their racial identities, and 3) participating in the SJTP prompted students to decrease in their adherence to color-blind ideologies over time (Table 15).

Additionally, findings demonstrate that White students in the sample report more developed racial identities and less utilization of color-blind ideologies when compared to students who do not identify racially as white. Moreover, students who indicated participating in past social justice training programs, including courses, workshops, and volunteer initiatives that educated adolescents on tenets of social justice, demonstrated a more developed racial identity and less adherence to color-blindness when compared to students who had not participated in previous training.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Research Results</th>
<th>Description of Results</th>
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<td>RQ1</td>
<td>What are the associations among variables of interest?</td>
<td>Correlation between WRCDS-R and CoBRAS</td>
<td>Significant association between variables of White racial identity and color-blindness. No association observed between White racial identity and racial identity.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>White students high in contact in T1; increase in PI and A over time; no evidence of reintegration White identity.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Main effect for time in contact subscale</td>
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<td>White students increased in White identity status of contact, suggesting greater cross-racial interaction over time.</td>
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<td>RQ2</td>
<td>Do differences exist across time in White racial identity?</td>
<td>Identity development over time</td>
<td>White students high in contact in T1; increase in PI and A over time; no evidence of reintegration White identity.</td>
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<td>Increase in exploration and commitment over time; unexamined racial identity in T1; identity reflected based on dimensions of identity not reflected in the MEIM model</td>
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<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td>Do differences exist across time in racial identity?</td>
<td>Various dimensions of identity represented</td>
<td>White students high in contact in T1; increase in PI and A over time; no evidence of reintegration White identity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RQ3a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increase in exploration and commitment over time; unexamined racial identity in T1; identity reflected based on dimensions of identity not reflected in the MEIM model</td>
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<td>No meaningful change in racial identity on quantitative measures. Anecdotal data indicated increase across time for exploration and other dimensions of racial identity.</td>
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<td>RQ3b</td>
<td>Do differences exist across race in racial identity?</td>
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<td>RQ4</td>
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<td>RQ4a</td>
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<td>Increase in utilization of abstract liberalism; minimal utilization of naturalization, cultural racism and minimization of race across time</td>
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<td>All participants decreased in adherence to color-blind ideologies across time. An overall decrease also observed in color-blindness related to racial privilege and blatant racial issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RQ4b</td>
<td>Do differences exist across race in color-blindness?</td>
<td>Main effect for race in CoBRAS</td>
<td>White participants ascribed to color-blind ideologies to a significantly lesser extent than did participants that did not identify as White.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Do differences exist across race and time in color-blindness?</td>
<td>Interaction effects for race and previous training in CoBRAS</td>
<td>White students and students with previous social justice training demonstrated high color-blindness at onset of the program, which decreased at a significantly higher rate in comparison to students who did not identify as</td>
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<td>RQ5</td>
<td>What are students’ perceptions of the social justice training program?</td>
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<td>High means for indicators of preparedness</td>
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<td>Students described feeling prepared to identify school-based social inequities and provide support to peers, but less equipped to identify and dismantle systemic inequities.</td>
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<td>Identification of facilitative and unfavorable program factors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pedagogical approaches and facilitator style were identified as facilitative program components. Intensive format of phase 1 and open format of phase 2 were identified as unfavorable program components.</td>
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Overall, findings suggested that participation in the SJTP was effective in promoting racial identity development among diverse adolescents who were preparing to take on peer support roles. This study’s findings also indicated that the SJTP promoted an increased awareness of racialized ideologies among participants, as demonstrated by a decrease in adherence to color-blind ideologies across time. Moreover, results suggested that particular factors, such as socialization of racial identity and previous exposure to social justice training, may also influence variables of racial identity and ideological awareness among adolescents. Outcomes of the current study are explored in depth in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this present study was to investigate the degree to which diverse adolescents developed a sense of racial identity and ideological awareness as a result of participating in a social justice training program aimed at preparing them to take on peer allyship roles within their school contexts. The results of this study, reported in chapter 4, explained the relationships between the dependent variables of White racial identity development (WRCDS-R), racial identity development (MEIM-R), and color-blind ideology (CoBRAS), across three time points (T1, T2, and T3). This chapter provides: a) an overview of the study, b) a discussion of the major findings, c) limitations of the study, d) implications for counselor educators, counselors, and school policy and school-based personnel, e) and suggestions for future research.

Overview of the Study

School climate has been identified as a primary determinant of academic and socio-emotional development among youth, influencing both short-term and lasting outcomes of students. Student-led, school-based initiatives, which engage social justice precepts in attempts to promote a more prosocial school climate, are being utilized at increasing rates within secondary school contexts. Oftentimes, however, involved youth are not provided opportunities to develop a reasonable awareness of self and others, which can result in the perpetuation of discriminatory practices. The present study aimed to address this by investigating whether participation in a social justice training program influenced students’ racial identity development and ideological awareness. Specifically, White racial identity development, racial identity development, and adherence to color-blind ideologies were assessed through a mixed-methods research design to determine the degree to which participants’ identities and ideologies transformed over time. Overall, students’ utilization of problematic color-blind ideologies
decreased over time while exploration of their racial identities increased over time. Additionally, main effects were observed based on student race and previous exposure to social justice training.

**Relationship among Variables of Interest**

The present study investigated whether associations were present among the three variables of interest, White racial identity (WRCDS-R), racial identity (MEIM-R), and color-blind ideology (CoBRAS). Analyses demonstrated significant correlations between White racial identity and color-blind ideology as well as between racial identity and dimensions of color-blindness. Further, no association was observed among White racial identity and racial identity.

Significant associations among dimension of White racial identity and color-blind ideology suggest that White racial identity is a strong indicator of color-blind attitudes among participants of the present study. Specifically, strong negative associations existed for the WRCDS-R subscales of pseudo-independence and autonomy, indicators of a highly developed White racial identity, and each component of the CoBRAS. The directionality of this relationship implies that more developed White racial identity correlates to minimal utilization of color-blind frames among adolescent participants. Conversely, positive associations were present for the WRCDS-R subscale of reintegration, which signifies a less developed White racial identity as denoted by a greater ascription to racist ideologies, and dimensions of color-blindness. This relationship suggests that a less developed White racial identity is related to greater adherence to color-blind ideologies.

To review, Helms’ model of White Racial Identity Development conceptualizes awareness of and participation in racism as a measurement of White racial identity. To this end, White individuals that report less awareness and greater participation in racism denote less developed White racial identities. Conversely, White individuals that report greater awareness
and less participation in various manifestations of racism are categorized as having a more
developed White racial identity. Indeed, Color-blind Ideology (CBI) literature helps to elucidate
various manifestations of racism, which are present in current society. Specifically, CBI
describes a range of subtle manifestations of racism that are utilized at a higher degree by
individuals within the post-civil rights era, in comparison to overt racist behaviors that were
observed in the past. Taken together, WRID and CBI provide a archetype for the ways in which
whiteness manifests among White populations. Helms summarizes this distinct manifestation of
whiteness among individuals who identify racially as White, stating:

…Some researchers have found that White people who endorse color blindness
perspectives are more likely to engage in discrimination toward other racial groups, act in
ways that preserve White privilege, and feel scared and helpless in interracial interactions
when they are not in the majority (Helms, 2008, p. 11).

The above quote reflects the interrelated nature of white identity and color-blindness. That is,
White individuals that exhibit color-blind tendencies outlined by Helms are likely to exhibit a
less developed White racial identity. Conversely, White individuals assuming less color-blind
ideologies are likely to report higher statuses of White racial identity. The association of White
racial identity and color-blindness has been demonstrated in other empirical scholarship (Gushue
& Constantine, 2007; Paone et al., 2015). Specifically, the association is consistent with findings
of Gushue and Constantine (2007), who reported that greater adherence to color-blind attitudes
was positively related to less developed statuses of White racial identity.

The evolving nature of racialized research may provide one explanation for the strong
association observed between White racial identity and color-blindness. Bonilla-Silva (2017)
contends that, historically, measures of White racial identity assess racial attitudes of White
populations, which are predicated on dated definitions of racism. In order to assess adherence to racism within the post-civil rights era, however, Bonilla-Silva argues that one must investigate manifestations of racism that are more subtle in nature. The revised WRCDS (Lee et al., 2007) is one such measure that evaluates such subtleties of racial identity. As a result, certain items of the WRCDS-R now closely mirror items on the CoBRAS, a measure developed to assess covert racial attitudes. The items below found in the WRCDS-R and CoBRAS, respectively, demonstrate the repetition of the two scales.

WRCDS-R Item: Affirmative action is just reverse discrimination.

CoBRAS Item: Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against White people.

Thus, such high correlations among subscales of the two instruments can also be an indicator of confounding of the two variables of interest. That stated, the scales continue to be used in conjunction, suggesting a distinct relationship between ascription to color-blind ideology and maturity of White racial identity.

Interestingly, no significant correlation was observed for the subscale of contact in White racial identity and aspects of color-blindness. This finding is unsurprising as, according to Bonilla-Silva (2018), many individuals that ascribe to color-blind ideologies hold liberalistic attitudes regarding racialized matters. Moreover, color-blind attitudes can be endorsed by racially diverse individuals, including White groups and people of color, independent of the degree of cross-racial social contact that one engages (Burkard & Knox, 2004; Manning et al., 2015).

A significant correlation was also observed between color-blindness and racial identity. Specifically, results indicated a strong negative association between the composite mean score of
racial identity and the institutional discrimination subscale of color-blindness. That is, individuals with more developed racial identities reported lower adherence to color-blind ideologies. This was unsurprising given that empirical racial literature indicates a greater social justice knowledge among individuals with more developed racial identities (Chao, 2006; Gushue & Constantine, 2007; Paone et al., 2015). For instance, Chao (2006) reported that individuals with higher scores on the MEIM, a measure of racial/ethnic identity, also exhibited greater knowledge and awareness of multicultural and social justice tenets. Similarly, the study found that lower scores of color-blindness was also associated with greater social justice knowledge and awareness. In short, it appears that a greater multicultural and social justice consciousness is associated with a more developed racial identity and a decreased adherence to color-blind ideology. It would make sense, then, that the variables of racial identity and color-blindness would also demonstrate a significant relationship with one another.

Finally, there was no meaningful association observed between the variables of White racial identity and racial identity. This was not surprising given that the two variables conceptualize distinct dimensions of racial identity. Specifically, Phinney’s (1996) measure of racial identity describes racial development in terms of one’s efforts to better understand and adhere to aspects of their racial group. This perspective positions race as a cultural category within society. Conversely, Helms’ (1990) model of White racial identity characterizes White racial development according to one’s level of awareness and endorsement of racist phenomena, with higher identity development denoting greater awareness and decreased endorsement of racism. According to this framework, race is outlined as an organizing paradigm of racial awareness.
**White Racial Identity Development**

In the present study, White racial identity was assessed across three time points by investigating changes in mean scores on each of the four subscales of the White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R), quantitatively, as well as assessing responses to student journal entries through a qualitative approach. In general, White participants indicated low degrees of social contact with people of color at the onset of the program, which increased substantially over time. In addition, White student participants appeared to maintain a relatively strong sense of racial identity, as denoted by high scores on the subscales of Pseudo-independence and Autonomy, which did not change significantly throughout the course of the program.

Increases on the contact subscale for White racial identity were observed in both survey measures as well as student narratives. Furthermore, follow-up contrast comparisons from survey data revealed that significant increases occurred between the second and final time points of the study as well as overall between the first and third time points, with large effect sizes for each. This finding indicates that White participants in the program developed a more mature White racial identity, as indicated by reported cross-racial contact, as they participated in the intervention. This finding is consistent with previous social justice training literature, which cites increases in racial development and awareness for White youth participating in such interventions (Loyd & Gaithers, 2018; Thomann & Suyemoto, 2018). Moreover, increases in White students’ reported cross-racial contact throughout the training may indicate an increased awareness of their current cross-racial social interactions prompted by formal and informal program content. Tauriac and colleagues (2013) engaged youth in a similar program, which centered on enhancing intergroup dialogue, and concluded that facilitated cross-racial exchanges
such as this promote ongoing intentionality in youth seeking out opportunities to engage with diverse peers.

Although observable development occurred in the contact subscale, quantitative analyses found no significant changes for any of the other three subscales of White identity development. In contrast to the contact subscale, which measures a concrete phenomenon, i.e. frequency of cross-racial social interactions, the additional three subscales of the WRCDS-R assess racial phenomena that are more abstract (Lee et al., 2007). This could provide one explanation in why there were no meaningful changes in these statuses of White identity, as youth may not possess the cognitive propensity to consider complex racial issues (Umana-Taylor et al., 2014). Given that students’ journal accounts demonstrated a more sophisticated understanding of racialize matters, however, it is likely that there is a more convoluted explanation of these outcomes.

In examining the subscale of reintegration, which assesses the degree to which White individuals endorse accusatory attitudes towards people of color, there were minimal changes in pretest and posttest scores. Given that student mean scores for reintegration were relatively low at pretest and remained low throughout the duration of the program, indicating less endorsement of accusatory attitudes, it may also be that participants responded to items in a socially desirable manner.

Conversely, the final two subscale of White identity development broadly represent attitudes that endorse racial equality across society. Students in the present study demonstrated high levels in both pseudo-independence and autonomy statuses at the onset of the program, which appeared to be sustained throughout the program. These results support Croll’s (2007) hypothesis of White racial identity, which asserts that White identity manifests as two distinct profiles, that of “defensive” and “progressive,” with progressive identities demonstrating high
endorsement of multicultural ideologies. According to this premise, it might be that participants enter into the program already possessing a strong “progressive” identity, creating a ceiling effect of mean scores for the two subscales. Indeed, students in the present study were self-referred to participate and indicated strong social justice attitudes within their journal responses. Further, responses to the demographic questionnaire revealed that 42.9% of participants had engaged in some form of social justice training in the past.

Related, other researchers have found a strong association between parental education, socialization practices and racial attitudes held by youth (Aldana et al., 2012; Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009; Thomann & Suyemoto, 2018). For instance, White youth who participated in one training intervention indicated that racial socialization practices from their parents were instrumental in cultivating a deeper understanding of racial rhetoric (Thomann & Suyemoto, 2018). Similarly, Aldana and colleagues (2012) found that racial identity was higher for those youth from families with higher educational attainment. It could be the case that adolescent participants received frequent racial socialization messages from their parents, which influenced their racial identity statuses even at the onset of the program. Over 26.2% of students in the sample reported that their parents have received at least a bachelor’s degree with another 59.5% indicating that at least one parent has received a graduate degree. Moreover, anecdotal student reports corroborate this premise, as one student explained:

*My dad is a professor of criminal justice and does a lot of studies on minorities within the justice system, so I have learned a lot about the inequalities and forms of White supremacy within these systems (Student 3).*

Perhaps racial socialization from parents has impacted White identity development and awareness for this and other participants beyond what was evoked during the program.
While it is plausible that participants in the present study entered the program at higher white racial identity statuses, in comparison to the general public, qualitative analyses demonstrate a somewhat contradictory account. Regarding stages of whiteness, students’ journal entries suggest an under-developed pseudo-independent status at the onset of the program, which seems to mature as students matriculate through the program. Similarly, very few student narratives collected at either phase of the intervention reflect the autonomy status. One rationale could be that, although students may adhere to beliefs that are representative of higher racial identity statuses, namely pseudo-independence and autonomy, they have a difficult time communicating these ideologies in writing. Alternatively, it could be that the journal prompts, which were provided as a springboard for student entries, were restrictive. That is, the manner in which daily journal prompts were written may not have allowed students to fully articulate their positionality relative to the racial identity statuses.

Social desirability is a final phenomenon that must be taken into account when interpreting outcome scores. Social desirability as a response bias asserts that respondents tend to answer questions in a manner assumed to be favorable by others or in a manner that allows them to be seen as “good,” and is frequently identified by researchers as a threat to validity when attempting to measure White racial identity (Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009; Loyd & Gaither, 2018). Based on the nature of the intervention, students may have felt a desire to respond in a way that aligned with inferred values of the program. It should be noted that a measure of social desirability was included in the present study but yielded no significant results. However, a low sample size or low measure of reliability may have generated insignificant effects. Nonetheless, an examination of means demonstrated expected trends of each of the subscales over time, such
that reintegration decreased slightly while means of pseudo-independence and autonomy increased marginally.

**Identity Development Across Racial Groups**

Although not included in its initial design, this study also investigated changes in racial identity across racial groups for each of the three time points. While this was due, in large part, to a high number of students of color included in the final sample, it is also recognized that racial identity development holds significant implications for social justice and multicultural competence among adolescent allies. Specifically, racial identity positively correlates with higher levels of multicultural competence (Chao, 2013) and ethno-cultural empathy (Peifer et al., 2016), and can be indicative of greater intergroup attitudes and cross-cultural awareness (Phinney, Jacoby & Silva, 2007). Ultimately, racial identity development was assessed quantitatively using the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R; Phinney & Ong, 2007), as well as qualitatively through thematic analysis of student journal entries. In general, results show that participants’ racial identity remained relatively consistent over time, with White students reporting a significantly higher racial identity in comparison to students of color.

Survey data revealed that there were only partially meaningful changes in all students’ sense of racial awareness as they progressed throughout the program. That is, youth reported greater exploration of their racial identity at the end of the intervention than was the case prior to participating in the program. Racial commitment and overall racial identity remained constant. In other words, participants expended more efforts exploring aspects of their racial identities over time, which appeared to be associated with participation in the SJTP. This finding was consistent with Aldana et al. (2012), who reported that students in their intervention increased in
racial/ethnic exploration, but remained consistent in racial commitment and overall racial identity.

These results provide two possible interpretations: a) participants entered into the program with minimal awareness of their racial identities, so were only able to engage the exploration phase of identity development in the constrained time span of the intervention, and b) participants are not yet developmentally mature enough to establish a concrete racial identity, described as racial commitment. Anecdotal data indicated that students expressed greater levels of racial identity awareness as they progressed through the intervention. Specifically, students’ racial rhetoric transformed from generally unexamined to an active searching for information about their racial backgrounds. Thusly, one student reported described taking various steps to learn more about their family of origin following the conclusion of phase 1 of the program, stating “I talked with my relatives via WeChat (since they live in China) and gained a greater understanding of my cultural background” (Student 24). Such findings may be attributed to the fact that participants were encouraged to seek out information about their social and cultural identities, and were provided opportunities during and outside of the intervention to explore how these differing identities influenced their roles as social justice allies.

Umaña and colleagues (2014) contend that racial identity development is contingent on individuals’ abilities to reach social and cognitive milestones throughout youth. Racial identity growth trends suggest that many youth demonstrate positive trajectories in racial identity development as they age, with early adolescents often marking the onset of exploration. Further, Phinney’s (1990) model theorizes that the process of exploring one’s racial identity, determining its meaningfulness in one’s life, and internalizing this identity in the form of commitment takes place across a span of time. One might, therefore, surmise that a greater amount of time is
needed in order to elicit meaningful gains in racial identity. Taken together, it appears that participation in training interventions such as the one described in the current study have promising positive effects on facilitating racial identity exploration for adolescent populations.

The study also investigated differences in reported racial identity development across White versus POC racial groups. Analyses found that, across time, White participants had higher scores on the measure of racial identity than participants of color. Significant differences were observed for composite scores of the MEIM-R as well as in the exploration subscale, with corresponding large effect sizes for each. This was surprising considering that a vast majority of empirical analyses conclude that adolescents of color maintain a more developed sense of racial identity than do White youth (Camacho, Medina, Rias-Drake & Jagers, 2018; Hughes, Del Torro, & Way, 2017; Peifer et al., 2016). One thing to consider is the potential range of racialized experiences among students within this heterogeneous group, which may have influenced an overall low score of racial identity development. Disaggregating data from the POC group may, therefore, help to elucidate seemingly discrepant findings. First, it is important to note that the POC group was comprised of students who identified racially as Black (11.9%), Latino/a (2.4%), Asian (19.0%), and Multi-racial (14.3%). Indeed, a deeper investigation of student narratives across racial groups illuminated potential explanations of this peculiar outcome.

A number of students who identified racially as Asian American alluded to challenges in identifying in terms of race versus ethnicity or nationality. This was best illustrated in one student’s narrative, stating:

*I always considered myself Indian… Later when filling out forms and meeting people I found out that Indian is not a race. I belong to the Asian race where I have my neighbors*
from the west Bangladesh, north China, Korea, Japan. However, all these people look
different from Indians. How are we from the same race... From filling out the passport
application to filling out school application I was always given one choice, ‘Asian’... I
still like to introduce myself as Indian and people tell me, ‘oh, so you are from Asia.’ The
total world no longer sees a Indian boy but a Asian boy... (Student 2)

This perspective is supported by the work of Junn and Masuoka (2008), which summarized
unique racial identity patterns among Asian and Latino youth in their study. In particular, the
researchers suggested that participants seemed to struggle with the tensions of feeling that their
racial identities were not important but also feeling a strong inclination to positively represent
attributes of their ethnic identities, especially within White society. Junn & Masuoka (2008)
conclude by stating that previous research may have come up short in identifying racial identity
among Latino and Asian youth because of using “insufficient measures,” which did not account
for the above nuances of the full scope of their identities. Perry, Vance and Helms (2009)
endorse this notion, asserting that it is important to consider not only one’s racial identity but
also the multifaceted cultural identities and varying degrees of acculturation when examining
identity, particularly for Asian American populations. Consequently, it may be that measures
used to assess racial development among this population was not attuned to capturing unique
attributes of identity that may be particularly relevant for students in this racial group.

In contrast, journal entries demonstrated that Black students in the current study
frequently indicated a high awareness of their racial identities, but described this racial
awareness as primarily being cued by experiences of discrimination. For example, when asked
what prompted realization of their racial identity, one student explained, “bullied for being black
and being different from the other kids.” Scottham, Sellers, and Nguyên (2008) noted that
experiences such as these may characterize distinct dimensions of racial identity, including private regard versus public regard. Accordingly, private regard refers to the extent to which an individual feels positively about their own racial group while public regard represents feeling that other racial groups view their racial group as positively or negatively. In one investigation of racial identity across student groups, researchers reported that students of color, including Black, Dominican, and Chinese youth, reported greater scores on the MEIM-R than did White youth (Hughes et al., 2017). However, when investigating racial identity in terms of public regard, White students appeared to have more favorable reports of racial identity when compared to Black and Chinese youth. Altogether, this suggests a need to assess contributing factor that influence racial development, such as acculturation or experiences with discrimination, in addition to measuring intrapersonal salience of one’s race.

It is also important to note the unique setting of this study, as it took place in a predominantly White, rural northeast town. While certain findings suggest that one’s racial identity becomes more salient in majority-White settings (Umaña-Taylor, 2009), others point to negative effects for youth of color residing in predominantly White neighborhoods (Barr & Neville, 2014; Byrd & Chavous, 2009). Indeed, Byrd and Chavous (2009) assert that minoritized groups residing in majority-White communities may be more likely to experience messages of racial denigration, resulting in decreased sense of racial affinity. Similarly, Barr and Neville (2014) reported that individuals who grew up in majority-minority neighborhoods reported greater cultural pride compared to those in predominantly White contexts. It could be the case that racial make-up of the ecological setting influenced how students of color experienced their racial development, specifically by feeling less secure in their identity.
There were no main effects observed for previous training, as students who indicated prior social justice training experiences had scores on the racial identity measure that did not differ significantly from those who had not engaged in previous training opportunities. This finding suggests that other social justice training interventions do not draw attention to students’ racial identity or provide students with opportunities for self-exploration. Furthermore, this reinforces the importance of the present study, as it is one of only few that integrates racial rhetoric into social justice programming for adolescent participants.

**Adherence to Color-blind Ideology**

The present study also assessed adherence to color-blind ideologies across three time points by investigating changes in composite mean scores and subscale scores of the Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS), quantitatively, as well as assessing responses to student journal entries through a qualitative approach. In general, results from this study show that participants indicated moderately strong color-blind attitudes at the onset of the intervention, which decreased substantially as they participated in the training program. In addition, race and engagement in previous training strongly influenced students’ reporting of color-blindness over time, with White students and students who were exposed to previous training indicating less color-blindness in comparison to students of color and those with no previous training.

Responses to the color-blind ideology survey revealed that students’ attitudes of color-blindness decreased over time as they engaged in the training program, as observed in both survey measures as well as student narratives. Specifically, survey data indicated main effects for overall color-blindness as well as for each of the three subscales of color-blindness, including Racial Privilege (RP) and Blatant Racial Issues (BRI), with corresponding medium to large effect sizes for each. Follow-up contrast comparisons revealed that significant increases occurred between the first and second time points of the study as well as overall between the first and third
time point. In other words, students’ mean scores on the CoBRAS decreased significantly during phase 1 of the intervention as well as overall, between the start of the intervention and the end of phase 2. This change indicates that participants became more aware of problematic ideologies commonly employed in racial discourse and were less likely to ascribe to such ideologies over time. These findings are also supported by previous studies finding that individuals are less likely to endorse color-blind ideologies when they are provided formalized training opportunities related to multiculturalism and social justice (Aldana et al., 2012; Chao et al., 2011; Paone et al., 2015).

Noteworthy, students did not exhibit significant changes during the second phase of the intervention, which included the time directly after the 5-day intensive training through 15 weeks after the start of the academic semester. As a review, phase 1 of the intervention occurred during the summer session for students and engaged them in an accelerated, all-day training, while phase 2 occurred during the fall semester of classes and included monthly sessions as well as engagement in action-based advocacy. One explanation could be that the less intensive approach was not rigorous enough to elicit robust growth during phase 2 of the intervention. Alternatively, students may have encountered a difficult time continuing to process program content given the increased cognitive load brought on by the start of the school year. This observation is useful when considering implications for future training programs.

Although observable gains occurred in composite scores of color-blindness as well as subscales of RP and BRI, quantitative analyses found no significant changes for the subscale of Institutional Discrimination (ID). The results of this study are consistent with Aldana and colleagues (2012) who reported that participants in their study decreased in overall color-blindness scores as well as scores on the BRI subscale; they did not observe changes in scores on
the ID scale. A closer investigation of the color-blind subscales suggests that RP and BRI scales assess students’ awareness of racist phenomena that may be more easily recognizable, including observable advantages and disadvantages allocated differentially based race. On the contrary, the ID scale assesses an aspect of racism that manifests in more subtle ways.

It is important to note that while students seem to be grasping rudimentary social justice principles related to privilege and overt discrimination, they may not be comprehending complex, abstract concepts. Aldana et al. (2012) rationalize that understanding institutional discrimination may be more “cognitively taxing” for adolescents and may indicate limits to their cognitive maturity. Furthermore, in examining this same phenomenon among a sample of high school youth, Thomann and Suyemoto (2018) concluded that participants in their study expressed a difficult time discussing or understanding structural racism because of limited cross-racial experiences. According to cognitive developmental models, adolescents progressively develop more sophisticated mechanisms for abstract thinking as they age. Thus, more cognitive scaffolding across an extended period of time may be needed to promote understanding of more complex concepts related to racial inequity.

Conversely, adolescents may have a difficult time understanding institutional discrimination resulting from limited opportunities to connect concrete personal experiences with abstract social constructs (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Considering the predominantly White setting of the present study, it may be that students were limited in opportunities to experience meaningful cross-racial interactions, which further impeded their awareness. Furthermore, students may require more robust educational and immersive experiences in order to better understand and identify obscured dimensions of racialized practices.
Participants were also asked to indicate whether or not they had previously participated in a SJTP, which could include a course, volunteer program, or other initiative where they were introduced to tenets of race and social justice. Importantly, an interaction effect was observed for previous training, indicating that students with no previous training reported high levels of color-blindness at the onset of the program, in comparison to students with previous social justice training. Further, participants with no previous participation in a SJTP decreased at a significantly greater rate over time, when compared to students with previous training. The interaction effect of previous training across time is a critical finding as it provides evidence that 1) participation in social justice training interventions can be effective in promoting ideological awareness among adolescents, and 2) there may be a ceiling effect for training programs in their ability to influence ideological awareness.

The interaction effect for previous training demonstrates that participants with previous social justice training indicated minimal adherence to color-blind ideologies at the onset of the program, in comparison to those with no previous training. This finding provides strong evidence that exposure to social justice tenets can be effective in increasing awareness of racism and decreasing adherence to attitudes that minimize the existence of racism. This finding supports the work of Johnson & Jackson (2015), which shows that participants who report high levels of multicultural training score lower on color-blindness measures in comparison to reporting low levels of multicultural training. Supported by the main effect of time reported in the present study, it can be concluded that exposing adolescents to various social justice concepts are enough to decrease utilization of certain color-blind frames.

It is important to note that the interaction effect also signified that participants with no previous training demonstrated a significant decreased in color-blindness throughout the duration
of the intervention, when compared to those with previous training. In other words, although individuals with no previous training reported higher color-blindness at the onset of the program, in comparison to those with previous training, the no previous training group decreased at a significantly higher rate than did those in the previous training group. Therefore, at the conclusion of the intervention, both groups reported nearly identical degrees of color-blindness.

The interaction effect for previous training in the present study supports literature on multicultural and social justice training initiatives (Chao, Wei, Good & Flores, 2011; Johnson & Jackson, 2015). As such, Chao and colleagues (2011) reported a similar finding for training in that individuals with high multicultural training demonstrated lower color-blindness scores in comparison to those with little training. The effect described here could indicate a ceiling effect for social justice training in influencing ideological awareness among adolescents. Accordingly, it may be that the introductory content introduced in this and other SJTPs has the propensity to merely influence color-blind ideologies to a particular degree. Further, more rigorous curricula may be required in order to continue influencing color-blind ideologies beyond this initial limit.

Patterns in students’ referencing of color-blind ideological frames were also investigated qualitatively to further understand student experiences as they participated in the intervention. Thematic analyses suggested that students’ utilization of three of the four frames did not change substantially over time. However, students appeared to employ abstract liberalist frames at a much higher rate during phase 2 of the program, when compared to phase 1. It should be noted that although the CoBRAS subscales and the four frames of Color-Blind Ideology model assess the same broad construct of color-blindness, Bonilla-Silva’s four frames of color-blindness are more indicative of Institutional Discrimination, as it is defined in the CoBRAS. Further, the two subscales of Blatant Racial Issues and Racial Privilege do not seem to converge with aspects of
the CBI framework. In other words, it may be that subscales of the CoBRAS are low in convergent validity in relation to Bonilla-Silva’s interpretation of the color-blindness construct.

One alternative way that color-blindness was demonstrated, which does not fully fit into the four dimensions of the CBI model, included students’ rationalizations of solutions. When discussing ideas for how students could enact change within their school environments, many students alluded to abstract, cursory solutions. For instance, when asked how they, as a peer ally, envision carrying out activism within their school context, one student stated, “…helping to make the school community a better place and making sure everyone feels safe and comforted” (Student 6). While such well-intentioned comments support efforts to create a harmonistic community, they do not acknowledge the root of such issues. Indeed, Bonilla-Silva (2002) contents that evading rhetoric that directly identifies structures of inequity is one other form of color-blindness. Students’ tendencies to avoid race when exploring advocacy efforts in the present study is a common example of color-blindness in both younger and older populations (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Apfelbaum et al., 2010).

Noteworthy, examining color-blindness through this alternative frame helped to illuminate additional patterns of development as students progressed through the intervention. For instance, some students entered into the program with vague, superficial understandings of peer allyship, as one student noted, “The work of a social justice peer advocate is to support those who do not have a voice within our community, in any way possible” (Student 4). When comparing this account from an entry completed during phase 1 of the program with this same student’s articulation of peer advocacy in phase 2, one can assume substantial growth:
In my opinion, social justice is the promotion of equity within any organization or society, in which the goal is to give every person (regardless of identity) equal rights, opportunities, and respect (Student 4).

Moreover, this comparison highlights one shortcoming of the CBI model, in that it does not provide space for a discussion of ideal, non-color-blind rhetoric. Examining student entries with this in mind, however, helps to corroborate statistical results for the variable of color-blind ideology. That is, not only did student journal entries reference color-blind discourse at lower rates across time, they also provided ideal, non-color-blind responses at higher rates over time. Such a non-color-blind was epitomized in the following student account:

A peer advocate works for equity but strives for justice. They work to dismantle the systems that oppress people of color, LGBTQ+ people, people who have different cultural backgrounds, and who have different levels of ability (Student 10).

Thus, investigating various dimensions of color-blindness through qualitative and quantitative inquiry may yield a more comprehensive understanding of diversity ideologies employed by student allies.

The present study also investigated whether differences occurred in adherence to color-blind ideologies based on participant race. Interestingly, quantitative analyses revealed significant differences across race for composite color-blindness as well as each of the three subscales. Specifically, White participants were significantly less likely to report color-blind attitudes in comparison to participants in the POC group. This finding is surprising given that researchers frequently report racial differences in the opposite direction, with people of color indicating less adherence to color-blind ideologies than White populations (Ryan et al., 2007). Moreover, an interaction effect was observed for race in that students of color reported greater
adherence to color-blind ideologies at the onset of the program, which decreased at a significantly higher rate over time, in comparison to White participants. Perhaps investigating the unique racial make-up of participants in this study can help to elucidate these peculiar findings.

Considering that the present study took place in a small, predominantly White rural town, it may be that ecological factors related to participants’ neighborhood and school environments influenced the degree to which students of color embraced color-blind attitudes. Indeed, investigating whether social proximity to White populations influenced color-blind racial attitudes among students of color, Gonlin and Campbell (2017) reported that close relationships with Whites were likely to predict color-blindness. Additionally, they found a wide degree of experiences based on race and other factors, and concluded that, in many instances, “respondents of color with close relationships with Whites are more likely to minimize certain types of racism.”

One rationale for the interaction effect could be the influence of socialization among individuals of color. It could be that adolescents in the present study have been socialized according to certain ideologies that are typically categorized as belonging to White Americans (Ryan et al., 2007). Indeed, Manning et al. (2015) reported that both White and Black individuals ascribed to color-blind frames, concluding that certain ideals seem to be shared across racial groups within the American society. Further, adherence to societal ideals of meritocracy and individualism, values that are reflective of a color-blind ideology, may be particularly common within majority white settings. One study concluded that Black employees in majority White work settings preferred a color-blind approach over multiculturalism, which was seemingly influenced by a desire to assimilate (Apfelbaum, Stephens & Reagans, 2016). Moreover, it may be more difficult for people of color within a predominantly White ecological setting to
acknowledge White privilege. Engaging in a training program could have prompted a significant shift in awareness of privilege and racism for individuals who previously held differing ideologies.

Barr and Neville (2014) also examined how racial makeup of one’s neighborhood and school influenced racial socialization practices and color-blind ideology endorsement for black adolescents and young adults. They reported that individuals who grew up in majority-Black neighborhoods had greater cultural pride and other forms of parental socialization. In turn, those with greater racial socialization from parents and peers accounted for less color-blind attitudes. It could be that families in predominantly White communities are socialized according to a different set of values and ideals. Moreover, findings such as this suggest that there is a wide range of factors that influence the type and degree of endorsement of color-blindness. Such factors must be taken into account when examining distinct outcomes of a diverse sample.

The majority of students in the participant of color group identified racially as Asian, followed by Multi-racial and Black. Consistent with findings from the present study, Junn & Masuoka (2008) suggested that color-blind notions held among Latino and Asian youth in their study may have influenced the ways that they conceptualized racial rhetoric. Kim (1998) provides one rationale for the ways in which Asian Americans may experience racial matters:

Although anti-U.S. sentiment is growing all over Asia, the "colonial mentality" is a frequent outcome of colonization, and many immigrants are held back from questioning injustices by ingrained old notions about the predominance and superiority of everything "American," which for many of them is coded as White (p. 7).
Accordingly, attributing ‘superiority’ to American ideals, including those that constitute a color-blind mindset, may influence greater degrees of endorsement for color-blindness ideologies for Asian students in the present study.

Furthermore, McDonald, Chang, Dispenza and O’Hara (2019) examined identity and color-blind racial ideology among individuals who identified as multiracial, and found that individuals in their sample tended to rank high on composite scores and subscales of the CoBRAS. Moreover, they rationalized that multiracial identity creates distinct differences in how one conceptualizes their world and experiences in comparison to the “monoracial minority population.” In expanding this notion to students in the present study, one might assume that multi-racial students may have had a difficult time understanding color-blind racialized matter at the onset of the program, in comparison to their monoracial, White peers. Social justice content and self-reflective opportunities provided throughout the duration of the intervention could have contributed to a significant decrease in color-blindness over time.

A final analysis compared reports of color-blind attitudes across time for students who had received previous training related to matters of social justice versus those who had not. Findings were consistent with the literature in demonstrating that individuals with previous social justice training were significantly less likely to adhere to color-blind ideologies compared to individuals with no prior training (Chao et al., 2011; Loyd & Gaithers, 2018), further emphasizing the importance of formalized training for youth engaged in advocacy work.

Limitations of Study

The use of a mixed-methods empirical design is a primary strength of the current study. That is, investigating racial identity development and adherence to color-blind ideology using both survey and anecdotal data allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of variables of interest. That stated, it is important to identify limitations of the present study.
One limitation of the current study regards to the study’s small sample. Specifically, the size of the final sample decreased significantly from the original sample, with an especially small number of participants within each of the two racial categories. As a result, the data from the relatively small sample size may have minimized power to detect statistical differences across variables. It should be noteworthy that while sample size was a limitation regarding the quantitative analyses of the study, it is an expected outcome based on the nature of the study. That is, a small sample size was necessary given that the present study aimed to provide targeted training to a select sub-sample of high-school students. It is likely that a larger sample size would pose challenges in adhering to the intensive, multi-pronged structure of the present study.

A second limitation is that this was not a true experiment, as it lacked a comparison group. With the absence of a comparison group, it is difficult to assess whether reported changes in variables were attributed to the intervention or to unexamined extraneous variables. This is especially important as the study did not utilize randomized sampling, instead all samples self-selected to participate in the study. Employing a repeated-measures ANOVA statistical design and gathering anecdotal data from students as they progressed throughout the program were strategies used to mitigate the effects of the quasi-experimental design.

The sample included youth residing in a small college town, many of their families who worked at the local university. This could significantly influence participants’ awareness and development in relation to content of the intervention. Further, the school district where the intervention took place had recently hired a Director of Equity shortly before the start of the program. This meant that there were several initiatives that were being employed in the realm of equity and social justice. Moreover, significant shifts in the sociopolitical climate of the nation have also influenced adolescents’ awareness of racialized matters within society. It is likely,
therefore, that this national climate shift has also influenced awareness among students of the present study.

A final limitation includes the measures used to assess variables of interest, primarily for White racial identity (WRCDS-R) and racial identity (MEIM-R). Specifically, subscales of the WRCDS-R correlate strongly with the CoBRAS, suggesting confounding of the two variables. Additionally, face validity of these measures may have influenced participants to answer in a socially desirable fashion. Further, study outcomes suggest that the MEIM-R may not be adequate in measuring all aspects of racial identity among the racially heterogeneous group. Including additional measures that assess other dimensions of racial identity development may yield more informative outcomes for the study. Further, while the study collected data at three time points over the course of six months, ongoing assessment is needed in order to provide evidence for lasting changes in student development.

**Implications for Practice, Counselor Education and Future Research**

**Implications for Practice**

Recognizing that educational experiences continue to stratify student groups, school counselors in particular have a responsibility to attend to the diverse needs of all communities within their school context. Further, school counselors have an obligation to contribute to the establishment of a socially just school environment while creating opportunities for student engagement and development. Findings from the current study support this mission by providing counselors and educators with important considerations in integrating social justice initiatives into their schools. At present, few programs exist that engage youth in critical thinking and reflection while simultaneously mobilizing students for advocacy and action. The current study contributes to this literature by providing a model for program integration that engages youth in social justice efforts while providing scaffolding for their awareness of self and others.
Furthermore, the study provides important considerations for understanding the complexities of the social identities held by students.

A primary aim for the current study was to provide youth with an opportunity for structured training in order to better prepare them to take on allyship roles within their school context. Positive findings from this study provide implications for the utility of such an approach among high school students engaged in advocacy. In particular, results suggest that, overall, engaging youth in training opportunities helps to expand their awareness of self and others in relation to their identities, ideologies, and understandings of social justice concepts. This is important given that researchers often note a minimal degree of self-awareness for youth engaged in such efforts (Kawecka Nenga, 2011; Swalwell, 2013; Wernick, 2012). That is, adolescents engaging in social justice efforts frequently report unexamined biases and limited understandings of the complexities of social injustice. When youth have unexamined color-blind and deficit-based ideologies related to social inequity, they can be ineffective in their ability to provide adequate advocacy (Gaztambide-Fernández, & Howard, 2013; Kawecka Nenga, 2011). Ultimately, the current study demonstrates that scaffolded training is, indeed, effective in supporting racial and ideological development among youth engaged in social justice advocacy.

Given that few school-based interventions exist, the present study also provides school counselors with a useful model of formalized social justice training for adolescent-aged students. First, the study utilized a two-phase design in which youth first took part in an intensive, week-long training that engaged them in didactic and experiential learning, and also prompted intentional self-reflection and intergroup dialogue. Following this was the second phase of the program, which was staggered across the fall semester and provided ongoing opportunities for instructive and practical learning as youth, simultaneously, assumed advocacy roles within their
school. Findings for the current study suggested that students exhibited substantial growth especially during the first phase of the program, with moderate gains also occurring in the second phase. School counselors and secondary educators can benefit by structuring programs similarly so that students are receiving optimal opportunities for growth.

Additionally, outcomes of the SJTP offer a number of programmatic components that school counselors and program coordinators must consider when structuring the program. Considerations include the age and number of participants to admit, instructional facilitators for various sessions, and session curriculum. Indeed, all of these decisions contributed to student gains that were evaluated throughout the program. Further, given that the study took place within a college town, university faculty with expertise in topics of social justice facilitated phase 1 sessions. School counselors who employ such a SJTP must assess their school’s contacts and resources in order to ensure access to skilled facilitators. Moreover, it is important to be involved in the curriculum development process to ensure that lessons align with the overall aim of the program.

Outcomes of the current study also provide implications for elements of a training intervention that work to elicit social development among youth. One objective of the current intervention was to provide youth with ample opportunities for self-reflection. According to the findings, this appeared to expand students’ awareness and enabled students to integrate personal experiences with training content. The program also aimed to present youth with sociopolitical content using didactic and experiential approaches. This approach helped to maintain participant engagement and encouraged youth to connect theoretical and practical understanding. It is likely that school counselors and secondary educators who aim to educate youth in social justice curricula will yield similar gains by employing such strategies to engage student learning.
Further, it is important to also consider implementing interventions that promote interpersonal engagement and build community. The program’s success in building community among participants was one aspect that students described as a primary strength. Establishing community among students who participate in a program such as this allows youth to engage more openly, practice vulnerability, and maintain involvement over time.

Success of the SJTP may also be associated with the program’s ability to actively engage youth within their school contexts. During phase 2 of the program, participants assumed a range of advocacy roles, which tapped their perspectives, experiences, and expertise. In replicating such a program, it is critical for school counselors to work with school administrators in determining advocacy roles that students can assume within their own school communities. In addition to employing students as agents of change, these roles can also reinforce learning in creating higher-order understandings of social justice topics. This study has implications for evolving models that inform the development of a social justice orientation within adolescents.

Researchers have developed models for social justice development and allyship that focus on social justice education (Hackman, 2005), White allyship (Broido, 2000), and advocacy and activism (McDaniel, 2017). Findings from the current study add to this literature by presenting a model for social justice development, which situates social justice orientation as a stimulus for racial identity and ideological development among youth.

Finally, findings from this study provide considerations for educators and school counselors working with racially and culturally diverse student groups. Counselors and other school personnel must consider the social, cultural, ecological, and other environmental factors that influence student development. Results from this study, in particular, provide a strong indication that such factors can greatly influence the ways in which students understand and
apply sociocultural and sociopolitical content. While not in the anticipated direction, significant differences from racial student groups suggest that racial socialization, degree of acculturation, and neighborhood urbanicity all influence how students understand their own racial identities as well as the ways in which students employ color-blind ideologies.

**Implications for Counselor Education**

Guidelines that have been developed to guide counselor education research and training underscore social justice as a critical element of practice. Further, ASCA standards that directly inform the work of school counselors provide clear expectations for engaging youth in social justice programming (ASCA, 2012). In adherence to these guideposts, the present study enhances our understanding about the nature of social justice integration. Furthermore, the study provides a clear rationale for the need to better develop counselors' multicultural and social justice competencies. In addition, the study provides implications for evolving theory on the development of a social justice orientation.

The Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD) positions social justice as a fundamental element of counseling, which should be embedded into all aspects of counselor education and practice (Ratts et al., 2016). Despite this, many school counselors indicate unfavorable multicultural counseling competencies while continuing to endorse color-blind racial attitudes (Chao, 2013). Moreover, a number of school counselors report not incorporating multicultural practices in their school settings as a result of feeling ill-prepared by their training programs (Packer-Williams, Jay, & Evans, 2010). It is important to introduce strategies for program development and intervention among counselors-in-training. Specifically, counselor educators must teach school counselors how to develop creative and innovative approaches to address the needs of their diverse student bodies. Steps adhered to in the current
study offer a relevant framework for accomplishing this, including: 1) identifying needs of the specific school community, 2) appraising resources and leveraging supports from teachers and community stakeholders, and 3) providing students with adequate preparation to learn and grow in self-awareness and awareness of others as well as to take on active roles within their communities.

Finally, school counselors and counselor educators often rely on theoretic and practical models to inform program and curriculum development. However, models that have been developed to help frame development of social justice attitude and allyship are limited in their approach. This is because many focus on particular elements of social justice, namely training, allyship, or activism. Findings from the present study contribute to an evolving theory of social justice development by positioning social justice orientation as a catalyst for racial and ideological development among diverse groups. This can inform future practices by demonstrating that social justice curriculum can be operationalized as a strategy for expanding identity and ideological development while, simultaneously, promoting increased understanding about sociopolitical content.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This is one of few studies that aims to assess racial development and color-blind ideological awareness among youth engaged in a social justice training program. The findings and limitations of the current study highlight a number of important areas for future research. Findings from the current study suggest that, while the anticipated relationship between increased social justice orientation and racial and ideological development appeared to hold true for White participants in the study, this was not fully the case for students of color. Findings also show that previous social justice training strongly influenced racial status and adherence to
color-blind ideologies over time. Based on these outcomes, the current study provides recommendations for future research in the following areas: a) ongoing and longitudinal research on the efficacy of a social justice training program, b) re-evaluation of constructs and measures used to assess racial identity development and color-blind ideology, and c) investigation of a wider range of factors that may be influenced by participation in a social justice training program.

The present study yielded interesting and informative findings regarding racial and ideological development for youth engaged in a social justice training program. That said, it is important for future research to examine consistency in eliciting and maintaining such effects over time and across future iterations of the program. While high effect sizes obtained in many of the quantitative analyses are promising, the relatively small, heterogeneous sample size was, indeed, a limitation in this study. Future analysis of the program is beneficial for two reasons. For one, future analysis on effects of the training program can help to validate the study’s effectiveness, primarily in influencing racial and ideological development through formalized social justice training. Additionally, ongoing investigation of the program can provide longitudinal data on the long-term effects of such intervention.

In addition to longitudinal examination of the study, future analyses could also benefit from a quasi-experimental research design that includes a comparison group. Given that students in the present study self-selected to participate in the program, generalizability of the results was a major limitation. Including a comparison group could allow the researcher to more accurately assess whether observed gains were a direct result of participation in the intervention. Further, such a design could provide a baseline determination of racial and color-blind ideological differences among high school students who self-select for participation in a social justice peer
allyship versus those who do not. Additionally, incorporating a formal program evaluation within future studies could also help to further substantiate results. While ex post facto examination of student perceptions provided some authentication of program outcomes, a formalized program evaluation could facilitate in more accurately linking participant results to program components.

Unintended findings from the present study indicate a need to re-examine methodological approaches to racial identity research. In particular, the mixed methods approach allowed for a more contextualized understanding of factors that influenced participants’ racial understanding and social justice development. From this, we can see that ecological and environmental factors play a major role in uniquely shaping the awareness and ideologies that students engage early on. While current models of racial identity development provide some utility in organizing and measuring facets of racial consciousness and affinity, outcomes provide a basis for the need to better understand and operationalize the properties of racial identity development across heterogeneous groups.

Similarly, approaches used to gather qualitative data may have been restrictive in allowing participants to thoroughly articulate racial identity and ideological perspectives. Future analysis could employ a range of alternative procedures in eliciting narratives from participants. One strategy could be to utilize structured or semi-structured interviews in order to garner beliefs and experiences of students. This approach would allow the interview to probe for additional content that is relevant to the study. In the current study, there were many instances where students did not thoroughly elaborate on an expressed position, making it challenging to interpret thoughts while refraining from a violation of interpretation validity.

Future studies can also expand on present findings by investigating how participation in a social justice training program may promote development across a wider range of factors.
Although the intervention focused primarily on expanding students’ knowledge and awareness of racial and sociopolitical rhetoric, students were also educated on strategies for advocacy and effectuating change. Given that the ultimate goal of the program was to prepare students to assume allyship roles within their school contexts, it could be of value to examine relevant factors, including ethno-cultural empathy and cultural competence. While ethno-cultural empathy was assessed for students in the present study, the small sample size inhibited ability to effectively assess any changes. Furthermore, future investigations could also examine students’ knowledge and competence relative to social justice content. A common practice in counselor education research, this approach could be beneficial for the current study in substantiating pedagogical approaches used to foster social justice orientation development.

Finally, an ex post facto examination of journal data was employed in efforts to identify compelling cases that were not represented through the pre-determined coding scheme. Through this process, the following themes emerged: 1) navigating difficult emotions, and 2) other social identities that influence racial identity and ideological development.

Students frequently referenced a range of difficult emotions that were elicited as they participated in the intervention. Further, many students identified emotions as facilitative in promoting knowledge and awareness in relation to program content, such as:

*The emotions that have been elicited through the training have mostly been feelings of empowerment. We have discussed very heavy topics, such as racism and homophobia, and this made me feel upset. However, I also felt empowered to stand up and fight for equity until justice is achieved (Student 11).*

Conversely, others’ narratives suggested that their emotionality was a hinderance to their development. This was epitomized in the following account:
Going throughout this training I have felt a lot of feelings of being overwhelmed and feeling defeated. I found that there are so many problems in our societies systems and so many injustices happening all around me that I didn’t know what to do (Student 9).

For this student, in particular, the intensive structure of the training program may have prevented them from imagining any realistic strategies to ameliorate the effects of systemic racism. More generally, it may be that students’ abilities to navigate a range of emotions also informs their racial and ideological development. Bonilla-Silva (2019) describes such a process as the “racial economy of emotions” and asserts that all groups experience particular emotions when they engage in racialized interaction. Future research could investigate the effects of racialized emotional reactions on students development.

A second theme that emerged from students’ journal entries was a discussion of other social identities that influence students’ social justice orientation. LGBTQ+ identity was the primary social identity cited by students, followed by gender. Altogether, students noted that holding marginalized identities allowed them to better empathize with the experiences of others and could be facilitative as they assumed ally roles within their school, as one student describes:

I am White, transgender, male, gay, and middle class. These inform my work as a peer advocate because I am able to pull from my own experiences with my identities to help people who are maybe going through the same things that I have gone through or to help relate to others who are going through things different than what I have gone through (Student 5).

As suggested in this quote, students holding marginalized identities may be more inclined to notice inequities that confront particular groups. Indeed, Tuch & Hughes (2011) cites differences
in identity development based on gender. Future research could continue to explore differences in racial and ideological development across gender, sexual identity, and other social identities.

**Conclusion**

An argument has been made for both top-down and bottom-up strategies in restoring a healthy climate for all student groups, as defined by pro-social peer interactions across groups and elimination of policies that perpetuate racial disparities (Beare et al., 2018; Theoharis, 2010). One approach has been to engage adolescents in student-led initiatives, which activate youth as social justice advocates within their school contexts. One concern has been that adolescents often hold a limited sense of awareness regarding their racial identities and sociopolitical ideologies, which can impede their abilities to assume healthy allyship roles. There is an apparent need for training opportunities that allow youth to increase in awareness of racialized matters. This study aimed to fill such a gap by describing a social justice training program that prepared student allies to take on advocacy roles within their school community. Specifically, the current study investigated changes in racial identity development and adherence to color-blind ideologies as adolescents progressed in a social justice training program.

Using a mixed-methods research design, the study examined survey data and journal entries from diverse adolescent participants. Results of the current study found that participating students developed in their racial identity exploration over time. Further, participants decreased in their adherence to color-blind narratives over time, demonstrating a greater understanding of sociopolitical constructs that reinforce racial hierarchy. This research provided valuable insight into the racialized processes that adolescents employed as they matriculated through such programs. In addition, the study offered a useful template for school counselors of student-led interventions used to involve youth in allyship and advocacy. While transforming the educational experiences of Black and Latino/Hispanic youth requires reform across all levels of an
organization, such initiatives as the one proposed in this review can provide an integral component to this systemic change.
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color-blind ideology, stereotypes, and ethnocentrism among Black and White 


We need your help!!

The Office of Equity and Inclusivity has released applications for [school district’s] first Social Justice Summer Institute for High School students. We are looking for students who are at High School A and High School B.

Please recommend students you believe would be excellent candidates to become a SCASD Peer Advocate. You may send your list of student names to me. We are looking for all types of leaders as we are looking for a diverse pool of applicants and a diverse inaugural class of peer advocates!

Qualities of a Peer Advocate: Seen among peers as trustworthy, has leadership qualities, an interest in social justice and/or helping others.

Please find the application for the institute [here] and more information about the institute and application process.

Dates: June 24-28
Location: High School A
Application Deadline: Feb. 15th by 5pm

Please send us the names of students you feel would be great candidates and we will send them personal invitations to apply!

You may also send them the link to the application and encourage them to apply.

The application deadline is February 15th.

If you have any questions or would love to get involved, please let me know!

Sincerely yours,

Office of Equity and Inclusivity
APPENDIX B

Social Justice Summer Institute Application

We are excited that you are interested in becoming a Peer Advocate. The Summer Institute will take place from June 24-28th. Accepted students must be able to attend the entire 5-day institute.

What is the Social Justice Summer Institute? Office of Diversity and Inclusivity is developing a week-long summer institute/program to train a select group of students as peer advocates. Students who are accepted into the institute will receive training in a variety of areas and will apply their training in order to work as peer advocates throughout the following school year. Topics covered throughout the program include: cross-cultural competence, basic counseling skills, public speaking and facilitation skills, leadership development and etiquette, and professionalism.

What is a peer advocate? Students who participate in the summer institute will be identified as peer advocates during the fall and spring semesters, and will be expected to support fellow students in the following ways:

• Point of contact for students who need assistance in addressing interpersonal issues with fellow students and teachers/staff
• Educate peers on matters related to culture, identity, equity, and social justice
• Liaison for teachers/administrators and peers in resolving challenging issues
• Provide support and advocacy for students struggling with various issues within the academic environment
• Conduct selves as a leader and representative of the school in public and private sectors.

In addition to this application, please provide a minimum of one letter of recommendation. Letters can come from an adult who has come to know you well (a teacher, school administrator, community member) or a peer. If you are submitting a letter from a peer, your peer should be able to explain why you would be an effective peer advocate.

Please complete the below application to be considered for the Summer Institute and peer mentor role for the 2019-2020 academic school year. The deadline for submission is February 15th, 2019 at 5pm.
Student Information

Please enter your first name and last name in the form below:

What is your gender identity? (Optional):

Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:
White
Black/African American
American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
Hispanic/Latino
Prefer not to say

What high school do you attend?
School A
School B

What grade are you currently enrolled as?

What is the best evening telephone number to reach you at?

About You

Please respond to the following prompts in the boxes provided.

Please list all extra-curricular activities that you are currently involved in. If not currently involved in any, please state "none."

Most people that know me would describe me in three words as....

Some strengths that I would bring as a peer advocate include...

Some of my long-term goals include (i.e. career, advocacy, or life goals)...

Experience

Please respond to the following prompts in the boxes provided.

What service experience do you have? Discuss any challenges that you faced? Describe major takeaways?

Advocacy is something that can be done in our everyday lives. Briefly discuss a time when you advocated for a particular person or issue. How did you go about doing this? What was the outcome?
How do you define "culture"? What are some strengths of a multicultural school environment?

What are some ways that you, as a peer advocate, could help to create a multicultural environment in your school?

Additional Information

Please respond to the following prompts in the boxes provided.

Why are you interested in the Social Justice Institute?

What types of issues, in State High, do you believe peer advocates will be tasked with responding to most often?

Mental Health concerns
Racial Discrimination
Discrimination against students who identify as LGBT
Discrimination against students with disabilities
Relationship issues
Peer Conflict

As a peer advocate, I am most excited to be able to...

Please leave any additional information that you would like us to know in the space provided below
APPENDIX C

White Racial Consciousness Development Scale- Revised (WRCDS-R)

Choose the intensity that most fits you or your experience.

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD); 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; and, 5 = Strongly Agree (SA).

1. I have had little or no contact with Black people other than seeing them on campus.
2. Blacks should not be allowed to continue in school unless able to perform at the same level as Whites.
3. White people think they are better than everyone else just because they are White.
4. Whenever I witness it, I confront people who make racist comments.
5. I greatly enjoy cross-racial (involving Blacks and Whites together) activities and I try to participate in them often.
6. Reversed discrimination is a big problem for Whites in America.
7. I support the idea of restitution for Blacks based on the history of slavery and oppression.
8. I do not understand why Blacks are so resentful of White people.
9. As a White person, I feel it is my responsibility to help eradicate racism and discrimination in our society.
10. I am afraid that minorities are taking over American society.
11. I have lived in close proximity to black people.
12. My family would disown me if I married a Black person.
13. Dominance over others is a characteristic of White culture.
14. Black people have brought many of their problems on themselves.
15. I would feel comfortable dating a Black person.
16. I have Black friends.
17. Black people are responsible for their lot in life.
18. White people should provide some form of restitution to Black people.
19. Slavery stopped a long time ago, Black people should just get over it.
20. I have never had much contact with Black people.
21. Racism continues because Black people dwell on the past.
22. My family would support me if I married a Black person.
23. Throughout history, White people have been the dominant oppressor.
24. In America, people pretty much decide their own fate.
25. None of my friends would look down on me for having an interracial relationship.
26. I would feel uncomfortable living near Black people.
27. If Black people weren’t so lazy, they wouldn’t be in the position they’re in.
28. If the media portrayed Black people more positively, racial tensions would end.
29. When I hear a racist joke, I say something to show my disapproval.
30. There are more Black people on welfare than Whites.
31. I do not have any Black friends.
32. White people are responsible for putting an end to racism.
33. I would feel comfortable with a Black physician.
34. Affirmative action is just reverse discrimination.
35. I am ashamed of what my Whiteness represents.
36. When I hear someone make racist comments, I say something to them to show my disapproval.
37. If Black people wanted to change things, they could take action themselves.
38. I feel comfortable when I am in close contact with Black people.
39. I think White people should work hard to give up their advantages.

40. Blacks must get over the issue of slavery so that we can move on.
APPENDIX D

Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS)

How much do you agree with the following statements?

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD); 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly Disagree; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Agree; and, 6 = Strongly Agree (SA).

1. _____ Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.

2. _____ Race plays a major role in the type of social services (such as type of health care or day care) that people receive in the U.S.

3. _____ It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American, or Italian American.

4. _____ Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.

5. _____ Racism is a major problem in the U.S.

6. _____ Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.

7. _____ Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today.

8. _____ Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as White people in the U.S.

9. _____ White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color of their skin.

10. ____ Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.

11. ____ It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society’s problems.
12. ____ White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.

13. ____ Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and adopt the values of the U.S.

14. ____ English should be the only official language in the U.S.

15. ____ White people are more to blame for racial discrimination in the U.S. than racial and ethnic minorities.

16. ____ Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against White people.

17. ____ It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities.

18. ____ Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.

19. ____ Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.

20. ____ Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.
APPENDIX E

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R)

“In this country, people come from a lot of different cultures and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic, Black, Asian-American, Native American, and White. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.”

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be ________________

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement. (5) Strongly agree; (4) Agree; (3) Neutral; (2) Disagree; (1) Strongly disagree.

1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
2. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
3. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
4. I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.
5. I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.
6. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
APPENDIX F

Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE)

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement:
1 = strongly disagree that it describes me – 6 = strongly agree that it describes me

1. When I hear people make racist jokes, I tell them I am offended even though they are not referring to my racial or ethnic group.
2. I don’t care if people make racist statements against other racial or ethnic groups.
3. It is easy for me to understand what it would feel like to be a person of another racial or ethnic background other than my own.
4. It is difficult for me to relate to stories in which people talk about racial or ethnic discrimination they experience in their day to day lives.
5. It is difficult for me to put myself in the shoes of someone who is racially and/or ethnically different from me.
6. I feel irritated when people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds speak their language around me.
7. I am aware of how society differentially treats racial or ethnic groups other than my own.

6-point Likert-type scale (1 strongly disagree that it describes me, disagree to 6 strongly agree that it describes me)
APPENDIX G

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (SDS)

Please indicate true or false for each of the following statements:

1. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.
2. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.
3. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.
4. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.
5. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.
6. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.
7. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.
8. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.
9. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.
10. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different opinions from my own.
11. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.
12. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.
13. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone’s feelings.
APPENDIX H

Peer Advocate Program Evaluation Survey

Choose the intensity that most fits you or your experience.

1 = Not at all; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; and, 5 = Very.

Based on training components of the program (i.e. the Social Justice Summer Institute, Fall Booster Session, and ongoing Peer Advocate meetings)…

1. How prepared do you feel in your ability to recognize instances of bias, bullying, and harassment that occur at school?
2. How equipped do you feel in responding to situations of bias, bullying, or harassment?
3. To what degree were you provided with skills for supporting peers who have experienced bias-based targeting within school?

Please provide short-answer responses to the following questions:

1. What did you like most/least about the program?
2. If your friend were interested in social justice, would you recommend them to the program? Why or why not?
APPENDIX I

Journal Entry Prompts

You are expected to keep a daily journal, guided by provided prompts for each day, and hand them in on the due dates. All journals are to be submitted by midnight via CANVAS the day they are due. The journal should be a regular and systematic means by which you will reflect upon the content and discussions occurring throughout each day’s session, along with your learning, yourself, and what you observe outside of the classroom—where you live, in the media, in the society and the world as a whole. The typical format for your journal should be typed. There is a 100-word minimum length requirement.

The material in your journal will be treated CONFIDENTIALLY and with RESPECT. Do not get concerned about proof reading and editing your journals. Please do not worry about spelling or grammar in your journals. The depth of your thoughts and feelings are the most important consideration.

Journal Entry Prompts:

Prompt 1- Day 0 (Sunday)
• Please list words or characteristics that you believe best define you. How have these characteristics been made aware to you? What does it mean to hold these characteristics? How might they relate to your role as a social justice peer advocate?

Prompt 2- Day 1 (Monday)
• How do you identify racially? When did you first know that you were this race? What were some experiences/interactions/observations that helped to inform this?

Prompt 3- Day 2 (Tuesday)
• What was something you heard that you do not agree with? What are your beliefs/opinions on the topic? How did you come to believe this?

Prompt 4- Day 3 (Wednesday)
• Have there been any changes in how you understand any of the topics presented so far? Explain. What are some concepts that you are still wrestling with? Describe this.

Prompt 5- Day 4 (Thursday)
• What emotions are elicited as you go through the training? Where might they be coming from? How did you address them? Was this effective? Why or why not?

Prompt 6- Day 5 (Friday)
• How do you define the work of a social justice peer advocate? What motivates you to do this work? What are some personal characteristics and identities that you hold, which will make this work more challenging? What are some personal characteristics and identities that you hold, which will facilitate this work? Why?
# APPENDIX J

Social Justice Training Institute Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Info. Sessions</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Instructional Approaches</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/28/19 3, 45-minute sessions</td>
<td>Program Description and Outline of Student Roles &amp; Responsibilities</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Social Justice Summer Institute | | |
| --- | --- |
| Day 1 | Race and Social Identity | Lecture; Activity; Intergroup Dialogue | Journal Entry |
| Day 2 | Systems of Oppression | Participatory Instruction; Reflective Exercise | Journal Entry |
| Day 3 | LGBT Issues/ Student Voice | Lecture; Experiential Activity; Intergroup Dialogue | Journal Entry |
| Day 4 | Basic Counseling Skills | Lecture; Role-Plays; Reflective Exercises | Journal Entry |
| Day 5 | Wellness/ Suicide Awareness/ Leadership Development | Lecture; Experiential Lesson & Activities; Reflective Dialogue | Journal Entry |

| Regular Fall Sessions | | |
| --- | --- |
| Fall Retreat | Race and Social Justice Advocacy | Lecture; Experiential Activity | Journal Entry |
| Fall Session 1 | Advocacy in Action | Guided discussion and Participant Brainstorming | None |
| Fall Session 2 | Advocacy in Action, Pt. 2 | Guided discussion and Participant Brainstorming | None |
| Fall Session 3 | Developing an Action Plan | Guided Activity | None |
| Fall Session 4 | Developing an Action Plan | Lecture; Guided discussion | None |
| Fall Session 5 | Utilizing Survey Data in Advocacy | Experiential Activity; Guided discussion | Journal Entry |

| Fall Counseling Sessions | | |
| --- | --- |
| Fall Session 1 | Basic Counseling Skills Reviewed | Lecture; Role-Plays; Reflective Exercises | None |
| Fall Session 2 | Procedures and Protocols for Peer Counseling | Lecture; Role-Plays; Reflective Exercises | None |
| Fall Session 3 | Handling Complex Student Matters | Lecture; Role-Plays; Reflective Exercises | None |
| Fall Session 4 | Basic Counseling Skills & Handling Complex Student Matters, Reviewed | Lecture; Role-Plays; Reflective Exercises | None |
APPENDIX K

Q-Q Plots for Study Measures
APPENDIX L

Normal Distribution Plots for Study Measures
Curriculum Vitae

Deanna L. Burgess, M.Ed., LMHCA
Department of Educational Psychology, Counseling, and Special Education
319 CEDAR Building
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA. 16802
dlb390@psu.edu

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) - Counselor Education Anticipated Date: May 2020
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA *(CACREP Accredited)*
Dissertation topic: Investigating identity development among adolescent social justice allies

Master of Education (M.Ed.) - Counselor Education May 2015
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA *(CACREP Accredited)*
Area of Specialization: Clinical Mental Health Counseling in Schools and Communities

Bachelors of Science (B.S.) - Psychology May 2012
Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
Major: Psychological Sciences

SELECTED REFEREED PUBLICATIONS


SELECTED TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Co-Instructor, CNED 585E: School Counseling Internship Spring 2020
*The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA*

Co-Instructor, CNED 507: Multicultural Counseling Summer 2018 – Fall 2018
*The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA*

Co-Instructor, D.C. Social Justice Fellowship Spring 2018 – Spring 2019
*The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA*