“SOMETHING UNDER THE RAINBOW”

THE INTERPLAY OF RACE AND GENDER
AFRICAN-AMERICAN MILITARY STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES
IN HAWAII PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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By
Kimetta R. Hairston

Dissertation Committee:

Donna Grace, Chairperson
Patricia Halagao
Julie Kaomea
Elizabeth Pateman
Kathryn Takara
For my children
Maya Anaé Hairston and Tyren W. Hairston, II (T.J.)
You are my strength and my foundation.
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I am greatly appreciative to the students, parents, principals and teachers who contributed to this dissertation. Over the past two years I have learned and gained so much from their experiences and I hope that through this dissertation, their voices will be heard.

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For a long time I contemplated why I was doing this dissertation. In the end, I can truly that I did it for myself and for the thousands of children yearning to learn about the millions of cultures that surround and enrich their lives everyday.
ABSTRACT

“Somewhere Under the Rainbow”
The Interplay of Race and Gender
African-American Military Students’ Experiences
In Hawaii Public Schools

By: Kimetta R. Hairston, M.Ed.
(Under the direction of Dr. Donna Grace)

This phenomenological case study investigates the experiences and perceptions of African-American military students in Hawaii public schools. There are two phases to this study. Phase I (pilot study) investigates the experiences and perceptions of 115 African-American military students, teachers, parents and principals. Phase II (case study) is a longitudinal in-depth study of the experiences of three African-American females. Data sources include questionnaires, individual and focus group interviews, personal journals, autobiographies and observation. Critical race theory provides a theoretical framework for the data analysis, recognizing the pivotal role racism plays in societal and educational practices.

The data analysis revealed the following broad themes i) racism in Hawaii; (ii) objectification, (iii) mimicry; and (iv) the value of support groups. Intersectionality provides an explanatory framework for illuminating the interplay of race, gender, and personal factors in interpreting the differences in the lived experiences of the participants.
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

“Somewhere Under the Rainbow”

“I will write upon the pages of history what I want them to say. I will be myself. I will speak my own name.”

(Maya Angelou)

First Impressions of Paradise

Sometimes I feel so alone in a great huge beautiful aquarium filled with so much diversity: shapes - colors - sizes. The water is at the top and it seems to keep me submerged, always fighting – always struggling to get to the top...

On the mainland everything was so black and white. I knew I was an African-American- no surprises. Everyone knew how to take me based on getting to know me or by believing in stereotypes that have been embedded in their minds stemming back to slavery. Bold, demanding woman, strong, who speaks her mind, won’t take no for an answer, and who needs to be the center of attention in all aspects of her life. This is one reason why I wanted to be a teacher. I figured I could express myself and teach about the issues I believed in and I would always be at the head of the class leading and educating young minds and assisting them with molding their futures.

Growing up, my race and the color of my skin came up a lot in school. Seeing as though I am the lightest of my siblings, I was often called, “white girl,” “white nigger,” “want-a-be,” and “red bone” by both black and white kids. I can remember my brother fighting many battles on my behalf for the tears that I’d shed. The old saying, names can never hurt is a lie because my spirit and my self-identity were deeply wounded.

Regardless of my inner emotions, I would always speak out and say, “I’m Black and I’m
proud, it's not my fault my great-great-grandmother was a victim of her master. I don’t claim the white blood therefore I am Black. Don’t you understand we come in all shades and colors?"

As I got older, my light skin took on a new meaning. All the black boys liked “red bones;” we were the closest things they could get to white. However, the darker skinned girls hated my guts. Not all of them, but quite a few. Their ignorance overlooked the fact that regardless of my lightness, in society’s eyes, we are all still black women when it comes down to it. I can remember, on hot Virginia summer days, when the temperature was 103 or more, and I would lie out on our patio in the sun, covered from head to toe in baby oil, trying to get darker, trying to be accepted by “my sistas.” I wanted to fit in.

At some point between my college graduation and getting married in 1996, I stopped focusing on my color. I began to understand who I was - a black woman with light skin just trying to do my thing in a crazy world. I began to understand the importance of education and educating others about ethnicity, diversity, culture and identity. I took on a silent battle to get the message across. I wrote many poems, kept journals and then one day I knew I had to speak out and voice my opinions and concerns. For four years I worked in Corporate America, and it was not the place for me. In 1996, I returned to school to get an M.Ed. I finally pursued my dream of becoming a teacher. In 1998, I got a full-time teaching position. In my class, I worked my butt off teaching my students about multiculturalism, diversity and accepting themselves and others in the world. I found out that it wasn’t about being at the head of the class, but being there for each and every child regardless of the color of their skin or their cultural beliefs and
values. It wasn’t until I got to Hawaii that the negative feelings related to my identity crept back into my life.

Then Came Paradise...

“HAWAII!” I shouted with excitement the day my husband phoned me and told me that he had received orders to transfer to Hawaii for three years on shore duty. That meant three years on a beautiful island. My husband would not have to deploy because it was a shore duty assignment, and since this was our first military relocation after twelve years of living in Virginia, what better place to go than paradise? April 3, 2001 was our departure date so we had six months to sell the house, pack our belongings, ship the cars, find a new home and a new school for our children. My husband’s command gave him a contact number for a Navy sponsor in Hawaii and information on how to get information about the relocation. No problem, right? Wrong!

One may think that a military relocation can be an easy transition; however, there are many components to deal with, on top of stress, leaving family and friends, and sticking to military guidelines. The first obstacle was the fact that we had to pack out thirty days before we were scheduled to leave. Second, I had to quit my job and withdraw my kids from school because we would have to stay with my parents for those remaining thirty days, and third we had to ship our car 45 days before leaving if we wanted it to be in Hawaii when we arrived. The military would only pay for one vehicle, so we decided to sell our second car, just adding to the list of “things to do.” In addition to this, we had to get on a military housing waiting list in Hawaii that placed us at number 87. We were told by the local housing office that houses on the military instillations in Hawaii were
small, so moving from a four bedroom house meant we would have to leave some of our household items behind in storage. On top of that, once we got to Hawaii, no one told us that we would have to live in a hotel for 45 days. The housing office in Hawaii eventually told us that we had to find somewhere to live off base until housing became available on base. It took a year for us to get to number one on the list. It was total hysteria for a first-time military transiency experience, but the relocation was the minor portion of our concerns.

As April eventually approached and we arrived in Waikiki on April 3, I became increasingly concerned about a new a school for my two children. I was also adapting to Hawaii’s culture. It was like moving to a foreign country, especially Waikiki where everything seemed to cater toward the Japanese culture. Where was the Hawaiian culture? Moreover, where was the African-American culture and Black people? Adapting to the local culture and finding a school for my children became the two major issues that I had to confront.

As a teacher, I was aware that Hawaii had a very poor reputation when it came to its educational system. I had researched the website for the Hawaii Department of Education (DOE), as well as other educational sites that included data on teacher positions, school systems statistics and programs. Also, the military base was full of rumors and impressions about the school system and most parents that I ran into only had negative things to say about Hawaii public schools. Fortunately, I interviewed for a teaching position before arriving in Hawaii with the DOE via telephone and established a relationship with a personnel recruiter. I was officially hired in June as a 6th grade teacher at a public school on one of the military bases. However, because we were forced
to live off base due to the lack of available housing, I became concerned about having my children attend the public school in the area that was located in the zone where we found a house to rent. I had previously contacted the school. There were no military transitioning programs in place, and the school was not familiar with military culture because the student population was predominately local. My daughter could not attend the school on base where I would be teaching because we did not live on base, and my son was number 58 on the Child Development Center (CDC) waiting list. At that point as parents, my husband and I began to consider private school.

We went through three interviews with private schools before choosing the right one. This school had an early learning center that would accept my three year old, and the school went from K-8, so it was perfect for my five-year old. Once I began working at the public school on a base near by, I was thankful that I had not put my daughter in this particular public school. The classrooms were hot, due to no air conditioning, and red dirt covered the floor, desks, walls and chalkboard. Fans were blowing so loud that at times I found myself shouting as I taught the students in my classroom. More concerning, the books were out dated and there was no set grade level or school curriculum. But, the major issue was that the majority of the staff isolated and ignored my presence, and I encountered two defining racial incidents that attacked my blackness and affected me emotionally. Both times, I was called a nigger.

A fellow teacher, who also labeled my class as the loudest at the school – because as she put it, “All Black people are loud,” called me a nigger! I later found out that she did not like me because her husband had left her for a black woman, so since I was a black woman... (it doesn’t make sense!). The other racial epithet came from a parent who
was angry that her son was making C's in my Language Arts class. The issue with this particular parent was that she worked at the school and had her son placed in my middle-level class, even though his test scores placed him in the lower class. This parent told me, "I know all Black women are hard to deal with because you are very aggressive and outspoken, and I know you don't like my son because he's white. You are acting like a nigger because you don't want my son to succeed!" I politely excused her from the parent teacher conference and reported the incident to the office. Both incidents were reported to the administrator, my Hawaii State Teacher Association (HSTA) representative, and the local Civil Rights Commission. Unfortunately, both of these people were allowed to continue teaching and working in the school.

As a teacher in Hawaii, and the only African-American teacher at this particular school, I became aware of certain issues and concerns not only dealing with the environment, but also regarding military students in Hawaii. I became particularly interested in the African-American military students and their families. Since I was the only Black teacher at the school, the African-American parents brought their problems, questions, and concerns to me. For example:

- One parent came to me and told me that her son's third grade teacher told him that his Afro was ugly and dirty and he needed to cut the thing off his head because it was an inappropriate hair cut.

- Several parents explained that when their husbands left for deployments, anywhere from six-months to a year, some of the teachers were more concerned about homework being completed instead of their children's emotional needs and
adjustments during the first few weeks after the military member left. They were upset that there was no transition program in place at the school.

- Another parent came to me in tears after a parent teacher conference where the teacher told her that most Black kids belonged in SPED and her son was not smart enough to be in general education classes.

- Many parents expressed concern over how their children were coming from the mainland making A’s and B’s where they knew the curriculum was harder and more challenging, but, in Hawaii their kids were making C’s. They said it was because the teachers did not care or would not call if a problem arose academically, but they were quick to call if there was a behavior problem. Others stated that they felt the teachers did not contact the home because they were uncaring or because they were afraid to speak with them one on one. These parents said that their kids were being “set up” to fail.

- Many parents explained that their sons attending Middle and High schools off base were in constant fights and arguments with local boys, especially during the first months of school.

- Other parents explained that local girls and often-local teachers teased their daughters about their hair, body builds, and attitude.

From these comments and concerns, several questions were raised:

- Where are the other African-American teachers and what type of curriculum is being taught to all of the military students – multicultural, diversity?

- Do these non-military teachers understand the military culture and the transitions of the students at the heavily impacted military schools?
• How do the teachers in Hawaii perceive the African-American students – are their perceptions based on stereotypes?

• What types of perceptions do the African-American students have about themselves, the school system and others in Hawaii?

• Moreover, has anyone asked the African-American students how they feel about Hawaii, their own culture and what they want to learn? Why are some of these students struggling academically and socially in Hawaii?

I became overwhelmed with trying to figure out solutions, to the many problems that parents brought to me. I decided at some point between June and July 2002 that I was not going to return to school in the following fall as a teacher. Instead, I enrolled as a full-time doctoral student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UH). After teaching for five years in Virginia and one year in Hawaii, it was time for me to make a change in my career path. I became determined to get answers to the previous questions, issues and concerns regarding African-Americans in Hawaii and search for the African-American culture and experience that appeared to be somewhere under the rainbow in this land of paradise. With my admittance into the program, I got several glimpses into the local perceptions about African-Americans, and a stronger sense of what it was like to be an African-American in Hawaii.

The first time I sat in a class at UH, it was great to see the diversity around me. For the first time in my life I was not the only minority in class, although I was the only African-American. The introductions began, and each person stated their name first, their ethnicities (Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, etc.) second, and then where they were from. I had never experienced anything like this before in my life. When it was my turn, I
said, "Kimetta Hairston and I'm from Virginia." There was a silence. Someone then asked, "What is your ethnicity?" I said, "African-American." There was silence.

Another person asked, "And what else."
I said, that's it, I'm Black."
Then the questions came pouring in: Why are you so light? You must be mixed with something else right?
Are both of your parents Black? I politely explained, "Black people come in many shades, my light skin comes from a rape that occurred during slavery, my great-great grandmother was raped by her slave owner, but I don't claim the whiteness because it was forced into my bloodline, therefore I am African-American, not mixed, and yes both of my parents are Black."
It was a repeat of my childhood. The class was silent.

Next, when I began my research for my dissertation, I decided that I would begin with a Pilot Study and interview several African-American military students in seven Hawaii public schools. The response to my research from the African-American parents, principals, and teachers was overwhelming. Once the letters began to circulate, I started receiving calls, almost daily, from parents who wanted to share their experiences in Hawaii. Many parents and teachers called to simply say, "Thank you and it's about time someone wants to hear what we are feeling here."
From the phone calls, I scheduled several family interviews. I also talked one-on-one with many students who just wanted to tell me about incidents of racism that they had encountered, and how to deal with and talk to teachers when their parents deploy. Most of these phone calls came from female students. This experience validated the need for my research.

Finally, when I came to the stage in my research where I could report findings from my Pilot Study, some interesting issues began to surface. Usually I presented my data to fellow classmates or as a visitor in other instructors' classrooms. There were usually
local, Hawaiian, White, Filipino, and Asian people in the audience. I received the following comments more than once:

- I usually started out with my experiences as a teacher in Hawaii, and many would reply:
  
  "How can you be called a nigger, you're too lovely."
  
  "Maybe they were playing with you and you took them calling you a nigger the wrong way."
  
  "I like Black people; I don't understand why someone would call you a nigger, and you're a nice person."
  
  "WOW!"

- After presenting I would get these types of comments:
  
  "Why African-Americans? Why not research another ethnic group?"
  
  "Why did you choose this topic?"
  
  "How is this research going to help Hawaii? We don't have racism here, we only have racism when you go looking for it."
  
  "What about the military, they deserve some of the treatment that they get, they took the land, and can't you understand why some students would not like the military?"
  
  "Hawaii is different from the mainland and racism does not exist here. I'm shocked those African-American kids are having it so hard here."
  
  "But a nigger is a Black person, right?"

- In one class, some of my classmates got very personal. I overheard them calling me names like angry, aggressive, black bitch, and at times they would cut me off or not even call on me when I held my hand up to voice my opinion during their presentations. The day that I presented my research for this particular class, six people were absent, that was half of the class.
The comments and responses to my research blew me away. Some individuals did not realize that they were offending me and being racist with some of their remarks. Moreover, how could they not realize that their questions and comments confirmed the perceptions and experiences of what African-American students were dealing with everyday in school? My personal experiences and the experiences of other African-American children developed into the problems that I am seeking to address. Somewhere under the beautiful Rainbows that enchant the Hawaiian skies, African-American military students' experiences, cultural heritage and histories are embedded and waiting to be unburied.

Statement of the Problem

African-Americans are a part of Hawaii's history and culture, with the majority of their roots embedded in the military. Currently, the majority of African-American students attending public schools in Hawaii are military dependents. As the number of African-American military students who attend Hawaii public schools continues to grow, questions arise as to how they are perceived by local teachers, students and administrators, how they deal with transiency issues, and most important how their experiences are affecting their identities and self-concepts. Over the years, there have been works that address the historical roots of African-Americans in Hawaii (Lee, 1948; Haas, 1992; Henderson, 1993; Jackson, 2001; Takara 1977, 1990, 2002). The lack of data addressing the implications of race, gender and class with regard to military students in Hawaii needs to be explored. Educators may expect to encounter academic and social problems from African-American students in populations where they are heavily represented (Lee, 1948), but in Hawaii these identical problems are arising where no one
particular group is the majority. Jackson (2001) and Takara (2002) have addressed the
history of African-Americans in Hawaii and their links to the military; but there is no
other research that analyzes the experiences of African-American military students in the
public school system in Hawaii.

Such work holds potential to open up new programs for the military to assist and
offer information for African-American military families in their transitions to Hawaii.
The military can address the issues, as well as include the data from this study in current
programs and websites for military families with regard to cultural conflicts, local
perceptions and both personal and institutional transiency issues. In addition, the data can
open up new venues for researchers, schools and communities with regard to addressing
cultural differences and enhancing multiculturalism. The findings of this research can
also contribute to teacher education and professional development for in-service teachers
in Hawaii. Two researchers, Dr. Allen Awaya who is in charge of military programs and
the Joint Ventures Education Forum (JVEF) and Dr. Miles Jackson, researcher and author
of And They Came – An Annotated Bibliography of African-Americans in Hawaii, are
interested in including some of the data in projects that they are currently working on.
This study does not claim to provide a solution, however it can serve as a resource for
military families moving to Hawaii, the military – Joint Ventures Education Forum
(JVEF), the Hawaii Department of Education, and other researchers who wish to further
investigate the experiences of African-American students in Hawaii.

Drawing from the discipline of critical race theory, which recognizes that racism
and ethnicity are determining factors in American society, this study will attempt to
provide a lens through which to view and understand issues related to being an African-American student in Hawaii. The following research questions will be addressed:

1) What are the perceptions and experiences of African-American military students in Hawaii regarding race, ethnic identity, and self-concept?

2) How and to what extent do issues of transiency (e.g. coming to a new school, making friends, and experiencing new cultures) affect the experiences of African-American military students in public schools both academically and socially in Hawaii?

PHASE I: PRELIMINARY DATA COLLECTION (PILOT STUDY)

Preliminary data were collected from February 19, 2003 – April 26, 2003 to identify key issues to investigate in my dissertation research. Nineteen focus group interviews were conducted in eight military impacted schools (schools with large military student populations) in Oahu, Hawaii. Findings from Phase I (Pilot Study) have led to Phase II (Case Study). Data collected from June 2003 – May 2004 school year will address the issues relevant to Phase II of this study.

There are social and behavioral problems for both African-American male and female military students in Hawaii, however, during the pilot study, important issues and themes were highlighted regarding the African-American female. Based on the issues and personal experiences that emerged from the data in Phase I (Pilot Study), Phase II (Case Study) of this dissertation will focus on the African-American female perspective. Researchers have examined the educational problems of African-American females over the years (Banks & Banks, 1995; Brown 1993; Gay 1987, 2000; Darling-Hammond,
They have discussed significant academic and social challenges confronting African-American females in their journey through the American educational system. These discussions point to issues such as racism, over-representation in SPED, achievement, self-identity and ethnic pride. Many of the discussions deal with academic achievements and gender bias, while others point out behavior and social problems, and relationships with peers, parents and teachers (Patton, 1995, hooks 1992, Williams, 1998). However, this is the first study that focuses specifically on the African-American female child who is a military dependent in Hawaii.

I chose to pursue further in-depth experiences of African-American females because historically they have experienced more racism based on their race and gender from all ethnic groups, including African-American men (hooks, 1990). Stereotypes based on past and present images of African-American females influence the perceptions of how they are viewed in society, and more interesting in a society like Hawaii where there is no majority group. In Phase II (Case Study), I examined the perceptions and very different and complex experiences of three African-American females students living and attending public school in Hawaii. In this examination, I investigated the students’ perceptions of themselves and identified factors that contributed to their social success or failure. In addition, I examined the parents, teachers, and principals’ perceptions of the African-American females in school and of the perceptions of the local Hawaiian culture to clarify and validate the findings.
Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Interplay of Race and Gender
African-American Military Students in Hawaii

"Historians insist that knowledge for the past is essential for understanding the present."

(Alphonso Pinkney, 1993)

An old African proverb proclaims, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me." It is ironic that this proverb is African, especially after so many years have passed and African-American students are victimized in public school classrooms through stereotypes and racial slurs, often based solely on their ethnicity. Delgado (1982) states, "The racial insult remains one of the most pervasive channels through which discriminatory attitudes are imparted. Not only does the listener learn and internalize the messages contained in racial insults, these messages color our society's institutions and are transmitted to succeeding generations" (p. 159). If, in fact, racial slurs are so harmful, then why has this form of racism continued to rear its ugly face in America's public schools? More important, why are racial epithets and stereotyping common occurrences in the lives of African-American military students attending Hawaii public schools, the most diverse state in the United States of America?

Based on information from the U.S. Census Bureau, in March 2002 there were 36.0 million people in the United States and 13 percent of the civilian population was Black. The majority of them (55 percent) lived in the South, 18 percent lived in the Northeast or Midwest, and 9 percent lived in the West. Within the Western population, 2.8 percent of Blacks lived in Hawaii. Of the 2.8 percent, the majority was associated
with the military. In addition, the 2001-2002 Federal Survey Card reported a total school population in Hawaii of 183,629.

African-American military students made up 1.9 percent of that population. These students share the public schools with Hawaiians, part-Hawaiians, Filipinos, Whites, Japanese, Samoans, Chinese, Hispanics, Portuguese, Koreans, and others that are not specified. Awaya (2003) found that although the percentage of African-American students appears minute, in 2003 there were 14,906 African-American students attending Hawaii public schools. Jackson (2001) found that many of these African-American students were from military families, and in most cases, if a family member was not on active duty, they were once a part of the military community. African-American military students face racial, transitional, societal, emotional and educational issues while in the public school system. They carry the dual burden of being both Black and military. Attached to these identities are negative perceptions that have historical roots that have been assimilated into the Hawaiian local culture.

This literature review is not attempting to prove that racism exists in Hawaii because in all societies, some form of racism exists. However, I am presenting a literary foundation that focuses on the historical perceptions of African-Americans in America, in general, and in Hawaii, more specifically as involuntary immigrants, members of the military and their roles in America’s educational system. First, I will discuss implications of dehumanization and colonialism with regard to African-Americans in general. Next, I will give a brief history and discuss the roles of the first African-Americans in Hawaii. Then, I will discuss racism in schools, the history of stereotypes and racial slurs in
society and how the impact of the word “nigger” affects African-American students in education. Finally, I will discuss the interplay of race and gender in American schools.

Historical Implications of Blackness

*Dehumanization*

Dehumanization means to deprive a person of human qualities, attributes and rights. African-Americans’ present status in U.S. society has been tremendously affected by historical dehumanization. In 1638, an African male who had been taken from his homeland in Africa and forced into slavery in America, could be bought for about $27.00; in 1640, whipping and branding Africans became common practice in the American colonies; and, in 1641, Massachusetts legalized slavery (McColley, 1988). Black women during this time were classified as breeders and their children could be taken away from them at birth and sold to other plantations. “As females, slave women were inherently vulnerable to all forms of sexual coercion...Rape, in fact, was an uncamouflaged expression of the slaveholder’s economic mastery and the overseer’s control over the Black women as workers” (Davis, 1983; p. 7). As early as the eighteenth century, showmen exhibited African-Americans with albinism and vitiligo in circus sideshows, taverns, and dime museums, subjecting them to public labels such as freak and white Negro, disregarding their visual impairment disabilities, but focusing on the fascination of a Black person with skin as white as snow (Martin, 1962). Newspapers in 1886 referred to Black people as “niggers,” “coons,” and “colored;” and by 1890, the word nigger was the primary term for African-Americans (Williamson, 1968). At the time of emancipation, over 90 percent of black people were illiterate in America. This
was largely the result of slaves being whipped and killed if they tried to read and write. Even those who were free - although the degree of freedom depended on whether they lived in the North or South- found it difficult to secure an education (Pinkney, 1993). In the 1960's African-Americans led the Civil Rights Movement protesting unjust and unequal rights with regard to where they could sit in public places to justifying their voting rights. The entire movement was soaked in racist acts from lynching innocent men women and children, to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1999, ten incidents of racism toward African-American military students in Hawaii public schools was reported in the local newspaper and described as “a scattering of racial incidents against African-Americans” (Kreifels, 1999). These facts demonstrate the historical and on-going dehumanization of African-Americans. The effects of colonialism have played a definite role in this process of dehumanization.

Colonialism

Colonialism is a form of cultural exploitation that evolved over 400 years ago when Europeans began to expand their horizons and conquer unknown lands inhabited by indigenous people. The people of these lands were either victims of invasive settlements or of slavery and exile. Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1998) point out that, “In colonies where the subject people were of a different race, or where minority indigenous peoples existed, the ideology of race was also a crucial part of the construction and naturalization of an unequal form of intercultural relations” (p. 46). African-Americans were victims of slavery and exile; thus becoming involuntary immigrants and a racial minority in America.
Ogbru (2003) explains that there are different types of minority status, immigrants versus nonimmigrants. Ogbru points out that “Involuntary or nonimmigrant minorities are people who are in the United States because they were initially colonized, or enslaved by White-Americans. They have been made permanently a part of the United States against their will” (p. 50). These minority groups include Native-American, Alaskan Natives, Black Americans, original Mexican-Americans in the Southwest, and Native Hawaiians. These groups often encounter the most discriminative acts of racism in America.

Voluntary immigrants are those who come to America seeking new social and political changes from their homelands. With this in mind, Native Hawaiians fall within the involuntary minority grouping because they were colonized, and African-Americans fall within the spectrum because of slavery. Both of these groups are victims of Eurocentric colonialism and share oppressive experiences in their histories.

Loomba, (1998), states that racial stereotypes arose in America during modern colonialism. She goes on to say that modern colonialists adopted this idea from the Greek and Roman periods, and from these two civilizations, the terms barbarian and savages arose and were applied to individuals who were considered as outsiders or different from Europeans. Loomba explains:

“Christianity became the prism through which all knowledge of the world was refracted (for Europeans). But, since the Bible held that all human beings were brothers descended from the same parents, the presence of ‘savages’ and ‘monsters’ was not easy to explain. One response was to locate them as creatures who had incurred God’s wrath – hence the Biblical association of blackness with the descendents of Ham, Noah’s bad son, and with the forces of evil. However, such an explanation created more conceptual problems than it solved (thus leading to stereotyping of darker skinned or different people)” (p. 16).
Hawaiians fell within this barbarian identity as well. Menton (1989) reported that the general attitudes of early explorers and missionaries about Hawaiians were that they were "dark savages against which they [missionaries] saw themselves as the light" (p. 2). Few missionaries saw it unfit to mingle with the Hawaiians and Kunkle (2003) explains "it was not uncommon for missionaries to completely segregate their offspring by enclosing their homes with high walls to keep out the brutish savage" (p. 2). Kunkle goes on to say that it was the missionaries’ intent to enlighten the Hawaiians about the aspects of civilization and Christianity. Over time, either voluntary or not, many Hawaiians and local residents accepted the Eurocentric beliefs and ideas, and although Hawaiians may or may not agree, they became part of the majority group. As African-Americans migrated into the islands, the "savage" identity resurfaced, this time attaching itself to Blacks.

As colonialism expanded and reached its peak, during World War II, historians began using the term post colonialism (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin; 1998) to refer to the effects of colonialism on cultures and societies. This term is often challenged by theorists because the word "post" is controversial implying that colonialism no longer exists in America (Ahmad, 1992; Slemon, 1990). Loomba argues that the term refers to "the contestations of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism" (Loomba; 1998, p. 12). However, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, (1998) state that, "Post-colonialism is now used in wide and diverse ways to include the study and analysis of European colonialisms..." (p. 187). Post-colonialism raised awareness in American society of the cultural groups that dominate or are dominated in society.
In the nineteenth century, Whites settled in Hawaii, abolished the Hawaiian social and political structures and established Western values and practices in their place. Blair (1998) explains, “Hawaiians lost their language, their culture, their way of life, and adopted – not necessarily by choice, nor uniformly – Christian religions, the English language, Western habits and the American concept of land ownership” (p. 12). For example, in 1848 with the influence of the Hawaii monarchy and influential non-Hawaiian residents, a land division called The Great Mahele (division) took place and began the Hawaiian plantation system. With this division, many whites and Hawaiian monarch ancestors became wealthy and “unintentionally made possible the multietnic culture that exists today,” but the system was oppressive toward other minority groups. Whites and Hawaiians refused to work the plantations because they felt it was beneath their social status (Blair, 1998, p. 12). Westernized ideas of power and superiority were evident in their refusal to do plantation labor because this type of labor was meant for minority immigrants. Hawaiians were part of a “majority” group that chose to exclude African-Americans from their plantation system.

A Brief History of the First Blacks in Hawaii

Dr. Miles Jackson wrote the first annotated bibliography of African-Americans in Hawaii. In his book, And They Came, Jackson discusses how African-Americans have been a part of the Hawaiian Islands since the 1700s. He goes on to say that Anthony Allen was the first black in the islands who was not a beachcomber or missionary that found a niche here. He was referred to in a journal written by Maria A. Loomis, a missionary, in 1820. Loomis’ wrote that “Among the residents of this island is a Black
man and native of Schenectady named Anthony Allen. He has been a constant friend. He has a large enclosure with 8 or 10 houses, which are eating, cooking and sleeping houses” (Jackson, 2001, p. 6). Allen owned cattle and sheep farms, provided foods and fruits to poor Hawaiians, participated in entrepreneurial activities and owned land. He was a resident of Hawaii for several years, but the actual date of his residence is not noted.

Another African-American who was in Hawaii during the 1800’s was Betsy Stockton. She arrived in Hawaii in 1873 with the Hawaiian Mission Children’s Society. Stockton is noted for helping establish the first school in Lahaina for Hawaiian children who were not sons or daughters of chiefs. Jackson (2001) states that like Stockton, many Blacks came over as laborers or missionaries. Some Blacks came as immigrants from Africa and Portugal. Blacks existed in many occupations in the islands during the early 1800’s, including politics, the arts, entertainment, and business. Two prominent Black residents were Nolle Smith, statesman, and Alice Ball, scientist and inventor (Takara, 2002). In addition, Jackson goes on to say that there were enough Blacks in Hawaii at various times to organize the “African Relief Society.” In the 1840’s, Blacks could be found as crewmen on whaling ships and as Honolulu businesses owners. Their businesses included barbershops, a tailor shop, a boarding house and Anthony Allen’s “grog shop,” among others. Immigration laws of the early 1900’s played a major role in the decline of Black immigrants in Hawaii.

Thousands of Japanese and Chinese immigrants flooded the islands and began working on the plantations, but there was opposition to immigrating Blacks from the mainland. In 1872, members of the Hawaiian Planters Association began talking of
recruiting Blacks from the Southern states on the mainland because they heard rumors of how hard they could work and of their prior experiences of working on plantations during the slave era. However, Jackson (2001) explains that in October 1882, John E. Bush, a Hawaiian and head of the Bureau of Immigration passed a resolution opposing the immigration of Blacks because the House of Legislature was decidedly averse to Negro immigrants. Despite the Hawaiian Planters Association opposition to immigrating Blacks into the islands, between 1900 and 1901 Blacks from Tennessee and Alabama were allowed to immigrate to Maui and work on the plantations. Jackson goes on to explain that, "It is difficult to determine how many Blacks recruited from Tennessee and Alabama remained in the islands, but for many who had high hopes and dreams of a better life, there was disappointment" (pp. 16-17). One of these disappointments, due to the low number of Blacks in Hawaii, was the lack of a viable ethnic community to identify with. Takara (1977) explains that in Hawaii there are no large institutions aside from the NAACP, "To focus on the problems of Black people, which somehow do not just disappear by the crossing of the ocean, nor is there an emphasis to encourage the development of Blacks as a group, despite the current trend toward ethnic pride and history in Hawaii. In fact, often Blacks are not even viewed as a minority here, but are rather silently ignored as an ethnic group" (91). One of the problems that crossed the ocean, was the racism that came with the military presence in Hawaii. The majority of African-Americans in Hawaii have historical lineage to the military.
Military Relations

African-Americans have been part of the U.S. military since the War of Independence in 1775. Although they were involved in the military, Blacks were not soldiers or sailors, but they performed a variety of maritime jobs. As early as 1800, U.S. warships sailed in and out of Hawaii ports and harbors. "In 1887, a treaty was signed to lease land for the establishment of Pearl Harbor. People in Honolulu had become accustomed to seeing Blacks performing a variety of maritime jobs by this time" (Jackson, p. 26). It was not until the 1900's that African-Americans in the military "were relegated to performing menial jobs, mostly as cooks and mess men" (Jackson, p. 26). Finally, in 1913, the 25th Infantry Regiment, an all-black unit of 2000 soldiers, was assigned to a military instillation called Schofield Barracks on the island of Oahu. This group is historically responsible for the lineage of African-Americans who live in Hawaii today. Jackson explains:

The Black military personnel and civilian war workers (of the 25th Infantry Regiment)...found a welcoming environment; unlike any they had experienced back home. They found Hawaii to be a place where Blacks could live without feeling the overt bite of racism, but also a place where there were racial problems...Some locals expressed a preference for Blacks because they felt that some White servicemen were arrogant and looked down on them as being no better than Blacks, often using racial epithets (p. 31).

However, while these men were in Hawaii, they experienced racism from the White soldiers and some local residents. Lee (1948) explained "The Army, Navy and Marine Corps generally maintained for Negroes separate quarters within an instillation
and sometimes even an altogether separate camp” (p. 430). Lee goes on to say that the White soldiers also spread negative stereotypes of the Negro throughout the islands, portraying them as (1) causing conflicts and often committing crimes of violence like rape and murder, (2) stealing and robbing from the wealthy, (3) living in poverty and coming from a lower social class, and (4) having dark skin and kinky hair, that marked them as “Other.” As these stereotypes became rooted in Hawaiian society, African-Americans fell further down the social ladder as an ethnic group, with the local people becoming increasingly disdainful towards them. Race friction between Whites and Blacks manifested itself in the form of fights and riots as racial tensions on the mainland increased amidst the struggle for Civil Rights. Takara (2002) explains that many local women were warned not to date Black men because they had rough, loud, unrefined and raucous behaviors. However, if African-Americans accepted the views and ideas of the local culture, they had a better chance of being socially accepted. Lee (1948) explains, “Whereas, as a racial group, the Negro has not been accepted yet in Hawaii, on the other hand, as an individual, he has been and can be assimilated and accepted here when he ceases to be conscious of his racial ancestry and tries to live a normal productive life” (p. 433).

In addition to being Black, being military brought on additional negative stereotyping for African-Americans. Military relations and ties were forming in the islands as the military units began to come in significant numbers. The military was the key contributor to the African-American community, and also associated with territorial take-over in the islands. Menton and Temura (1989) explain that Hawaiians believe that, “The land is religion. It is alive, respected, treasured, praised, and even
worshipped...Land is the foundation of native Hawaiian culture” (p. 404). When Hawaii became a territory in the 1900’s, the federal government took some of the lands and used it for parks and military bases. Menton and Temura found that by the 1980’s the government owned over 40 percent of the land in Hawaii. Through such actions, the Americans demonstrated what was perceived as a lack of respect for the land and for the Hawaiian people. During 1953, the military dropped bombs on the island of Kaha ‘alawe, and used it for war games and target practice. Many Native Hawaiians fought for the island’s preservation because it has many historical artifacts and historical sites. After decades of controversy, on April 9, 2004, the military finally decided to cease ammunition activity on the island of Kaho ‘olawe” (Moore, Fox News, April 9, 2004).

In addition, the military brings over many new residents to the islands that often stay three or more years and sometimes decide to retire in the islands. They are often viewed as the “Other” or “outsider,” coming in to occupy Hawaiian land. Blair (1998) explains that locals share a special language, mode of behavior, value system, and special racial experience, which separates them from “outsiders.” He goes on to say, “Continued affirmation of local identity over the past decade represents an expression of opposition to outside control and change in Hawaii and its land, peoples, and cultures...local is a distinction between “us” and “them” (p. 174).

Somewhere over the years, being both African-American and in the military changed from a positive experience for some, to a negative one. Racism and the lack of cultural assimilation were experienced on a daily basis. Lee, writing in 1948, illuminated the following issues regarding African-Americans in Hawaii:
“First, the Negro group, as a new element in the Hawaiian social structure, is at the bottom of the social and economic ladder, thereby following the traditional pattern of evaluation which stems from the old plantation system. Second, the majority of these Negroes, having been conditioned to the mainland pattern of racial mores and being still hypersensitive in their roles, find some difficulty in becoming absorbed into their new environment. And third... individual Negroes are assimilated into the Hawaiian community when they transcend this hypersensitivity or when they are able vocationally or professionally to contribute to the general welfare of the community” (pp. 419-420).

Today more than three-fourths of the Hawaiian population is made up of immigrants and Hawaiian descendents. Blair (1998) states that “Ethnic heritage is not an automatic or unchanged marker of class in Hawaii, but the most privileged groups are made up largely of whites, Japanese-Americans and descendents of the Hawaiian ali‘i” (p. 53). He goes on to state, “All racial stereotypes (in Hawaii) are not created equal, for the more hostile stereotypes usually refer to darker-skinned people such as...blacks” (p. 174).

African-Americans as Students

Since the late 1960’s, it has been researched and reported that the low academic performance of Black students is caused by the differences in and conflicts between African-American and Eurocentric cultures (Boykin, 1986; Gay, 1979; Irvine, 1991, Delgado & Stefancic, 1995). Ogbu (2003) makes an important point stating that the identity of African-American students and their differences contribute to the learning conflicts. He pointed out, “There are differences in dressing, hairstyles, jokes, sports, communication style, styles of religious worship, attitudes toward schoolwork, parental
involvement in school, study habits, time orientation, and peer group orientation” (p. 38). All of these contribute to the way children respond to their teachers and how African-American students behave in classroom settings. In addition, Boykin (1986) identified that Black parents raise their children with different social and ethical values and beliefs. He said, “Because of their upbringing, Black children come to school with values and beliefs different from those of school authorities” (Ogbu, p. 37). As a result, the children face cultural conflicts in their relations to their teachers, administrators and peers. Black parents raise their children to act and react according to their cultural beliefs and values, like other parents in other cultures. Although the upbringing for the children is similar, there are still difference issues among male and female African-American children in society and in schools.

The African-American Male:

One tenth of all African-American boys are addicted to drugs; 70 percent are born out of wedlock; 85 percent are placed in special education; 47 percent are in penal institutions; 3.5 percent attend college; 37 percent get suspended from schools; 31 percent between the ages of 18-25 are unemployed; and African-American men have the lowest life expectancy among any other ethnic gender group (sistaspaces.com). African-American males are often viewed as sports fanatics, hoodlums, or criminals and in school they often deal with these stereotypes on a daily basis. Ladson-Billings (1994) discusses how boys are often labeled as social outcasts and, with the exception of a few, they begin to believe the labels placed on them by society.
These are the negative perceptions that are reported in the media, and these are the perceptions that most US citizens believe and accept regarding African-American males. Researchers have found that achievement gaps and societal problems exist because of racism and sexism toward black males (Williams, 1998; West, 2001; Delpit, 2002; Ogbu, 2003).

As African-American males continue their journey in America’s educational system social, political and economic issues will continue to affect their lives. Although all African-American children face similar problems, African-American male issues tend to center around social, special education, their behavior, and their achievement gaps. African-American females face these same issues; however self-identity and social acceptance concerns are the major factors for this gender.

The African-American Female

The dehumanization of blackness and its effects on the black female are rooted in the harsh history of slavery. Racial identity, community lifestyle and educational development can be linked to the African female slave and the history of her rebellion in America. hooks (1981) explains:

“No other group in America has so had their identity socialized out of existence as have black women. We are rarely recognized as a group separate and distinct from black men, or as a present part of the larger group “women” in this culture. When black people are talked about, sexism militates against the acknowledgment of the interests of black women; when women are talked about racism militates against the recognition of black female interests” (p. 7).

The identity of the black female began to grind its roots during slavery. She was seen as a laborer, child bearer, nanny, doctor, field hand, breeder, wife, mother, and mistress. Davis (1983) discusses countless tales of black females being raped by their
masters, husbands and other male slaves. She goes on to say that from the point of view of others, the violation of black females was brought on by their own promiscuous acts. The identity of the black female from slavery to its end was ridiculed and mocked.

"During the years of Black Reconstruction, 1867-77, black women struggled to change negative images of black womanhood perpetuated by whites" (hooks, 1981; p. 55). In addition, hooks emphasizes that if a black woman wore clean clothes and presented herself in a dignified manner, she often became the victim of "white men who ridiculed and mocked her self-improvement efforts" (p. 55). Black women undoubtedly belong to two historically labeled groups, women and black. Morton (1991) says that they continue to find their intellectual, physical, social and educational capabilities challenged in society.

Another issue among African-American females is her role in the educational system. Compared to African-American males, overall nationally, African-American females have higher grade point averages, proficiency test scores, SAT scores, course level enrollments, high school graduating rankings, and college attendances (Stupay, 1993; Whittington, 1996; Ogbu, 2003). However, regardless of the higher numbers between female and male African-American students, females also face stereotypes in classroom settings. For example, Delpit (1995) states:

"Research has been conducted in classroom settings which shows that African-American girls are rewarded for nurturing behavior while white girls are rewarded for academic behavior. Though it is likely true that many African-American girls are nurturers, having played with or helped to care for younger siblings and cousins, they are penalized by the nurturing “mammy” stereotype when they are not given the same encouragement as white girls toward academic endeavors" (p. 171).
Moreover, hooks (1990) adds that black women fall under two categories in society with regard to stereotypes. She explains that they are either considered a “bitch” or “madwoman” who speaks her mind and is often labeled as crazy and assertive, or “super mommas,” who are telling it like it is while taking care of themselves and everyone else around them as they spread their “special magic” wherever they go. As these stereotypes haunt the African-American female, self-image, self-concept, and self-conceptualization are under attack. “Unless we remain ever vigilant about the ways representations of black womanhood are appropriated and exploited...we may find ourselves falling into traps set by the dominant culture” (hooks, 1990; p. 92). Black females cannot separate their race from their gender. Furthermore, African-Americans cannot separate race, gender and class in American society. Castenell and Pinar (1993) point out that black people are united because they are share a common oppression even when the oppression is in terms of race, gender and class. Negative stereotypes and experiences affect African-American children in the Hawaii educational system, as well.

African-Americans in Hawaii Public Schools

There are 16 military housing facilities on the island of Oahu, the most populated island in Hawaii. Within these 16 areas, there are 39 military impacted (high military dependent populated) schools with a total military population of 183,629, and a total military African-American population of 14,906 (2001-2002 Federal Survey Card). Moreover, 17 of these schools have military populations over 50 percent, with the lowest at 50.7 percent military dependents and the highest at 99.7 percent military dependents. In order from highest to lowest percentages, these schools are: Hale Kula Elementary,
Solomon Elementary, Hickam Elementary, Iroquois Point Elementary, Pearl Harbor Kai Elementary, Mokulele Elementary, Nimitz Elementary, Mokapu Elementary, Wheeler Elementary, Shafter Elementary, Wheeler Intermediate, Red Hill Elementary, Aliamanu Elementary, Radford High, Barbers Point Elementary, Lehua Elementary, and Pearl Harbor Elementary. The Hawaii Department of Education (2003), states that the African-American students attending these schools are military dependents. Ogilvy (1993) concludes that, “Defining the relationship of Hawaii’s educational system to the size, the role, and the needs of the military may well be an important objective during the next decade… Hawaii’s mix of cultures, like the climate, can be a curse or a blessing” (pp. 76 & 80). He goes on to state that Hawaii must serve the needs of the military families in order for them to have a positive military experience in the state.

African-American Experiences with Racism in Hawaii Public Schools:

In a Star Bulletin article, Is trouble brewing? (Kreifels, April 23, 1999) discusses racial incidents involving African-Americans. Kreifels writes that, “Most parents, teachers, and students interviewed believed racial harassment is not a major problem in school corridors. But enough anecdotal experiences show students of various races and ethnic groups have felt it” (p. 2). In contrast to the views of Kreifels’ interviewees, African-Americans do see racism as a major problem in schools. The Honolulu Star Bulletin has more reports of racial incidents towards African-Americans than for any other ethnic group. In 1999, Kreifels, Kubota, and Tighe reported the following 10 incidents:

1. Iao Intermediate School, in Wailuku, Maui – A 14-year old African-American eighth grader was punched and shoved on separate occasions and called racial slurs, including nigger. The child’s mother complained
several times to the school administration, but her son continued to be harassed. Two students were suspended and the principal stated that racial slurs would not be tolerated at his school.

2. Baldwin High School, in Wailuku, Maui – students’ utter racial slurs daily toward African-American students, including nigger.

3. A Honolulu elementary school– an outbreak of racial slurs (including nigger) and fights among third graders. The principal called in an outsider, Michel D’Andrea, director of the National Institute of Multicultural Competence, to speak with the students.

4. Castle High School, Kailua, Oahu – Halloween, a student came to school wearing a Klu Klux Klan outfit and a picture of the student appeared in the school yearbook. No actions against the students were reported.

5. Kalaheo High School, Kailua, Oahu – a caption under a picture of an African-American student read, “I like pig’s feet. I like hog mollz. Where da collard greens?” Two students filed a $14 million federal lawsuit against the state and Kalaheo, and settled for $80,000.

6. School name not given –Oahu– a student attending a school was called a nigger. The parent discussed the incident with the principal. The principal said, “It’s just a name. Didn’t he hear it in the O.J. Simpson trial?”

7. Manoa Elementary School –Oahu, the same student from #6, after transferring to this school, was called a “burnt french fry.” The school responded swiftly, apologized, suspended a student for a day, and had the student body attend a school assembly regarding no tolerance for racism at the school.

8. Manoa Elementary School – Oahu, another student cried after being called derogatory racial names. No report of any actions taken.

9. Radford High School – Oahu, a 15-year-old was called a nigger. She said, “I don’t like the ‘n’ word. It’s telling me I’m beneath you and that you are superior. I think of slavery and lynching and segregation.” No report of any actions taken.

10. Leilehua High School – Wahiawa, Oahu– a substitute teacher reports countless issues of name-calling and tension, students often admitted being afraid to come to school and feeling unsafe. Students who called names and made the threats were not reprimanded for their actions.
In addition to these 10 incidents, an African-American teacher at Leilehua High School, who has taught for 10 years, reported that the military students, especially those who are Black, “stand out.” (Kriefles, April 23,1999, p.5). He has witnessed several incidents of racism against them and punished the offenders. Although the number of reported incidents may not seem high, it is likely that many more go unreported.

A major concern is how each of these incidents was handled, and how the local communities responded when asked about their views of racism in Hawaii. As noted in the following two comments, there is some awareness and acknowledgement by individuals of racial harassment of African-American students.

- Motokawa, a teacher for 30 years, believes that schools are failing to teach children about racial discrimination, and are not drawing a solid line between humor and harassment.

- Bill D’Agostino, a resident responded via Internet saying, “Locals accept people who are like them (i.e. humble, concerned about each other’s welfare and can tease another person about his or her race). When they meet somebody new, they tend to test him or her – to see if he or she is local too. If he or she takes offense to the “racial epithet,” that’s a big clue that he or she is not local. Then the locals tend to pick on that person as being clueless.”

However, the majority of these who publicly responded to these incidents had a much different view. As reported by Kriefels, a common sentiment is, “What’s the big deal?”

The residents in the Wailuku, Maui incident made comments including the following (Star Bulletin, April 23, 1999):

1. “Racial incidents are sensationalized by the news media. Racial slurs occur all the time in schools and the workplace, and students don’t really mean what they say.”

2. A retired teacher said, “It’s no big deal.”

3. “Racism really doesn’t exist in Wailuku because everyone is a minority.”
4. Sharon Nakagawa, a principal of 12 years said, “Is it racial issues, or people just angry at each other and saying something hurtful?”

As mentioned earlier, racial slurs and words like *nigger* are negatively impacting African-American children’s social, educational and psychological lives. Awaya (2003) said, “Local people tend to deal with each other’s ethnicity in a very open way and what might be construed by nonlocals as not politically correct. This is seen as racist to nonlocals who have little historical, social or cultural knowledge of the Hawaii experience” (notes, HERA Conference 2003).

The local reaction to racism often consists of excuses for racism and connects to the issues raised by Blair (1998) regarding racial preference vs. prejudice in Hawaii. To add to these statements, the actions and reactions of the teachers and administrators also indicate that the incidents were not taken seriously. In seven out of the 10 incidents reported in the Star Bulletin articles, the administration or teachers at the school took no actions. In the two yearbook incidents, it is assumed that an adult had to approve the photos that were taken and displayed in the yearbook; there is no mention of the person responsible for these occurrences or actions taken by the school.

The African-American perspective to the reported incidents of racism in Hawaii’s schools, is depicted in the following (Tighe, Star Bulletin, April 26, 1999):

- Earl Sundance, a substitute teacher stated, “A racial slur is more than a word. It grows into institutionalized racism.”

- Sandy Ma, an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, said that racism was alive in Hawaii schools and would not be accepted by the union.

- Beverlee Heart, a parent, expressed concern over the comment made from the principal regarding the word *nigger* in relation to the O.J. trial, “I was appalled!”
Joe Collins, a parent said, "I didn’t think there was racial tension here. I thought it was ohana and aloha." He withdrew his children from public school feeling the system failed to stop racial harassment.

There is clearly a contrast in the reported statements of most locals vs. African-Americans. Within the African-American community, there is recognition that teachers, parents and local residents need to be educated about cultural clashes. Locals are unaware of the effects that the word nigger, and other stereotypes and symbols (e.g. Klu Klux Klan), have on African-Americans. Miles (2000) wrote in the Honolulu magazine that until people in Hawaii acknowledge that racism is a problem and begin to openly address the issue then the only people being harmed by the avoidance are the people who live here. It is important to increase understanding of the historical roots of stereotypes and racial epithets, as well as their impact on the recipients of them.

The History of Stereotypes and Racial Epithets

Stereotypes are often termed "social myths." Racial slurs and stereotyping are the two most common forms of racism, and cannot be discussed separately. Stereotypes come in many forms, from verbal implications about one’s culture and character to negative depictions of individuals in literature and pictures. Racial slurs are direct words aimed to wound and humiliate a person based on their ethnicity. For example, hooks (1981, 1990, 1992, 1995), hooks and West (1991), West (1982), and Freire (1970), discuss how stereotypes are half-truth and half-myth that impact perceptions and intergroup interactions. hooks (1981) explains that dominant cultures in society use generalizations and stereotypes to their advantage. She states that, “The propaganda effectively serves the dominant culture’s need to maintain the status quo by socializing
citizens into particular modes of behavior and thought by presenting its traditions as cultural norms” (hooks, 1984, p. 21). She goes on to say that the influence of White supremacist ideology is evidenced in the attitudes of the American people and the racial stereotypes they have perpetuated throughout history. To support this idea, West (1982) states:

“Black self-love is thus submissive in a white supremacist society. There is no recognition when one is viewed through stereotypical images, and this renders one simultaneously invisible and hyper-visible. Therefore, the struggle for justice is a quest for recognition, visibility, and self-definition, and to secure liberation and equal citizenship [i.e. from stereotypes]. The differences that have been rendered invisible must be recognized and accented” (in Cowan, 2003, p. 138).

Stereotypes perpetuate the dehumanization of African-Americans, as well as other minority groups that encounter them.

Racial slurs derive from negative stereotypes. It is the dehumanizing aspect of the name-calling that transforms the stereotypes into racial epithets. With regard to Black women in particular, hooks (1990) explains that they are verbally referred to in two ways, (i) as bitches and madwomen who are assertive and threatening, or (ii) as the superwomen, super mammas, who tell it like it is and take care of everybody. With deep and entrenched historical roots, stereotypes such as this continue to plague African-American students in schools today. The inclusion of slavery in public school curricula further affects the self-esteem and perceptions of African-American children in classrooms, because of the stereotypes that are attached to it. For example, Brown (1993) points out, when slavery is taught, it is from a Euro/White dominant point of view. Tatum (1997) explains:

“Too often I hear from young African-American students the embarrassment they have felt in school when the topic of slavery is discussed, ironically one of the
few ways that the Black experience is included in their school curriculum. Uncomfortable with the portrayal of their group as helpless victims – the rebellions and resistance offered by the enslaved Africans are rarely discussed – they squirm uncomfortably as they feel the eyes of White children looking to see their reaction to this subject” (p. 41)

Tatum goes on to discuss how the inclusion of slavery from the dominant point of view often ignites issues of stereotyping and the name-calling that African-American students face in schools. Brown agrees with Tatum and concludes that teaching slavery without discussing issues regarding how slaves rebelled, and personal acts of defiance, eliminates the opportunity for African-American children to feel proud of their ancestors and their culture. In agreement with Tatum and Brown, are many scholars that express concern about how the slave is portrayed in America’s classrooms and in society. Douglass (1852) and Bell (1992) emphasize that slavery was the beginning of racism in America for African-Americans, as well as the beginning for racial epithets and negative stereotypes.

Racism has been around for centuries and first arose during colonization when the White man exploited indigenous people culturally, and Black people economically. For Blacks, this was the initial beginning of slavery in America. Gordon and Brazier (1985) explain racism as an ideology, which bundled up prejudices into a package to prove that black people were inferior. Webster’s II New College Dictionary defines racism as the notion that one’s own ethnic stock is superior, or when prejudice or discrimination is based on a person’s race. In contrast to Webster’s definition, Tatum (1999) feels prejudice and racism are two separate entities. Tatum defines prejudice as one inescapable consequence of living in a racist society, and uniquely defines racism as being so “thick it is visible, other times it is less apparent, but always, day in and day out,
we are breathing it in” (p. 6). The definitions of racism are countless, and Delgado (1995) concludes:

Racism is not a mistake, not a matter of episodic, irrational behavior carried out by vicious-willed individuals, not a throwback to a long-gone era. It is a ritual assertion of supremacy, like animals sneering and posturing to maintain their places in the hierarchy of the colony. It is performed largely unconsciously, just as the animals’ behavior is. Racism seems right, customary, and inoffensive to those engaged in it, while bringing psychic and pecuniary advantages. The notion that more speech, more talking, more preaching, more lecturing can counter this system of oppression is appealing, lofty, romantic – and wrong (p. 224).

From a feminist perspective, when bell hooks discusses race, it is personal and often based on her experiences encountering White Supremacy. She defines race as one factor that determines the social construction of a person’s gender and to what extent the person will suffer exploitation and domination (hooks, 1981). She experienced school desegregation first hand and recalls lessons in schools that displayed naked Africans portrayed as savages in geography. Scant attention was paid to the term race despite its centrality to the students’ lives. hooks demonstrates that as a child, she and her siblings understood without being told that the “world is more a home for white folks than it is for anyone else” (p. 31). hooks and West (1991) also contend that the black cultural experience portrayed in the media effects the current educational experience of black students in America. For example, the portrayal of black men in hip-hop and rap music culture as gangsters and pimps.

From another perspective on race, feminist scholar Angela Davis (1983) says, “Although the term race allegedly referred to the “human race,” in practice - especially as the eugenics movement grew in popularity – little distinction was made between “the race” and “the Anglo Saxon race” (p. 121). She goes on to say that although no
distinction was made, African-Americans still faced the harshest discrimination based on their race and although it was not a distinct difference in terms, it was a difference in societal views. Davis and hooks in their analysis of race, also focus on gender and identity when they discuss the devaluation of black women.

Further, critical race theorist and feminist scholar Patricia Williams (1997) discusses race in education in terms of colorblindness. Colorblindness is a myth that implies that everyone in America is the same regardless of race and ethnicity. Williams argues against colorblindness and says:

“Race is treated as though it were some sort of generic leprosy or a biological train wreck. Those who privilege themselves as Un-raced usually, but not always those who are white are always anxiously maintaining that it doesn’t matter, even as they are quite busy feeling pity, no less, and thankful to God for their great good luck in having been spared so intolerable an affliction” (p. 9).

The point is that race does matter in America and in education. Being black in America leads many scholars to focus on historical and current obstacles that are faced in America’s schools. For example, Ogbu (1995) believes that Blacks have access to equal education and its resources, but racial inequality in education exists because of racial stratification. He concludes that often black students are not performing like white students, not because of the lack of resources at their schools, but because they have not been culturally assimilated into the mainstream to the same extent as other cultural and ethnic groups (Glazer, 1994). From the examples of these scholars, we see race as the primary factor for discrimination among African-Americans.

In his famous Fourth of July Antislavery speech, Frederick Douglass said, “What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer, a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant
victim” (Bell, 148). Bell (1992) adds that the racism that made slavery feasible is far from dead. It is blatantly alive in society today. Although there are efforts underway to eliminate stereotypes and epithets in schools (i.e. multicultural education), they impact minority students daily. One of the most painful racial slurs for African-Americans is the word “nigger.”

The Effects of the N-Word:

Critical race theory (CRT) scholars focus explicitly on the psychological harm of racism on children of color. Delgado (1982) states, “Race based stigmatization is, therefore, one of the most fruitful causes of human misery. Poverty can be eliminated—but skin color cannot” (p. 159). He goes on to say that stereotyping and racial slurs can injure a person’s dignity and self-regard because the listener who “internalizes” the message can suffer both mental and emotional distress. Delgado presents research from Pewewardy, (1996, 1997) who states that, “Subtle racial stereotypes transmitted through films, television, videotapes, and other popular media can leave deep emotional and psychological scars on children of the targeted ethnic group, and on others as well” (In Delgado, 1995, p. 129). Both writers agree that racial slurs and stereotypes, whether experienced face to face or through the media, may cause long-term emotional pain. In addition to pain, Delgado writes that children come to question their competence, intelligence and worth, thus being dehumanized by the racial labels.

The word nigger has become such a controversial term that most people cannot say it, instead using the euphemism, the ‘N-word’. Nigger derived from the Latin word niger, meaning the color black, and its origination was derogatory. It developed a
negative connotation over time. Kennedy (2002), in his book, Nigger, The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word, addresses the issues of how hurtful the use of nigger can be. In 1837, Hosea Easton, quoted in this book, wrote that nigger “is an opprobrious term, employed to impose contempt upon {blacks} as an inferior race... The term in itself would be perfectly harmless were it used only to distinguish one class of society from another; but it is not used with that intent... It flows from the fountain of purpose to injure” (p. 5). Although some African-Americans use the term to refer to one another it is not in the same context as when coming from non-African-Americans. Kennedy explains it is the context and historical background of the word that makes it come across as a racial insult. Professor Michael Eric Dyson, as quoted in Kennedy, asserts that whites must know and stay in their racial place when it comes to saying “nigger.” “Most white folk attracted to black culture know better than to cross a line drawn in the sand of racial history. Nigger has never been cool when spit from white lips” (p. 51). According to Kennedy, by the end of the nineteenth century, nigger had become a familiar and influential insult.

Kennedy also points out that the word nigger has appeared in children’s nursery rhymes, children’s literature and other novels, as well as in songs and in movies. He explains:

“The writer Andrew Hacker has asserted that among slurs of any sort, nigger ‘stands alone [in] its power to tear at one’s insides.’ Judge Stephen Reinhardt deemed nigger ‘the most noxious racial epithet in the contemporary American lexicon.’ And prosecutor Christopher Darden famously branded nigger the “filthiest, dirtiest, nastiest word in the English language’” (p. 28).

Hacker, Reinhardt and Darden are not alone in their beliefs. Most African-Americans, if not all, have the same feelings about the word when used by different ethnic groups,
especially Whites. Today in our society, rap artists and hip-hop musicians use *nigger* loosely in their musical lyrics, and Black comedians have been known to use the word for a comic response in their acts. Although these black groups use the word *nigger*, most African-Americans are not offended because the use of the word is being used by an ethnic insider, not an outsider, and it is not intended to be a racial slur. However, others, like Langston Hughes, reject any and all uses of the term. Hughes (1940) writes:

"The word *nigger* to colored people of high and low degree is like a red rag to a bull. Used rightly or wrongly, ironically or seriously, of necessity for the sake of realism, or impishly for the sake of comedy [,] it doesn't matter. Negroes do not like it in any book or play whatsoever, be the book or play ever so sympathetic in its treatment of the basic problems of the race. The word *nigger*, you see sums up for us who are colored all the bitter years of insult and struggle in America" (p. 268).

When other ethnic groups use the word, African-Americans take offense. When other African-Americans use the word, some Blacks take offense. Delgado (1992) points out epithets like *nigger, wop, spick, or kike*, are offensive and intended to wound when used by opposite ethnic groups. In addition, he goes on to say that for African-American students, hearing the word *nigger* in schools from classmates, and sometimes teachers, is devastating and can cause long-term emotional pain. It is important to understand the historical context and implications of the word *nigger*, and how the lack of knowledge about this term or the African-American culture can lead to negative historical perceptions and stereotyping in education.

*The Use of "Nigger" in Public Schools:*

The word *nigger* has been used in numerous novels and texts, which today have been banned from the school’s libraries and classrooms. Kennedy (2002) lists some of
these novels, including: Beecher Stowe’s (*Uncle Tom’s Cabin*), Twain’s (*Huckleberry Finn*), Howells’ (*An Imperative Duty*), Sheldon’s (*The Nigger*), Grisham’s (*A Time to Kill*), and many others. In addition to the use of the word in print, in classroom texts, teachers have also been implicated in using the term.

In the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Malcolm discusses a time when he was interested in becoming a lawyer and his English teacher responded, “That’s no realistic goal for a nigger.” In a study conducted by Tatum (1997), several of the African-American students that she interviewed in a predominantly black community had encountered situations where they felt the teachers were implying that they were niggers, or different from and less capable than their white counterparts. In one incident, a substitute teacher suggested a community college for a Black male because she felt he was not capable or intelligent enough to attend a four-year college. In another example, a young African-American student who was considering attending a dance was told by her teacher, “I know you people love to dance” (p. 59). Today in schools, the concept of nigger is often implied through negative stereotypes, assumptions and misrepresentations. *Nigger* continues to be a commonly used word and will probably be around for many years, especially if students are not educated about the negative impact of such epithets. Teachers and schools must address issues of racial stereotyping and the use of racial epithets with particular regard to African-American military students. In addition, transiency issues must also be understood and addressed.
Transiency Issues:

Transitioning into a new school for any student is often a challenging task for the family and the student. Military families encounter these transitions more often because it is a characteristic of their life styles. There are over 54,000 active duty military members in Hawaii (US Census, 2002). Most military families stay in a particular assignment for three to four years. In Hawaii, Jackson (2001) found that nine of 12 year-round schools serve military families and less than 80 percent of the military students remained enrolled the entire year. In addition, schools with high populations address high transfer rates. For example, Hale Kula Elementary has the largest military population on the island of Oahu. On their school website page they state, “We have a very high transiency rate, therefore, a consistent, nationally researched and proven literacy program is essential to our students as well as demanded by our parents” (DOE, 2003). The Military Education Coalition (MISA) explains that transiency issues range from student files arriving at schools in a less than timely manner, to children having difficulties making friends and fitting in to a new school environment. MISA (2000) goes on to report that military children who arrive at schools across the nation have both curricular and emotional issues to encounter in their transition.

MISA addresses several transitional concerns that schools should consider improving for military children. They include: improving the timely transfer of records, developing systems to ease student transition, and promoting practices which foster access to extracurricular programs. MISA also points out that schools should establish procedures to lesson the adverse impact of moves, including providing child-centered partnerships between the military installation and the supporting school. With these
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“First, the Negro group, as a new element in the Hawaiian social structure, is at the bottom of the social and economic ladder, thereby following the traditional pattern of evaluation which stems from the old plantation system. Second, the majority of these Negroes, having been conditioned to the mainland pattern of racial mores and being still hypersensitive in their roles, find some difficulty in becoming absorbed into their new environment. And third...individual Negroes are assimilated into the Hawaiian community when they transcend this hypersensitivity or when they are able vocationally or professionally to contribute to the general welfare of the community” (pp. 419-420).

Today more than three-fourths of the Hawaiian population is made up of immigrants and Hawaiian descendents. Blair (1998) states that “Ethnic heritage is not an automatic or unchanged marker of class in Hawaii, but the most privileged groups are made up largely of whites, Japanese-Americans and descendents of the Hawaiian ali‘i” (p. 53). He goes on to state, “All racial stereotypes (in Hawaii) are not created equal, for the more hostile stereotypes usually refer to darker-skinned people such as...blacks” (p. 174).

**African-Americans as Students**

Since the late 1960’s, it has been researched and reported that the low academic performance of Black students is caused by the differences in and conflicts between African-American and Eurocentric cultures (Boykin, 1986; Gay, 1979; Irvine, 1991, Delgado & Stefancic, 1995). Ogbu (2003) makes an important point stating that the identity of African-American students and their differences contribute to the learning conflicts. He pointed out, “There are differences in dressing, hairstyles, jokes, sports, communication style, styles of religious worship, attitudes toward schoolwork, parental
involvement in school, study habits, time orientation, and peer group orientation” (p. 38). All of these contribute to the way children respond to their teachers and how African-American students behave in classroom settings. In addition, Boykin (1986) identified that Black parents raise their children with different social and ethical values and beliefs. He said, “Because of their upbringing, Black children come to school with values and beliefs different from those of school authorities” (Ogbu, p. 37). As a result, the children face cultural conflicts in their relations to their teachers, administrators and peers. Black parents raise their children to act and react according to their cultural beliefs and values, like other parents in other cultures. Although the upbringing for the children is similar, there are still difference issues among male and female African-American children in society and in schools.

The African-American Male:

One tenth of all African-American boys are addicted to drugs; 70 percent are born out of wedlock; 85 percent are placed in special education; 47 percent are in penal institutions; 3.5 percent attend college; 37 percent get suspended from schools; 31 percent between the ages of 18-25 are unemployed; and African-American men have the lowest life expectancy among any other ethnic gender group (sistaspacem.com). African-American males are often viewed as sports fanatics, hoodlums, or criminals and in school they often deal with these stereotypes on a daily basis. Ladson-Billings (1994) discusses how boys are often labeled as social outcasts and, with the exception of a few, they begin to believe the labels placed on them by society.
These are the negative perceptions that are reported in the media, and these are the perceptions that most US citizens believe and accept regarding African-American males. Researchers have found that achievement gaps and societal problems exist because of racism and sexism toward black males (Williams, 1998; West, 2001; Delpit, 2002; Ogbu, 2003).

As African-American males continue their journey in America's educational system social, political and economic issues will continue to affect their lives. Although all African-American children face similar problems, African-American male issues tend to center around social, special education, their behavior, and their achievement gaps. African-American females face these same issues; however self-identity and social acceptance concerns are the major factors for this gender.

The African-American Female

The dehumanization of blackness and its effects on the black female are rooted in the harsh history of slavery. Racial identity, community lifestyle and educational development can be linked to the African female slave and the history of her rebellion in America. hooks (1981) explains:

“No other group in America has so had their identity socialized out of existence as have black women. We are rarely recognized as a group separate and distinct from black men, or as a present part of the larger group “women” in this culture. When black people are talked about, sexism militates against the acknowledgment of the interests of black women; when women are talked about racism militates against the recognition of black female interests” (p. 7).

The identity of the black female began to grind its roots during slavery. She was seen as a laborer, child bearer, nanny, doctor, field hand, breeder, wife, mother, and mistress. Davis (1983) discusses countless tales of black females being raped by their
masters, husbands and other male slaves. She goes on to say that from the point of view of others, the violation of black females was brought on by their own promiscuous acts. The identity of the black female from slavery to its end was ridiculed and mocked.

"During the years of Black Reconstruction, 1867-77, black women struggled to change negative images of black womanhood perpetuated by whites" (hooks, 1981; p. 55). In addition, hooks emphasizes that if a black woman wore clean clothes and presented herself in a dignified manner, she often became the victim of "white men who ridiculed and mocked her self-improvement efforts" (p. 55). Black women undoubtedly belong to two historically labeled groups, women and black. Morton (1991) says that they continue to find their intellectual, physical, social and educational capabilities challenged in society.

Another issue among African-American females is her role in the educational system. Compared to African-American males, overall nationally, African-American females have higher grade point averages, proficiency test scores, SAT scores, course level enrollments, high school graduating rankings, and college attendances (Stupay, 1993; Whittington, 1996; Ogbu, 2003). However, regardless of the higher numbers between female and male African-American students, females also face stereotypes in classroom settings. For example, Delpit (1995) states:

"Research has been conducted in classroom settings which shows that African-American girls are rewarded for nurturing behavior while white girls are rewarded for academic behavior. Though it is likely true that many African-American girls are nurturers, having played with or helped to care for younger siblings and cousins, they are penalized by the nurturing "mammy" stereotype when they are not given the same encouragement as white girls toward academic endeavors" (p. 171).
Moreover, hooks (1990) adds that black women fall under two categories in society with regard to stereotypes. She explains that they are either considered a “bitch” or “madwoman” who speaks her mind and is often labeled as crazy and assertive, or “super mommas,” who are telling it like it is while taking care of themselves and everyone else around them as they spread their “special magic” wherever they go. As these stereotypes haunt the African-American female, self-image, self-concept, and self-conceptualization are under attack. “Unless we remain ever vigilant about the ways representations of black womanhood are appropriated and exploited...we may find ourselves falling into traps set by the dominant culture” (hooks, 1990; p. 92). Black females cannot separate their race from their gender. Furthermore, African-Americans cannot separate race, gender and class in American society. Castenell and Pinar (1993) point out that black people are united because they are share a common oppression even when the oppression is in terms of race, gender and class. Negative stereotypes and experiences affect African-American children in the Hawaii educational system, as well.

African-Americans in Hawaii Public Schools

There are 16 military housing facilities on the island of Oahu, the most populated island in Hawaii. Within these 16 areas, there are 39 military impacted (high military dependent populated) schools with a total military population of 183,629, and a total military African-American population of 14,906 (2001-2002 Federal Survey Card). Moreover, 17 of these schools have military populations over 50 percent, with the lowest at 50.7 percent military dependents and the highest at 99.7 percent military dependents. In order from highest to lowest percentages, these schools are: Hale Kula Elementary,
Solomon Elementary, Hickam Elementary, Iroquois Point Elementary, Pearl Harbor Kai Elementary, Mokulele Elementary, Nimitz Elementary, Mokapu Elementary, Wheeler Elementary, Shafter Elementary, Wheeler Intermediate, Red Hill Elementary, Aliamanu Elementary, Radford High, Barbers Point Elementary, Lehua Elementary, and Pearl Harbor Elementary. The Hawaii Department of Education (2003), states that the African-American students attending these schools are military dependents. Ogilvy (1993) concludes that, “Defining the relationship of Hawaii’s educational system to the size, the role, and the needs of the military may well be an important objective during the next decade... Hawaii’s mix of cultures, like the climate, can be a curse or a blessing” (pp. 76 & 80). He goes on to state that Hawaii must serve the needs of the military families in order for them to have a positive military experience in the state.

African-American Experiences with Racism in Hawaii Public Schools:

In a Star Bulletin article, *Is trouble brewing?* (Kreifels, April 23, 1999) discusses racial incidents involving African-Americans. Kreifels writes that, “Most parents, teachers, and students interviewed believed racial harassment is not a major problem in school corridors. But enough anecdotal experiences show students of various races and ethnic groups have felt it” (p. 2). In contrast to the views of Kreifels’ interviewees, African-Americans do see racism as a major problem in schools. The *Honolulu Star Bulletin* has more reports of racial incidents towards African-Americans than for any other ethnic group. In 1999, Kreifels, Kubota, and Tighe reported the following 10 incidents:

1. *Iao Intermediate School, in Wailuku, Maui* – A 14-year old African-American eighth grader was punched and shoved on separate occasions and called racial slurs, including *nigger*. The child’s mother complained
several times to the school administration, but her son continued to be harassed. Two students were suspended and the principal stated that racial slurs would not be tolerated at his school.

2. Baldwin High School, in Wailuku, Maui – students’ utter racial slurs daily toward African-American students, including nigger.

3. A Honolulu elementary school – an outbreak of racial slurs (including nigger) and fights among third graders. The principal called in an outsider, Michel D’Andrea, director of the National Institute of Multicultural Competence, to speak with the students.

4. Castle High School, Kailua, Oahu – Halloween, a student came to school wearing a Klu Klux Klan outfit and a picture of the student appeared in the school yearbook. No actions against the students were reported.

5. Kalaheo High School, Kailua, Oahu – a caption under a picture of an African-American student read, “I like pig’s feet. I like hog mollz. Where da collard greens?” Two students filed a $14 million federal lawsuit against the state and Kalaheo, and settled for $80,000.

6. School name not given – Oahu – a student attending a school was called a nigger. The parent discussed the incident with the principal. The principal said, “It’s just a name. Didn’t he hear it in the O.J. Simpson trial?”

7. Manoa Elementary School – Oahu, the same student from #6, after transferring to this school, was called a “burnt french fry.” The school responded swiftly, apologized, suspended a student for a day, and had the student body attend a school assembly regarding no tolerance for racism at the school.

8. Manoa Elementary School – Oahu, another student cried after being called derogatory racial names. No report of any actions taken.

9. Radford High School – Oahu, a 15-year-old was called a nigger. She said, “I don’t like the ‘n’ word. It’s telling me I’m beneath you and that you are superior. I think of slavery and lynching and segregation.” No report of any actions taken.

10. Leilehua High School – Wahiawa, Oahu – a substitute teacher reports countless issues of name-calling and tension, students often admitted being afraid to come to school and feeling unsafe. Students who called names and made the threats were not reprimanded for their actions.
In addition to these 10 incidents, an African-American teacher at Leilehua High School, who has taught for 10 years, reported that the military students, especially those who are Black, “stand out.” (Kriefles, April 23, 1999, p.5). He has witnessed several incidents of racism against them and punished the offenders. Although the number of reported incidents may not seem high, it is likely that many more go unreported.

A major concern is how each of these incidents was handled, and how the local communities responded when asked about their views of racism in Hawaii. As noted in the following two comments, there is some awareness and acknowledgement by individuals of racial harassment of African-American students.

- Motokawa, a teacher for 30 years, believes that schools are failing to teach children about racial discrimination, and are not drawing a solid line between humor and harassment.

- Bill D’Agostino, a resident responded via Internet saying, “Locals accept people who are like them (i.e. humble, concerned about each other’s welfare and can tease another person about his or her race). When they meet somebody new, they tend to test him or her – to see if he or she is local too. If he or she takes offense to the “racial epithet,” that’s a big clue that he or she is not local. Then the locals tend to pick on that person as being clueless.”

However, the majority of these who publicly responded to these incidents had a much different view. As reported by Kriefels, a common sentiment is, “What’s the big deal?”

The residents in the Wailuku, Maui incident made comments including the following (Star Bulletin, April 23, 1999):

1. “Racial incidents are sensationalized by the news media. Racial slurs occur all the time in schools and the workplace, and students don’t really mean what they say.”

2. A retired teacher said, “It’s no big deal.”

3. “Racism really doesn’t exist in Wailuku because everyone is a minority.”
4. Sharon Nakagawa, a principal of 12 years said, “Is it racial issues, or people just angry at each other and saying something hurtful?”

As mentioned earlier, racial slurs and words like nigger are negatively impacting African-American children’s social, educational and psychological lives. Awaya (2003) said, “Local people tend to deal with each other’s ethnicity in a very open way and what might be construed by nonlocals as not politically correct. This is seen as racist to nonlocals who have little historical, social or cultural knowledge of the Hawaii experience” (notes, HERA Conference 2003).

The local reaction to racism often consists of excuses for racism and connects to the issues raised by Blair (1998) regarding racial preference vs. prejudice in Hawaii. To add to these statements, the actions and reactions of the teachers and administrators also indicate that the incidents were not taken seriously. In seven out of the 10 incidents reported in the Star Bulletin articles, the administration or teachers at the school took no actions. In the two yearbook incidents, it is assumed that an adult had to approve the photos that were taken and displayed in the yearbook; there is no mention of the person responsible for these occurrences or actions taken by the school.

The African-American perspective to the reported incidents of racism in Hawaii’s schools, is depicted in the following (Tighe, Star Bulletin, April 26, 1999):

- Earl Sundance, a substitute teacher stated, “A racial slur is more than a word. It grows into institutionalized racism.”

- Sandy Ma, an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, said that racism was alive in Hawaii schools and would not be accepted by the union.

- Beverlee Heart, a parent, expressed concern over the comment made from the principal regarding the word nigger in relation to the O.J. trial, “I was appalled!”
Joe Collins, a parent said, “I didn’t think there was racial tension here. I thought it was *ohana* and *aloha*.” He withdrew his children from public school feeling the system failed to stop racial harassment.

There is clearly a contrast in the reported statements of most locals vs. African-Americans. Within the African-American community, there is recognition that teachers, parents and local residents need to be educated about cultural clashes. Locals are unaware of the effects that the word *nigger*, and other stereotypes and symbols (e.g. Klu Klux Klan), have on African-Americans. Miles (2000) wrote in the *Honolulu* magazine that until people in Hawaii acknowledge that racism is a problem and begin to openly address the issue then the only people being harmed by the avoidance are the people who live here. It is important to increase understanding of the historical roots of stereotypes and racial epithets, as well as their impact on the recipients of them.

The History of Stereotypes and Racial Epithets

Stereotypes are often termed “social myths.” Racial slurs and stereotyping are the two most common forms of racism, and cannot be discussed separately. Stereotypes come in many forms, from verbal implications about one’s culture and character to negative depictions of individuals in literature and pictures. Racial slurs are direct words aimed to wound and humiliate a person based on their ethnicity. For example, hooks (1981, 1990, 1992, 1995), hooks and West (1991), West (1982), and Freire (1970), discuss how stereotypes are half-truth and half-myth that impact perceptions and intergroup interactions. hooks (1981) explains that dominant cultures in society use generalizations and stereotypes to their advantage. She states that, “The propaganda effectively serves the dominant culture’s need to maintain the status quo by socializing
citizens into particular modes of behavior and thought by presenting its traditions as cultural norms" (hooks, 1984, p. 21). She goes on to say that the influence of White supremacist ideology is evidenced in the attitudes of the American people and the racial stereotypes they have perpetuated throughout history. To support this idea, West (1982) states:

"Black self-love is thus submissive in a white supremacist society. There is no recognition when one is viewed through stereotypical images, and this renders one simultaneously invisible and hyper-visible. Therefore, the struggle for justice is a quest for recognition, visibility, and self-definition, and to secure liberation and equal citizenship [i.e. from stereotypes]. The differences that have been rendered invisible must be recognized and accented" (in Cowan, 2003, p. 138).

Stereotypes perpetuate the dehumanization of African-Americans, as well as other minority groups that encounter them.

Racial slurs derive from negative stereotypes. It is the dehumanizing aspect of the name-calling that transforms the stereotypes into racial epithets. With regard to Black women in particular, hooks (1990) explains that they are verbally referred to in two ways, (i) as bitches and madwomen who are assertive and threatening, or (ii) as the superwomen, super mammas, who tell it like it is and take care of everybody. With deep and entrenched historical roots, stereotypes such as this continue to plague African-American students in schools today. The inclusion of slavery in public school curricula further affects the self-esteem and perceptions of African-American children in classrooms, because of the stereotypes that are attached to it. For example, Brown (1993) points out, when slavery is taught, it is from a Euro/White dominant point of view. Tatum (1997) explains:

"Too often I hear from young African-American students the embarrassment they have felt in school when the topic of slavery is discussed, ironically one of the
few ways that the Black experience is included in their school curriculum.

Uncomfortable with the portrayal of their group as helpless victims – the rebellions and resistance offered by the enslaved Africans are rarely discussed – they squirm uncomfortably as they feel the eyes of White children looking to see their reaction to this subject" (p. 41)

Tatum goes on to discuss how the inclusion of slavery from the dominant point of view often ignites issues of stereotyping and the name-calling that African-American students face in schools. Brown agrees with Tatum and concludes that teaching slavery without discussing issues regarding how slaves rebelled, and personal acts of defiance, eliminates the opportunity for African-American children to feel proud of their ancestors and their culture. In agreement with Tatum and Brown, are many scholars that express concern about how the slave is portrayed in America's classrooms and in society. Douglass (1852) and Bell (1992) emphasize that slavery was the beginning of racism in America for African-Americans, as well as the beginning for racial epithets and negative stereotypes.

Racism has been around for centuries and first arose during colonization when the White man exploited indigenous people culturally, and Black people economically. For Blacks, this was the initial beginning of slavery in America. Gordon and Brazier (1985) explain racism as an ideology, which bundled up prejudices into a package to prove that black people were inferior. Webster’s II New College Dictionary defines racism as the notion that one’s own ethnic stock is superior, or when prejudice or discrimination is based on a person’s race. In contrast to Webster’s definition, Tatum (1999) feels prejudice and racism are two separate entities. Tatum defines prejudice as one inescapable consequence of living in a racist society, and uniquely defines racism as being so “thick it is visible, other times it is less apparent, but always, day in and day out,
we are breathing it in” (p. 6). The definitions of racism are countless, and Delgado (1995) concludes:

Racism is not a mistake, not a matter of episodic, irrational behavior carried out by vicious-willed individuals, not a throwback to a long-gone era. It is a ritual assertion of supremacy, like animals sneering and posturing to maintain their places in the hierarchy of the colony. It is performed largely unconsciously, just as the animals’ behavior is. Racism seems right, customary, and inoffensive to those engaged in it, while bringing psychic and pecuniary advantages. The notion that more speech, more talking, more preaching, more lecturing can counter this system of oppression is appealing, lofty, romantic – and wrong (p. 224).

From a feminist perspective, when bell hooks discusses race, it is personal and often based on her experiences encountering White Supremacy. She defines race as one factor that determines the social construction of a person’s gender and to what extent the person will suffer exploitation and domination (hooks, 1981). She experienced school desegregation first hand and recalls lessons in schools that displayed naked Africans portrayed as savages in geography. Scant attention was paid to the term race despite its centrality to the students’ lives. hooks demonstrates that as a child, she and her siblings understood without being told that the “world is more a home for white folks than it is for anyone else” (p. 31). hooks and West (1991) also contend that the black cultural experience portrayed in the media effects the current educational experience of black students in America. For example, the portrayal of black men in hip-hop and rap music culture as gangsters and pimps.

From another perspective on race, feminist scholar Angela Davis (1983) says, “Although the term race allegedly referred to the “human race,” in practice - especially as the eugenics movement grew in popularity – little distinction was made between “the race” and “the Anglo Saxon race” (p. 121). She goes on to say that although no
distinction was made, African-Americans still faced the harshest discrimination based on their race and although it was not a distinct difference in terms, it was a difference in societal views. Davis and hooks in their analysis of race, also focus on gender and identity when they discuss the devaluation of black women.

Further, critical race theorist and feminist scholar Patricia Williams (1997) discusses race in education in terms of colorblindness. Colorblindness is a myth that implies that everyone in America is the same regardless of race and ethnicity. Williams argues against colorblindness and says:

"Race is treated as though it were some sort of generic leprosy or a biological train wreck. Those who privilege themselves as Un-raced usually, but not always those who are white are always anxiously maintaining that it doesn't matter, even as they are quite busy feeling pity, no less, and thankful to God for their great good luck in having been spared so intolerable an affliction" (p. 9).

The point is that race does matter in America and in education. Being black in America leads many scholars to focus on historical and current obstacles that are faced in America's schools. For example, Ogbu (1995) believes that Blacks have access to equal education and its resources, but racial inequality in education exists because of racial stratification. He concludes that often black students are not performing like white students, not because of the lack of resources at their schools, but because they have not been culturally assimilated into the mainstream to the same extent as other cultural and ethnic groups (Glazer, 1994). From the examples of these scholars, we see race as the primary factor for discrimination among African-Americans.

In his famous Fourth of July Antislavery speech, Frederick Douglass said, "What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer, a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant
victim” (Bell, 148). Bell (1992) adds that the racism that made slavery feasible is far from dead. It is blatantly alive in society today. Although there are efforts underway to eliminate stereotypes and epithets in schools (i.e. multicultural education), they impact minority students daily. One of the most painful racial slurs for African-Americans is the word "nigger.”

The Effects of the N-Word:

Critical race theory (CRT) scholars focus explicitly on the psychological harm of racism on children of color. Delgado (1982) states, “Race based stigmatization is, therefore, one of the most fruitful causes of human misery. Poverty can be eliminated—but skin color cannot” (p. 159). He goes on to say that stereotyping and racial slurs can injure a person’s dignity and self-regard because the listener who “internalizes” the message can suffer both mental and emotional distress. Delgado presents research from Pewewardy, (1996, 1997) who states that, “Subtle racial stereotypes transmitted through films, television, videotapes, and other popular media can leave deep emotional and psychological scars on children of the targeted ethnic group, and on others as well” (In Delgado, 1995, p. 129). Both writers agree that racial slurs and stereotypes, whether experienced face to face or through the media, may cause long-term emotional pain. In addition to pain, Delgado writes that children come to question their competence, intelligence and worth, thus being dehumanized by the racial labels.

The word nigger has become such a controversial term that most people cannot say it, instead using the euphemism, the ‘N-word’. Nigger derived from the Latin word niger, meaning the color black, and its origination was derogatory. It developed a
negative connotation over time. Kennedy (2002), in his book, *Nigger, The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word*, addresses the issues of how hurtful the use of nigger can be. In 1837, Hosea Easton, quoted in this book, wrote that nigger “is an opprobrious term, employed to impose contempt upon {blacks} as an inferior race...The term in itself would be perfectly harmless were it used only to distinguish one class of society from another; but it is not used with that intent...It flows from the fountain of purpose to injure” (p. 5). Although some African-Americans use the term to refer to one another it is not in the same context as when coming from non-African-Americans. Kennedy explains it is the context and historical background of the word that makes it come across as a racial insult. Professor Michael Eric Dyson, as quoted in Kennedy, asserts that whites must know and stay in their racial place when it comes to saying “nigger.” “Most white folk attracted to black culture know better than to cross a line drawn in the sand of racial history. Nigger has never been cool when spit from white lips” (p. 51). According to Kennedy, by the end of the nineteenth century, nigger had become a familiar and influential insult.

Kennedy also points out that the word nigger has appeared in children’s nursery rhymes, children’s literature and other novels, as well as in songs and in movies. He explains:

“The writer Andrew Hacker has asserted that among slurs of any sort, nigger ‘stands alone [in] its power to tear at one’s insides.’ Judge Stephen Reinhardt deemed nigger ‘the most noxious racial epithet in the contemporary American lexicon.’ And prosecutor Christopher Darden famously branded nigger the “filthiest, dirtiest, nastiest word in the English language’” (p. 28).

Hacker, Reinhardt and Darden are not alone in their beliefs. Most African-Americans, if not all, have the same feelings about the word when used by different ethnic groups,
especially Whites. Today in our society, rap artists and hip-hop musicians use *nigger* loosely in their musical lyrics, and Black comedians have been known to use the word for a comic response in their acts. Although these black groups use the word *nigger*, most African-Americans are not offended because the use of the word is being used by an ethnic insider, not an outsider, and it is not intended to be a racial slur. However, others, like Langston Hughes, reject any and all uses of the term. Hughes (1940) writes:

"The word *nigger* to colored people of high and low degree is like a red rag to a bull. Used rightly or wrongly, ironically or seriously, of necessity for the sake of realism, or impishly for the sake of comedy [,] it doesn't matter. Negroes do not like it in any book or play whatsoever, be the book or play ever so sympathetic in its treatment of the basic problems of the race. The word *nigger* you see sums up for us who are colored all the bitter years of insult and struggle in America" (p. 268).

When other ethnic groups use the word, African-Americans take offense. When other African-Americans use the word, some Blacks take offense. Delgado (1992) points out epithets like *nigger, wop, spick, or kike,* are offensive and intended to wound when used by opposite ethnic groups. In addition, he goes on to say that for African-American students, hearing the word *nigger* in schools from classmates, and sometimes teachers, is devastating and can cause long-term emotional pain. It is important to understand the historical context and implications of the word *nigger*, and how the lack of knowledge about this term or the African-American culture can lead to negative historical perceptions and stereotyping in education.

*The Use of "Nigger" in Public Schools:*

The word *nigger* has been used in numerous novels and texts, which today have been banned from the school's libraries and classrooms. Kennedy (2002) lists some of
these novels, including: Beecher Stowe’s (*Uncle Tom’s Cabin*), Twain’s (*Huckleberry Finn*), Howells’ (*An Imperative Duty*), Sheldon’s (*The Nigger*), Grisham’s (*A Time to Kill*), and many others. In addition to the use of the word in print, in classroom texts, teachers have also been implicated in using the term.

In the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Malcolm discusses a time when he was interested in becoming a lawyer and his English teacher responded, “That’s no realistic goal for a nigger.” In a study conducted by Tatum (1997), several of the African-American students that she interviewed in a predominantly black community had encountered situations where they felt the teachers were implying that they were niggers, or different from and less capable than their white counterparts. In one incident, a substitute teacher suggested a community college for a Black male because she felt he was not capable or intelligent enough to attend a four-year college. In another example, a young African-American student who was considering attending a dance was told by her teacher, “I know you people love to dance” (p. 59). Today in schools, the concept of nigger is often implied through negative stereotypes, assumptions and misrepresentations. Nigger continues to be a commonly used word and will probably be around for many years, especially if students are not educated about the negative impact of such epithets. Teachers and schools must address issues of racial stereotyping and the use of racial epithets with particular regard to African-American military students. In addition, transiency issues must also be understood and addressed.
Transiency Issues:

Transitioning into a new school for any student is often a challenging task for the family and the student. Military families encounter these transitions more often because it is a characteristic of their life styles. There are over 54,000 active duty military members in Hawaii (US Census, 2002). Most military families stay in a particular assignment for three to four years. In Hawaii, Jackson (2001) found that nine of 12 year-round schools serve military families and less than 80 percent of the military students remained enrolled the entire year. In addition, schools with high populations address high transfer rates. For example, Hale Kula Elementary has the largest military population on the island of Oahu. On their school website page they state, “We have a very high transiency rate, therefore, a consistent, nationally researched and proven literacy program is essential to our students as well as demanded by our parents” (DOE, 2003). The Military Education Coalition (MISA) explains that transiency issues range from student files arriving at schools in a less than timely manner, to children having difficulties making friends and fitting in to a new school environment. MISA (2000) goes on to report that military children who arrive at schools across the nation have both curricular and emotional issues to encounter in their transition.

MISA addresses several transitional concerns that schools should consider improving for military children. They include: improving the timely transfer of records, developing systems to ease student transition, and promoting practices which foster access to extracurricular programs. MISA also points out that schools should establish procedures to lesson the adverse impact of moves, including providing child-centered partnerships between the military installation and the supporting school. With these
suggestions in place, most military parents would feel more confident when their child enters a new school. However, based on the Hawaii Department of Education website (2002-2003), the emotional transition is often the most difficult to resolve due to cultural differences and the lack of each Hawaii school that does not participate or have existing transitional programs in place. So, not only are African-American military students dealing with emotional transitions, they are also confronted with racial stereotyping and issues of being Black in Hawaii public schools.

Lee (1948) found that African-Americans had difficulty in Hawaii due to their ethnic identity. The emotional transition is often the most difficult to resolve due to cultural differences. However, the particular interplay of race (African-American), class (military), and gender (male or female), create situations in which racism is experienced in different ways and to different degrees. Further research is needed to uncover issues, concerns and emotional needs of African-American military students’ experiences and their perceptions of racism in the Hawaii public school system.

Final Thoughts

Looking at the historical implications of dehumanization, colonialism, and stereotypes suggests that African-Americans have always been victims of America’s political and educational systems. Pinkney (1993) said that African-Americans are the largest and oldest minority in the country and that they are highly visible and racially distinct from the majority. He goes on to point out that when slavery ended, African-Americans were not allowed to enter the mainstream of society, and that blacks,
regardless of their achievements or status, were still considered simply as blacks. James
Johnson (1934), a famous African-American author wrote:

Black America is called upon to stand as the protagonist of tolerance, of fair play,
of justice, and of good will. Until white America heeds, we shall never let its conscience
sleep. For the responsibility for the outcome is not ours alone. White America cannot
save itself if it prevents us from being saved. (Mazel, p. 99). People have to want to
understand and be willing to learn about each other before such unity can be realized.
The literature discusses how African-Americans in the military are a growing entity in
Hawaii’s communities and schools. Beginning in the 1700s, they came to the Islands, left
historical data, roots and links to and for the existing African-Americans that are
currently living here or militarily assigned in Hawaii today. With a growing number of
military deployments to Hawaii, more and more African-Americans will come and their
children will attend public school here. There must be some assistance from the schools
and community to inform students of all races and ethnicities that racism is wrong in
America. Colonization and mainland ideas that influenced current perceptions of
African-American military people in Hawaii have to be addressed.

As researchers, educators and others continue to contribute to our knowledge
about the nature, quality and value of teaching about other cultures, then understanding
and recognizing that racism is a part of American society will become easier. Society
must first acknowledge racism in order for it to be defeated. Cultural and political
conditions and experiences of different ethnic groups can become positive symbols in
America. This is not limited to White and Black people, but to all races, genders, and
classes. In his novel, Faces at the Bottom of the Well, Derrick Bell said:
“Black people are the magical faces at the bottom of society’s well. Even the poorest whites, those who must live their lives only a few levels above, (as well as other minorities), gain self-esteem by gazing down on us. Surely, they must know that their deliverance depends on letting down their ropes. Only by working together is escape possible. Over time, many reach out, but most simply watch, mesmerized into maintaining their unspoken commitment to keeping us where we are, at whatever cost to them or to us” (p. ix).

In mainland American schools, the magical faces are often African-American children, and in Hawaii the faces belong to African-American military students who can be linked to historical implications and perceptions placing them at the bottom of Hawaii’s social well. However, are they at the bottom because of race, class or both? A resolution is needed and can be achieved through understanding the personal perceptions and experiences of African-American military students. The question remains however, are the personal perceptions of African-American military students based on their historical implications, and if so are their past experiences contributing to the racial conflicts in paradise? Through further research, the different ways and degrees in which African-American military students experience racism, classism and sexism can be unmasked and their voices can be heard.
Chapter III
THEORECTICAL FRAMEWORK

“Looking Through the Lens of Critical Race Theory”

“It is essential that the ethical person acknowledge society’s injustices and, whether or not called to ease them, recognizes the disadvantaged, those who have been squeezed out unfairly despite the nation’s boast that all here have an equal chance to gain a share of the nation’s riches.”

(Derrick Bell, 2002)

The voices of African-American military students are rarely heard in research. African-American children in public schools and the problems that encompass them surface in literature. However, the African-American military dependent child’s voice is not heard in research. Critical race theory acknowledges that their voices are legitimate and provides an arena for their voices to be heard. Berry (2002) states “Critical race theory challenges ahistoricism and insists on analyzing race and racism by placing them both in an historical context” (p. 9). The history of African-Americans in Hawaii based on racial perceptions and experiences need to be brought to the forefront and because of this, critical race theory is the theoretical framework for this study.

The Origins of Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) originated in the mid-1970’s. Delgado (1995) explains that, “The critical race theory (CRT) movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power” (p. 2). CRT arose with the early works of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman. Derrick Bell, an African-American lawyer who served for the NAACP branch, began to write arguments that were designed to change existing Civil Rights laws (Bell, 1980). Alan Freeman, a Civil Rights attorney and Caucasian, wrote an article that documented how
the U.S. Supreme Court’s race jurisprudence legitimized racism (Freeman, 1995). These
two scholars, along with other lawyers, activists and legal scholars across the country
realized that the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960’s had stalled and, in many respects,
was being rolled back. They realized that new theories and strategies were needed to
combat racism in American society. CRT’s origin evolved from critical legal studies
(CLS).

Critical legal studies was a movement by leftist legal scholars of color who were
seeking to transform society by reforming practices, ideas and institutions that catered to
white racist hegemony. However, this movement ignored race relations and ethnicity as a
primary concern. Since race relations and racism were excluded or not as important to
some critical legal scholars, others branched out to form the critical race theory
for undue emphasis on class and economic structure, insisting that race is more critical.
Critical race theorists consider race up front and personal” (p. 18). With the division from
CLS, a majority of scholars of color, such as Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, Patricia
Williams, Cornel West, and Kimberle Crenshaw, research, analyze and discuss critical
race theory in depth. These scholars comprise a variety of ethnicities, including African-
American, Latino-American, Asian-American, and others. Although CRT evolved
primarily from CLS, there are additional predecessors to the movement, including
feminist theory and continental social and political philosophy. In addition, CRT derives
its inspiration from American civil rights traditions and nationalist movements that were
led by Martin Luther King, Jr., W.E.B. Du Bois, Rosa Parks, Cesar Chavez, Malcolm X,
and the Black Panthers. CRT scholars consistently refer to these individuals and the
groups they represented in their writings (Delgado, 1995; West, 1993; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Bell 2002).

Defining Critical Race Theory

Delgado and Stefancic (1995) explain, “(CRT) not only tries to understand our social situation, but to change it; it sets out not only to ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies, but to transform it for the better” (p. 3). Although definitions of CRT by its scholars vary, they share many common characteristics. Critical race theorists set out to (i) challenge Eurocentric epistemologies, (ii) use race as an analytical tool, and (iii) use storytelling as a methodological tool.

CRT: A Post Structuralist Point of View?

CRT has ties to post-structuralism in its challenge to Eurocentric epistemology and questioning of dominant notions of power. CRT scholars, like post-structuralists, reject neutrality, objectivity, rationality and universality as defined by European/Modernist claims (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Crenshaw, 1995; and Delgado, 1995). One of the primary goals of CRT in education is to dismantle prevailing Eurocentric notions of fairness, meritocracy, colorblindness, and neutrality (Parker, Deyhle, & Villenas; 1999). Eurocentric views interpret the world in terms of European values and perspectives with the belief that these views are superior. CRT scholars write in contrast to these views. For example, Matusda (1995) explains that Hawaiians, Japanese-Americans, Chicanos, black slaves and Chinese railroad workers have all been victims of the hardest, most dangerous and least compensated work. While the dominant group can sympathize with these oppressed group’s experiences, it cannot understand
their oppressive hardships because the dominant group does not have historical connections to those experiences. By addressing the views of the oppressed, the Eurocentric views do not dominate the conversation and the oppressed are given a voice. Matusda and other CRT scholars demonstrate that race is the primary element of the oppressed. Within this argument, CRT scholars use race as an analytical tool.

Race as an Analytical Tool

Critical race theorists use race as an analytical tool arguing that race and ethnicity are the primary determining factors that affect a person’s status in American society. Carter G. Woodson was one of the first scholars to acknowledge this in 1933 in his book *The Mis-Education of the Negro,* and several CRT scholars refer to Woodson’s work in their research (Bell, 1992; Delgado, 1995; Williams, 1998; West 1993). It is important to note that the oppressive acts toward people of color in these writings are based primarily on their race. Critical race theorists are linked together by their belief in the need to analyze race and racism from within a historical context. They reject racism as being socioeconomic, and view it instead as a “normalized” part of society. The term “normalized,” means that discrimination based on a person’s race has become a way of life for the dominant culture and an accepted and unquestioned aspect of societal norms.

CRT scholars believe that race, used as an analytical tool (rather than a biological or socially constructed category used to compare and contrast social conditions), can deepen the analysis of educational barriers for people of color (Sleeter, 2002). There are many examples of using race as an analytical tool within CRT. Critical race theorists utilize methods such as storytelling and counterstorytelling to portray the lived
experiences of students (Delgado, 1995). Ladson-Billings (1995) discusses how critical race theorists depart from mainstream legal scholarship by using these methods to “analyze the myths, presuppositions, and received wisdoms that make up the common culture about race and that invariably render blacks and other minorities one-down” (p. 215).

One of the most noted methods of counterstorytelling is the book Race Matters, written by Cornel West. West discusses issues ranging from affirmative action to strained relations within and between minority groups. Throughout the book, he places race in the center of each story, and challenges Eurocentric views while analyzing events through the lens of critical race theory. The stories that he tells are from the points of view of the oppressed, and the dominant voice is weakened. Another scholar, Derrick Bell (1992), is renowned for using the counterstorytelling technique, as in his book, Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism. In this book, Bell uses a range of stories from amusing to shocking to discuss and challenge racism in society. As another example, Patricia Williams (1998) in her book, Seeing a Colorblind Future, uses both storytelling and counterstorytelling as she draws on personal experiences and slave narratives to explore living in a so-called “color-blind” society.

The storytelling method allows the scholar to step outside of the realm of formal reporting and provide literary and narrative effects to give victims of discrimination and oppression a voice. The counterstorytelling method aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones that are held by the majority. Delgado (2001) explains that attorneys and teachers of clinical law use storytelling and counterstorytelling for the persuasion of understanding certain cases. He goes on to
explain, "Stories also serve a powerful psychic function for minority communities. Many victims of racial discrimination suffer in silence, or blame themselves for their predicaments. Stories can give them voice and reveal that others have similar experience" (p. 43). The primary goals of storytelling and counterstorytelling are to branch the worlds of people of color with those who are unfamiliar with their experiences. Delgado and Stefancic (2002) state, "Critical race theorists deploy stories and narratives as a means of building cohesion with minority groups and shattering the mindset created by the stories of the dominant group" (p. 91). By overcoming the barrier of formal writing and offering a dislodge version that is rooted in a person’s experience through this methodology, the voices of the oppressed people are heard.

Critiques of Critical Race Theory

As with all theories, critical race theory has those who resist it. These individuals are both White and people of color. Some of the areas that critics focus on include the following issues: the role of ethnicity in CRT scholarship, the issues of nonwhite scholars relating to experiences and research of people of color, and the storytelling methodological tool.

The first issue raised is the role of ethnicity in CRT scholarship. Kennedy (1989) focuses his critique on three CRT scholars in particular - Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado and Mari Matusda - and questions whether “these scholars have any particular claim to expertise simply by virtue of who they are” (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). Kennedy argues that minority scholars have experienced racial oppressions like all people of color in the world. However, while these experiences cause them to view the world with a
different perspective from that of white scholars, this does not make them more of an expert. He feels that if a person is from a particular ethnic group, he/she does not obtain an expertise status about that group. Thus, white scholars can also write and understand issues regarding people of color. In contrast to Kennedy, Hall (1999) says, “There are reasons to be suspicious of white philosophers (male and female) who are suddenly proclaiming an interest in critical race theory. Often it seems as if some of these white people have developed specializations in critical race theory overnight, as if one could claim competency in this area after reading a couple of recommended books” (p. 2). The debate over scholars’ experiences, perspectives and expertise rage on in CRT, as in other arenas, such as feminist and disability studies because these theories are specific to race, gender and ability. However, CRT scholars, like Kennedy, do not discourage white scholars from using critical race theory. In fact, as mentioned earlier, Alan Freeman, a Caucasian, was an essential scholar and founding father of the CRT movement. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) explain, “The ‘voice of color,’ as it is termed, seems to imply that critical race theorists have a deeper understanding of certain issues than their white counterparts…This issue of ‘standing’ (who has the right to redress a grievance) usually comes into play when white scholars talk and write about racial encounters or other subjects outside their experience” (p. 92). CRT scholars respond that while shared experiences of being a minority is essential when using race as an analytical tool, CRT is not limited to people of color (Bell, 1976; Matusda, 1987; Espinoza, 1990; Delgado, 1995).

Another criticism of CRT is its use of the storytelling method. CRT scholars believe that the stories being told about people of color will bridge the gap between their
Farber and Sherry (1997), and a few other mainstream scholars, quarrel with this premise. These critics charge that storytelling is a distortion of public discourse (Posner, 1997). These scholars imply that storytelling is one-sided and intentionally atypical to attract the attention and arouse sympathy of the audience. They feel that the stories give the impression that the experience is typical, although it could be one among millions. Another argument from this group is that storytelling lacks analytical rigor. They argue that the point of the story is left open to interpretation and therefore there is no true foundation to complete the analysis. Farber and Sherry maintain, "if we wish a society to have a conversation about issues of race and gender, unadorned stories may be too ambiguous in their implications to provide a basis for further dialogue" (p. 86). Delgado and Stefancic (2001) counter the argument and explain, "legal storytelling and narrative analysis are clear-cut advances that the movement can claim" (p. 39). These advances can open a window into ignored or alternative realities for members of the dominant racial group who cannot easily grasp what it is like to be nonwhite (Du Bois, 1929; and Bell, 1987). These advances also allow CRT scholars to challenge and mock the normal beliefs in society. Often counter stories are radical views of the effects of racism on people of color in the world, and they use fiction to draw audience’s attention and make a point. Finally, these advances give voice to minority communities (West, 1982; Williams, 1998; and Bell, 2002), for by using storytelling minorities’ experiences are highlighted in American society.
Connecting the Dots: Critical Race Theory and Education

While looking through the lens of critical race theory, issues are raised about how the dominant Eurocentric culture affects the way African-American students are perceived and treated in public schools (Delpit, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Bell, 1987; West, 1993; Delgado, 1995; Crenshaw, 1995; Williams, 1998; and Irvine, 2003). Using CRT exposes issues of speech, language and power, and the rain of insults and name calling that African-American students face on a daily basis. In addition, critical race theory has implications for exploring racism in education through multicultural education, critical multiculturalism, anti-racist and culturally responsive pedagogies.

Today, numerous scholars are writing, researching and implementing critical race theory within multicultural education both at K-12 and post secondary levels (Sleeter 2001). In addition, special journal issues on CRT in education have appeared in *Multicultural Perspectives, 2003; Qualitative Inquiry, 2002; and Equity and Excellence in Education, 2002*.

CRT and multicultural education focus on particular groups that have been the target of racism in America. There is no hidden agenda regarding the particular groups that CRT scholars focus on in their writings and research. The focus is on people of color and minorities who have historical experiences with racism and oppression. “Critical race theory aims to reexamine the terms by which race and racism have been negotiated in American consciousness, and to recover and revitalize the radical tradition or race-consciousness among African-Americans and other peoples of color” (Delgado, 1995, p. xiv).
Proponents of both CRT and multicultural education can offer substantial evidence for racial biases and discrimination in schools. The fact that both derived from the Civil Rights Movement with intentions of addressing equality and equity in America is evidence that they have some roots in common with one another. According to Sleeter (2001), “Multicultural research conducted within a CRT framework might offer a way to understand and analyze the multiple identities and knowledge of people of color without essentializing their various experiences (p. 17). Cornel West and Derrick Bell have been strongly influenced by John Dewey; a proponent of progressive pedagogy paved the way for immigrants and minorities within the educational spectrum acknowledging that experience is a factor in educational development. As CRT scholars, both West and Bell focus on race and the experience of race, and the vital role these factors play in the learning and social development of children in schools. Bell (1995) explains, “Blacks must provide an enforcement mechanism that will give educational content to the constitutional right recognized in Brown” (p. 18). The Brown decision recognized that all children regardless of ethnicity should have equal access to public education. With this in mind, both scholars point to the significance of race in education and the importance of raising it as an issue in the classroom and in curricula. Critical race theory as a theoretical framework will empower the analysis of identity and intersectionality of race, gender and class regarding the experiences of African-American students and how these factors affect them socially, emotionally, and academically.
Chapter IV

METHODOLOGY

“There is a common theme: the ways in which stories – and myths, and diaries, and histories – give shape and expression to what would otherwise be untold about “our lives.”

(Maxine Greene)

PHASE I (Pilot Study)

Phase I of this study is the preliminary data collection (pilot study) conducted to identify key issues among African-American military students in Hawaii public schools to investigate in my dissertation research. I sought participants for Phase I based on the following criteria sampling: Identified as African-American by school ethnicity report, student in a military impacted school, and military dependent. Preliminary data were collected from February 19, 2003 – April 26, 2003. Focus group interviews were conducted in eight military impacted schools (schools with large military student populations) in Oahu, Hawaii, with the participants also responding in writing to a questionnaire. These schools were: Mokapu Elementary, Pearl Harbor Elementary, Pearl Harbor Kai Elementary, Kailua Intermediate Elementary, Kapolei Intermediate, Kalaheo High School, Mililani High School and Radford High School. Individual interviews were also conducted with some of the students.
Methods of Data Collection

Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews allowed the group of participants to discuss, form opinions, and build upon responses of one another. Nineteen focus group interviews with 115 African-American military student participants were conducted. The students were both male and female from grades 4-12. There were 115 students interviewed during a six-month preliminary data collection period: 39 elementary students (grades 4-6), 19 intermediate students (grades 7-8), and 57 high school students (grades 9-12). There were 6-8 participants in each focus group interview session. Each child, although some were mixed with African-American, was identified by his/her parents as African-American students on the schools’ ethnicity reports, which were obtained from each individual school setting and/or the Hawaii Department of Education. The following are pseudonyms in order to maintain the confidentiality of the school sites.

1. Miracle - Elementary – African-American students grades 4-6, interviewed: 17.
2. Parker Elementary – African-American students grades 4-6, interviewed: 15.
3. Precise Elementary – African-American students grades 4-6, interviewed: 14.
The interview sessions were broken into gender groups. The students in each session were combined and ages ranged from 8-11 years old (4-6 grade elementary), 12-14 years old (7-8 grade intermediate), and 14-18 years old (9-12 grade high school). There were 6-10 participants in each group. Participants were asked to individually respond to a particular set of questions asked one at a time. As a group, the participants were encouraged to discuss the same questions or topics that arose from individual responses. The focus group interview protocol was used in each session (see Appendix A). The interviews were audio and visually recorded.

Limitations with the focus group interviews included: some individuals dominated the conversation and others strayed from the topic; some peers may have agreed with others because they wanted approval and some may have held back information. The sessions were tape recorded, so I had to make sure that the participants stated their names, took turns talking, and stayed on the topic, otherwise transcribing would have been difficult when reconstructing the interview session.

**Questionnaire**

Prior to and immediately after the focus group interview sessions, I used a questionnaire for data collection and all participants were asked to write their responses (see Appendix B, Appendix C). The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather information about each individual participant’s age, grade, personal perceptions about being an African-American military student in Hawaii, and the military background of his/her parents (branch of service, number of years in Hawaii, other places they have lived, etc.). One of the drawbacks of questionnaire data was that participants may have
found some questions to be vague or confusing, thus they may not have interpreted the questions in the same way as I intended.

*Individual Interviews*

From these 115 student participants, nine students (six females and three males) contacted me by phone with questions and interest in the study and agreed (with parental consent) to individual interviews. In addition to the student interviews, three African-American principals and five African-American teachers were interviewed. For validity purposes, I must mention that there are only three African-American principals in the state of Hawaii (all of whom were interviewed) and African-American teachers make up less than two percent of the teacher population (Hawaii Department of Education Fact Sheet, 2003). Only one interview was conducted with each participant. These interviews were conducted to get more in-depth perceptions of African-American military students in the public school setting from a local and an African-American perspective. All of the individual interviews used the interview protocol (see Appendix D). The interviews lasted approximately 30-45 minutes. They were recorded and transcribed immediately afterward.

*Principals:*

I conducted individual formal interviews with three African-American principals, two from the selected sites and one in Maui. In addition to the African-American principals, the principals at all other participating sites met with me to discuss issues of racism and transiency and concerns about obtaining parental consent. The principals
came from Asian, White, Hawaiian and local ethnic backgrounds. Their comments, questions, concerns and recommendations are documented in my field notes journal. The principal interviews include the local and African-American principals’ perceptions of African-American military students in Hawaii, and were helpful in developing the research questions and inquiry for Phase II (see interview protocol Appendix E).

**Teachers:**

Teacher interviews were conducted at the teachers’ schools, local restaurants, or at their residents. I met four of the teachers at the school sites when I went to conduct the focus group interviews. The fifth teacher is a parent of one of the focus group interview student participants. This teacher’s initial contact came from the permission slip that was sent home for the focus group interview. Each of the five teachers requested to be interviewed to discuss racism and their perceptions of African-American military students in their schools (see interview protocol Appendix F1).

**Parents:**

Parents had to sign and return a permission form allowing their son(s) or daughter(s) to participate (see Appendix G). As part of the permission letter, there was a request for a family interview if the parent was interested. Eleven parents contacted me from the initial permission letter. All of them agreed to family interviews. The interviews were conducted in their homes.

Limitations of the individual interviews included the following: student interviews required the presence of their parents, and the students may not have spoken
freely regarding certain topics because they were unsure how their parents would react to their responses. In addition, interviews were more time-consuming than questionnaires and this may have been perceived as an imposition to the interviewees.

Participants

Before data collection, I submitted a request to conduct research involving human participants to the University of Hawaii at Manoa Human Subjects Board. After receiving an exemption from the Board, permission was sought from the participants. Prior to the distribution of the focus group interview permission forms, a student orientation was held with the students to explain the purpose of the focus group interviews. Permission letters were given to the students and they took them home to their parents. The students were asked to return the letters to their homeroom teachers. At a later date, I collected the permission letters from the homeroom teachers and organized a time with the school principals for the focus group interview sessions. The participants' parents, teachers and the principals of the schools were notified in advance of the dates and times that I would conduct the interview sessions (see Appendix H). In addition, a letter was sent home to parents immediately after the focus group sessions reminding the parents that the interview had taken place and to contact me if they had questions or concerns about the session (see Appendix I).

PHASE II (Case Study)

Based on preliminary findings from my pilot study, I realized that African-American military students experiencing issues of racism and military transiency in
Hawaii schools is due to historical dehumanization and stereotyping based on their race, gender and class. More specifically, African-American females have a complexity of issues that are affected by self-image and personal perceptions of themselves and the local culture. For Phase II, three African-American females were chosen for a 16-month longitudinal single case study.

The sampling criteria for these three participants included: their gender, length of time they had left in Hawaii (due to high military transitions), their interests in participating, their abilities to articulate orally and in writing, their current grade, transitioning into the following school year, and the data they provided during the focus group interviews. The three students' parents showed interest in participating in the study and volunteered to participate. Data was collected from June 2003 – April 2004. These individual student and family interviews over the course of the 2003-2004 school year will address the issues relevant to this study.

Case Study Method

Case studies are broad studies of people that require researchers to come in contact with personal, historical, societal, emotional and cultural experiences of individuals and/or groups regarding specific issues and concerns within their communities. Stake (1995) states, “Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied... we could study it analytically or holistically, organically or culturally, and by mixed methods, but we concentrate, at least for the time being, on the case” (p. 122). Another definition of case study is presented as a group of cells that define a case (Ragin and Becker, 1992). There are four specific cells presented by Ragin
and Becker that include both theoretical and empirical foundations when defining and researching a case study. Use of the concept empirical in the following descriptions implies that researchers are relying upon or gaining from the experiences they observe without regard for theory or systematic processes. All good researchers care about theory, rigor and being systematic. There are four cells researchers use to identify a case study.

- **Cell 1: Cases are found.** In this cell researchers identify the case as empirically real and bounded, but specific. A researcher who approaches a case in this regard believes that empirical bounding of cases is an important part of the research process and feels the need to establish empirical boundaries in the research process in order to analyze the data (Harper, 1982).

- **Cell 2: Cases are objects.** In this cell, the researcher also views the case as empirically real and bounded. However, they are willing to accept current definitions and base findings on present research literature. They do not establish empirical boundaries in the research process. The researchers in this cell face more critiques in the field because they are exploring generic processes across different types of empirical units (Vaughan, 1983).

- **Cell 3: Cases are made.** Researchers in this quadrant see cases as specific theoretical constructs. The cases do not need to be empirical nor given, and the empirical data that arises from the cases arises as the case research develops. At the beginning of the case it may not be clear if the case will or will not be discerned. However, Ragin and Becker (1992) point out “Interaction between ideas and evidence results in progressive refinement of the case conceived as a
theoretical construct” (p. 10). When a case is constructed, the empirical limits are not determined (Wieviroka, 1988).

- **Cell 4: Cases as conventions.** In this final quadrant, researchers see cases as general theoretical constructs, but they are viewed as products from collective scholarly works and data. These types of case studies may shift theoretically over time based on the social practice and social science of the time (Platt, 1984).

In addition to this in-depth analysis of case study research, it is important to include a definition by Stake (1995), which concludes:

“A case study is expected to catch the complexity of a single case. The single leaf, even a single toothpick, has unique complexities – but rarely will we care enough to submit it to case study. We study a case when it itself is of very special interest. We look for detail of interaction with its context. Case study is the study of the particularly and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi).

A single case study focuses on detailed examinations that take place in one particular setting, with one specific subject, and investigating one particular event. However, there can be two or more participants and locations for gathering the data (Bogdan and Biklen 1998). In addition to this, single case studies are conducted by both novice and experienced researchers because they require less rigor than multi-site and multi-subject studies (Scott, 1965).

For the purpose of my study, I conducted a single case study, at multiple locations and conducted a comparative analysis of the data collected. This study is not attempting to provide a representative sample to analyze the data collection. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) explain that, “Many qualitative researchers employ...purposive, and not random, sampling methods. They seek out groups, settings and individuals where...the processes being studied are most likely to occur. (p. 202). Thus, the sampling in my study involves
a variety of methods and an in-depth analysis of the experiences and perceptions of the individual participants.

Phenomenology

The methodology of this study is a phenomenological case study involving the stories of three African-American female students told from their perspectives, and their parents’ and teachers’ perceptions of them. Pinar and Reynolds (1992) explain that phenomenology communicates a story in which the elements of an experience are observable. Phenomenology is aimed toward the interpretive understandings and description of experiences from the points of view of the individual’s experiences (Tesch, 1987). According to Grumet (1992), phenomenology reminds us to be attuned to specific and actual situations and to listen to the story, how it is spoken, heard and answered, and from this educators and researchers can “reveal and transform the bonds that constrain the human spirit” (p. 28). This is consistent with the use of storytelling, family histories, and parables used in critical race theory (Berry, 2002). This study uses the lens of critical race theory and phenomenological case study methodology to analyze and interpret the experiences of African-American students in Hawaii public schools.

Berry (2002) points out that a phenomenological approach is one characterized by multiple perspectives (students, teachers, parents, administrators). Eyring (1998) explains, “Instead of the researcher choosing one angle of vision from which to view a phenomenon, there is an attempt to understand experience through the lenses of those describing the experience – while recognizing one’s own perspective and the influence of that perspective” (141). She concludes that through this approach, there is an attempt to
see experience in new ways while searching for new depth or richness in understanding human experience.

**Narrative Inquiry**

The case of each female student is told and reported in narrative form. Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. Phenomenology is the methodology employed and narrative inquiry is the method used. It is the essential part of the case study because within the narrative the stories and experiences of the participants are revealed. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state:

"It (narrative inquiry) is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction within milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in this same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people’s lives, both individual and social. Simply stated, narrative inquiry is stories lived and told" (p. 20).

As a means for inquiry, narratives reveal cultural and social patterns through the perceptions of individual experiences. Narrative inquiry is a qualitative approach that does not follow formal interview protocol. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) explain that there are many ways to collect and report data in qualitative research and it is up to the researcher “to make certain that [his or her] style reflects [their] intent in writing, the audience for whom the piece is intended, and most importantly, what [the researcher] wants to convey” (198). In this study, narrative inquiry, allows the voices of African-American female military dependent’s to be heard.

In the book, *The Narrative Study of Lives*, Josselson and Lieblich (1993) detail the reconstruction of life stories through interviewing, thus making the stories the center of
narrative analysis. Interpreting stories and, more specifically, the content of them is the central component of narrative analysis. Josselson and Lieblich (1993) conclude, “The relationship between life and story can be characterized as interpretive. A story interprets experiences; it makes their meaning explicit” (p. 18). Narrative inquiry reconstructs people’s life histories and stories. As discussed in chapter three, composites, storytelling and counterstorytelling are three methods of writing a narrative inquiry that are prevalent in critical race theory. In academic settings, stories are sometimes considered less acceptable than a more formal paper (Farber and Sherry, 1997).

Mainstream academia often questions the research in education and other social science fields, when narrative storytelling methods are used to present the data. However, Bogdan and Biklen (1998) point out “A good qualitative paper is well documented with description taken from the data to illustrate and substantiate the assertions made. There are no formal conventions used to establish truth in a qualitative research paper. [The researcher’s] task is to convince the reader of the plausibility of [their] presentation” (196). They go on to explain stories incorporate dialogue and description directly into the narrative and the data is incorporated directly into the text. To the reader it appears that the case study is a story. Eyring (1998) explains that because experience is complex, “The researcher must fluidly shift his or her focus from the experience itself, to the ground shaping of the experience, and then back to the experience” (141).

**Phase II - Participants**

In a phenomenological study, the participants may be located at a single site, although they need not be. However, it is essential that the participants be individuals
who have experienced the phenomenon being explored or have common lived experiences, and can articulate their conscious experiences (Creswell, 1998). The participants in this study were all African-American military dependent students, from Navy, Marine, Army and Air Force families, enrolled in large military-impacted schools on the island of Oahu, Hawaii. “Military-impacted” is defined as a school with high populations of students whose parents or guardians are in the military. The students at these schools make up 70 percent or more of the total student population. The schools are on or near a military base. Kinship Intermediate School is the only school that is not military-impacted. However, the majority of African-Americans at this particular school are dependents of retired military members and have common lived experiences with the other participants.

Student Backgrounds:

The following students were initially contacted in Phase I of this research. The students and their families participated in individual and family interviews. Due to the complexity of their experiences, and differences in personalities, physical appearances, abilities and disabilities, academic achievements, and their social and academic interactions with peers, family and teachers, I identified and recruited these students to also participate in Phase II (Case Study) of this study, involving in-depth interviews over the course of 16 months. Permission letters were sent to each student’s family along with a timeline for scheduled interviews (see Appendix J).
1. **Symone:** I met Symone when she was a 6\textsuperscript{th} grader at an elementary located on a military instillation on February 26, 2003, and I have followed her transition into the 7\textsuperscript{th} grade at local intermediate school. Symone is a singer and performed for the Black History Awards Dinner on Marine Corps Base Hawaii in 2003 and 2004. Symone has a dark complexion and a voluptuous body for her age. She has lived in Hawaii for eighteen months and has encountered racism from her peers and teachers in both elementary and middle school. She is an only child. Her mother is a full-time dental assistant student, and her father is a Staff Sergeant, who has been in the Marine Corps for 16 years. He was deployed for six months during the past year, and has left for weeks at a time throughout the other months that the family has been in Hawaii.

2. **Valerie:** I met Valerie when she was an 8\textsuperscript{th} grader at a local intermediate school on March 3, 2003, and I have followed her transition into the 9\textsuperscript{th} grade at a local high school in the same area. Valerie has a light brown complexion, wears glasses, and is slightly over-weight. She is a violinist and very active in the school band and the Hawaii Symphony for the Youth. She plans to continue her commitment to the band and orchestra through high school. She has received awards for violin and band performances. In addition, she is active in other school activities and associates with the local students, one of which is her best friend. Her father is a retired Navy Chief who still works for the military as a contractor. Her mother is an administrative enrollment assistant at Wayland University Community College. Valerie is the middle sibling, and has one sister and one
brother. She has lived in Hawaii for seven years. Her family plans to return to the mainland in 2005.

3. **Taylour:** I met Taylour when she was a 7th grader at a local intermediate school March 24, 2003 and I have followed her transition into the 8th grade at the same school. Taylour has albinism and she has been declared legally blind in both eyes. Her skin is as white as snow and she wears her blond hair in braids. As an African-American female living in a “white” body, Taylour is confronting issues regarding her race, identity and abilities in school. Taylour is a seamstress and part owner of the family business “Taylour Made Embroidery.” She is a black belt in Karate and an active member in the National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation. Taylour is the youngest of three siblings; she has two brothers, both of whom attend military academies on the mainland. Her parents are in the military. Her mother is a retired Navy Chief; however, she is in the Navy reserve and works for the Navy Reserve Center on Pearl Harbor Navy Base. Her father is a First Sergeant and has been a Marine for 22 years. This is the second tour to Hawaii for the Smith family; they lived here in 1998 and currently have been here since 2001. They have extended their stay until 2006.

**Teachers and Principals:**

In order to get the academic and social perspectives of the students’ daily lives, a teacher for each student was identified and interviewed for the study. The students were
asked to choose a teacher that they felt knew them the best. Teachers were actively involved in the students’ education and aware of their social interactions in school. In addition, I conducted interviews with the principals and African-American teachers at the participants’ schools. The principals were interviewed initially in Phase I, but I re-visited specific issues regarding the participants with them in Phase II. Three students, six parents, and three teachers participated in this phase.

Phase II - Data Collection

Phenomenological research explores the personal perceptions of a person’s world through in-depth, open-ended interviews (Polkinghorne, 1989; Tesch, 1987, Berry 2003). Data sources such as observations, personal journals, and specific tasks are used in phenomenological research (Tesch, 1987). The range of methods used in case study research include ethnography and observation, individual and focus group interviews, field notes, personal journals, surveys and questionnaires. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) define methods as “a term that refers to the specific technique you use...the more technical aspects of the research” (p. 31). They go on to explain that in good research, methods are consistent with the logic that exists in the methodology. Interviewing is the primary method of this case study research.

Patton (2002) states that, “Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspectives of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (p. 341). He goes on to explain that researchers interview to find out what is in or on another person’s mind in order to gather information and write their story. Although the
interview is the most prevalent in phenomenological and case study research, it is not the only way to gather data (Tesch, 1987; Patton, 2002).

**Individual Interviews**

Three students, six parents, and three teachers were interviewed separately in Phase II. The interviews conducted with the students and parents were in-depth and conducted over a 16-month period of time. All of the individual interviews used the interview protocol (see Appendix K). The purpose of the individual interviews was to gain insights about the participants’ experiences and perceptions. The interviews lasted approximately 30-45 minutes; they were recorded and transcribed immediately. The interviews were conducted in both the home and school settings, and the students were observed in both settings on three separate occasions. The initial student and parent contacts occurred in August 2003, midpoint January 2004, and final interviews at the end of the school year in April 2004. The research ended in April because the families were leaving Hawaii. However, the interviews were not limited to three, and parents contacted me as issues and concerns arose. In addition all three students participated in one focus group interview that took place in February. They were interviewed on the first day of school of the new school year as well.

**Parent Interviews**

The purpose of the parental interviews was to gain: (1) parents’ perceptions of their child’s social and educational experiences; (2) parent’s insights regarding their child’s cultural history; and (3) about the roles parents play in relation to their children’s
school experiences. A parental protocol was designed to elicit in-depth responses from parents (see Appendix G). All parents were interviewed at the beginning, mid-point and end of the school year and follow-up interviews were conducted as necessary. Two parents contacted me for an additional interview. The parent interviews were audio-recorded.

*Teacher Interviews*

The purpose of the teacher interviews was to gain teachers' perceptions of the students' social and academic strengths, weaknesses, performance, learning preferences and interactions in school. The student participants chose the teachers for the interviews in Phase II. They stated that these were their favorite teachers who “understood them the best.” The teacher interviews followed a designed protocol (see Appendix F2). When necessary, a follow-up interview was conducted to clarify responses. The teacher interviews were audio-recorded.

*Personal Journals*

The students' personal journals were used to capture their reflections on their experiences during the 2003-2004 school year. These structured (see Appendix ?) and unstructured entries include reflections on their first day of school, any events and interactions throughout the school year, what it is like to be an African-American student in Hawaii, their perceptions of their teachers, principal and other students, their curriculum, their last day of school and any other experiences they would like to reflect
upon. They were not limited to the topics listed here, but were encouraged to write and reflect at any time during the year.

*Personal Autobiography*

In addition to the personal journal, the students were asked to write a personal autobiography. The purpose of the autobiography was to engage the participants into thinking about their experiences of being an African-American female.

*Observations*

Each participant was observed at school three times, at home four-to-seven times, and three times during social activities over the course of the study. During the year I often dropped in on the family and was invited to dinner. The purpose of the observations was to gain insight into participants’ interactions with their peers, parents, and with their teacher. I observed behaviors and tried to find meaning attached to the behaviors. The typical home or school visit lasted from 1-2 hours (Appendix L).

**Phase I & Phase II - Data Analysis**

Analyzing the data is the most challenging part of the research process for first time researchers (Bogdan and Biklen 1998, Patton 2002, Hatch 2002). The analysis was initiated immediately after data collection began. This process entailed organizing and systematically arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials that had been gathered during the research process. Hatch (2002) discusses how data analysis is systematic with regard to searching for meaning, and is a way to process qualitative data.
in order for others to read and understand the study. He goes on to say, “Analysis means organizing and interrogating data in ways that allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theory. It often involves synthesis, evaluation, interpretation, categorization, hypothesizing, comparison, and pattern finding. It always involves what Wolcott calls “mind work” (p. 148). In addition, Hatch provides five models of qualitative data analysis that he labels as typological, inductive, interpretive, political, and polyvocal. Similar models are used by other scholars to discuss data analysis (Stake, 1995; Silverman, 2001; and Patton, 2002). For purposes of my study, I will focus on typological, inductive and interpretive analysis.

Typological analysis refers to the division of the data into groups and categories. Once categorized, the data can be read and interpreted. Typology in this model means that the researcher will “code” the data. Patton (2002) points out “Developing some manageable classification or coding scheme is the first step in analysis. Without classification, there is chaos and confusion” (p. 463). Topics and categories can range from gender, age, and ethnicity to relationships, patterns and themes. During the analysis, researchers may write the topics as one-sentence generalizations and the select data excerpts to support them (Hatch 2002). Although this model starts deductively, it depends on inductive thinking with each step. Appropriate methods for validating studies based largely or entirely upon qualitative data include inductive analysis because it begins with observations and builds toward general patterns (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998; and Silverman, 2001).
Qualitative research is not guided by the development of hypotheses; it rests in grounded theory, the most widely known inductive approach. Grounded theory is meant to build theory instead of testing it. In addition, it provides researchers with analytical tools for handling large amounts of data drives analysts to consider other definitions of phenomenon, and clarifies that the concepts are the building blocks of the study. Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe the theory as “discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis” (p. 23). Grounded theory uses inductive analysis which includes the following components: reading the data and identifying frames of analysis; creating domains based on semantic relationships with the frames; assigning the frames a code; rereading the data and keeping record of where relationships are found; deciding if the domains are supported by the data and searching for examples; completing the analysis of the domains; searching for themes; creating a master outline expressing relationships within and among domains; and selecting data excerpts to support the elements (Hatch 2002). Within each step, the process of interpretation is present.

Interpretation is a defining element of, and essential to all qualitative research, because at all stages of the research process interpretation permeates everything that is done (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Silverman, 2001; Hatch, 2002; and Patton, 2002). Interpretation analysis requires the researcher to work back and forth from data to story while using his/her perceptions and understandings of the evidence. “Symbolic interaction, rather than internal drives, personality traits, unconscious motives, needs, socioeconomic status, role obligations, cultural prescriptions, social-control mechanisms, or the physical environment becomes
the conceptual paradigm” (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998; p. 26). The interpretation supports the theory, issues and themes within the data.

During the management stage, the researcher organizes the data (Patton 2002). For this study, I used Windows Excel Spreadsheets to organize and record text data that I transferred from my hand-written field notes and transcribed interview scripts. I went through interviews and field notes and color-coded themes using a variety of color markers and color index cards. After organizing and converting the data, I made notes and developed questions for follow-up interviews. After reading, rereading and noting the data, I identified themes that emerged. I coded, described, classified and interpreted each theme using constant comparative method to integrate the data. Then I described in detail the meaning of the lived experience of each participant.

Constant comparative method analysis and data collection occur in a pulsating fashion. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) explain that during this method the following steps occur: “first the interview, then the analysis and theory development, another interview, and then more analysis, and so on – until the research is completed” (66). The constant comparative method is a research design for multi-data sources. Glaser (1978) points out the steps in the constant comparative method as follows; (1) Begin data collection; (2) Identify key issues and themes that become categories of focus; (3) Collect data that provided many incidents of categories of focus; (4) Write about the categories, describe them and account for all incidents while continuing to search for new incidents; (5) Work with the data to discover social processes and relationships; (6) Engage in sampling, coding, and writing the analysis on the core categories (Bogdan and Biklen, p. 67). Coding categories were used to organize data.
Bogdan and Biklen (1998) state that a coding system involves searching through data for regularities and patterns, jotting down coding categories as you collect data for future use, and developing a list of coding categories after data is collected are crucial steps in data analysis. For this study, the data was coded for specific responses, key words and phrases, as well as for similarities and differences that emerge in the data. The analysis took into consideration role group, age group, ethnicity, gender, length of time in Hawaii, and individual circumstances. Coding categories included: age; participants' school geographical location; number of years in Hawaii; parent's military status, - class, branch, and number of times deployed during the study-; peer relationships; teacher relationships; social activities; encounters with racism, name-calling and stereotyping; academic achievement; and parental involvement.

In this study the initial data collection occurred in Phase I (pilot study). The data from the pilot study was analyzed and themes arose to support my theory. From the pilot study, additional data and themes emerged Phase II (case study). During the process the data was being analyzed, coded and as themes arose, I exhausted the dimensions of the categories. The formal analysis of the study began early in the study and was nearly complete by the end of the data collection (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Bogdan and Biklen, 1998).

Trustworthiness of the Data

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability are criteria used to verify trustworthiness of data in qualitative research (Patton, 1995 and 2002). To establish good credibility, the researcher must go over the data numerous times to see if
the constructs, categories, explanations and interpretations are accurate and truly reflect the phenomena. Credibility was verified in this study by providing for long-term engagement, persistent observation, triangulation and validity check. Providing a rich description of each participant’s story established transferability. Dependability was established through overlapping methods. For example, in addition to individual interviews, personal journals and an autobiography were used to get in-depth descriptions and experiences of the girls. An audit trail consisting of transcripts, audio recordings, videotapes, field notes, and documents established conformability.

This research study incorporated the notion of data and method triangulation. Patton (2002) describes four types of triangulation: data, investigator, theory, and methodological. Data triangulation uses a variety of data sources. Investigator triangulation uses several researchers and evaluators. Theory triangulation uses multiple perspectives to determine the data and methodological triangulation uses multiple methods to study a single problem or program. Triangulation for this study was established using method and data. Methodological triangulation was established by using multiple data collection methods: focus group and individual interviews, questionnaires, personal journals, student autobiographies, and observations. Data triangulation was established by data from the interviews, field notes and observations, student journals and the students’ written autobiographies. Triangulation enhances the scope, density, and clarity of constructs developed during the course of the research process, helps eliminate biases, and prevents the researcher from accepting too readily the validity of first impressions (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Triangulation strengthens the reliability, validity and design of the study (Patton, 2002).
I conducted participant validity checks with each African-American female student, their parents and the three teachers in Phase II, as well as the principals from Phase I when questions and clarity issues arose to ensure trustworthiness of the data (Moustakas, 1994). The participants were given a summary of their interview session and the opportunity to provide additional support to responses and to clarify the responses. The pilot study helped determine the usefulness of the interview questions in each interview protocol.
Chapter V

PHASE I (PILOT STUDY)
COMPOSITE COUNTERSTORYTELLING

Memoirs of African-American Military Students

“Each of us, from childhood, weaves his own intricate web of self-image. These images form the beliefs born in response to every thought and experience, every humiliation and triumph, every defeat and victory.”

(Dennis Kimbro)

In this chapter, the experiences and perceptions of 115 African-American military students, three African-American principals, five African-American teachers and eleven African-American parents are re-told through counterstorytelling. Counterstorytelling is “writing that aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority” (Delgado and Stefancic; 2002, p. 144). The events, experiences, and participants’ perceptions have been developed into a composite portrait of one African-American family’s experiences in Hawaii and the public school system. The people in the story are not “real” but instead composites and are an intentional and exaggerated blending of people and places. The thoughts, feelings, and incidents experienced by the individuals in this story are taken directly from the data collected in the interviews and surveys during the pilot study. By presenting the data in this exaggerated manner, in which one family has a number of experiences with racism and military transiency into Hawaii, the reader is challenged, displaced and forced to see the role of African-American military students in Hawaii public schools. Many researchers have stated that the acknowledgment that racism exists in Hawaii is hidden within the “spirit of aloha” (Lee, 1948; Blair, 1998; Kreifels, Kubota, and Tighe, 1999; Takara, 2001). However, it becomes evident from the perceptions and experiences of African-American military students that the situation is otherwise.
The following data was collected during Phase I (Pilot Study) and is provided as a background for the counterstorytelling that follows.

**Issues of Racism:** Out of 115 student participants, 99 (86%) feel they have experienced racism in public school, 97 (84%) have been called a nigger, 115 (100%) have experienced other racial slurs and negative stereotyping by teachers, students and administrators, and 109 (94%) feel that the incidents go without acknowledgement and reprimands from the teachers and administrators. The perceptions of these acts come from a variety of ethnicities including Hawaiian, part Hawaiian, Filipino, Samoan, White and Asian. Throughout the paper I use “local” to refer to members of Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian ethnic groups who have over the years made Hawaii their permanent home.

**Issues in School:** Of the 115 student participants, 109 (94%) felt their was a lack of African-American teachers, principals and role models in the school. 115 noted that there is a lack of African-American culture and history in the curriculum, and 109 (94%) were concerned that Black History Month was not acknowledged in school.

**Issues of Transiency:** Most of the elementary and intermediate students have lived in three-to-five other states and/or countries and most high school students have lived in five-ten other states and/or countries. 97 of the 115 (84%) students will be leaving the island in the next three-to-six months. 115 feel that the hardest part of the transition is leaving old friends, making new friends, fitting in at their new school and being accepted by their teachers. 110 (96%) stated that they are ready to leave Hawaii because it is not what they thought it was going to be; they were shocked by racism and they feel that their culture does not exist here.

For a brief second, as William and Marsha Wilkington walked through the halls of their new school, they thought that they had landed in the southern part of the United States. They had heard most of these slurs before, and seen them in graffiti, in other schools they had attended on the mainland. When they were overseas, they had a break from the stereotypes and slurs especially in Germany, Japan, Okinawa and Spain. Now they were back in America. It was their first time in Hawaii and the negative attitudes toward African-Americans were alive once again. For the past 15 years, they had lived in four different countries and five different states. Mr. Wilkington, their father, was a Marine currently stationed at a base on Oahu, and Mrs. Wilkington, their mother, was a stay at home mother, who volunteered in the school system. William, 17 years old and in the 12th grade, and Marsha, 15 years old and in the 9th grade, were about to get a new dose of racism while in the most culturally diverse state in America.

The family had heard many rumors about Hawaii. For example, they heard that the school system was not that good, the books were old and out dated, the buildings were dirty and dusty with red clay dirt, and fans blew in the classrooms while the
teachers tried to teach. There were very few African-American teachers and principals in the schools and the curriculum was said to be at least ten years behind the mainland curriculum. Mr. and Mrs. Wilkington were told to put their kids in private school, if they could afford it. Hawaii’s educational system had a bad reputation among military families transferring to the islands.

Although there were negative rumors about the schools, there were also good rumors about coming to Hawaii. The good rumors included phrases like: “aloha,” “beautiful scenery and sunny weather,” “beautiful water and friendly people,” and “you will be in paradise.” But no one warned this African-American family about the stereotypes and slurs that were hurled at them from all directions; coming from all types of people varying in age, gender, social class, and ethnicity. The family was shocked as William and Marsha received the largest doses of racism in school. How could racism be so blatant in paradise?

William’s Memoir...

“I was challenged the first day of school, not by my teachers academically, but by my peers socially. Being an African-American male in Hawaii and a military dependent brought many conflicts. My friends and I (all black) were walking down the hallway on my first day of school. A group of local guys started calling us names and saying things like: “You military brats make us sick, you think you can run this school?” “Why do you black people look so mean, are you gangsters? Do you want to fight us on our turf?” Man, I was mad, but I kept walking. I couldn’t believe this. Was this aloha or the south? They didn’t care about where we came from; they didn’t want to know our names or
anything else. But the local girls seemed to like us and I think that’s why the local guys
got so upset. One girl asked me for my phone number and told me that she would love to
get with a “brother.” Other local girls winked at me and even told the local guys to shut
up and leave my friends and I alone.

When I got to class, I told my teacher about the incident in the hallway. She looked at
me like I was crazy. She was a Japanese lady and seemed a little nervous when I
approached her. She told me not to worry and that the local boys were just kidding. I kept
thinking, “No they weren’t!” I told her that they said some really mean things to me.
Luckily they had not called me a nigger because that would have set me off. She just told
me to stop being so dramatic and it would be okay. Then she told me to take my seat.

I looked around the room and it was literally segregated. All the black students were
in one section; the white students were in another section, the Samoans and Asians each
in separate sections, and so on. At first I thought nothing about it, but then as the year
progressed, I realized that the teacher did this on purpose. When someone cracked a joke
in class, she turned to the local kids. When someone said something rude or
objectionable she turned to the black kids. When she needed an answer quickly, she
turned to the Asian and white kids and when she was angry she looked at the Samoan and
black kids. This was crazy. On top of that, she decided that she just didn’t like me. I did
all of my work, turned in all of my assignments, because my parents stayed on me at
home. I even raised my hand in class, but she refused to call on me or she treated my
answers as less important than the other students and often embarrassed me in front of
the class. For example, one week we were discussing slavery in class, so the next day I
brought in a tape of old slave spirituals. I asked the teacher if I could play the tape
because during slavery, the slave had special codes in their songs or they used the songs
for spiritual uplifting. In front of the class, she said no. She asked me why would slaves
have anything happy to sing about and she said that by playing the tape it would only
depress the real meaning behind the lesson. I tried to explain, but she told me to sit down
or leave if I continued to interrupt her class. I was angry, embarrassed and mentally tired
of trying to defend myself. I gave up and sat down.

The first quarter, for the first time in my life, I got a D in English. On the mainland I
was an A-B Honor Roll Student. I went to her and complained and she told me that I was
too opinionated. She also told me that she had not received some of my assignments (in
other words, she lost my work, because I kept my work in a binder and I recorded my
grades as I received them). I showed her the missed assignments, but she would not
change my grade. My parents finally came to the school for a conference. Once she met
my parents and realized that they were involved in my education, her attitude toward me
began to change. In fact, that D went to a B – real quick! I just can't help but think that
if my parents had not come up to the school or if I had not kept track of my grades, I
would have failed English – like most of my other friends were doing. I'm not used to this
and sometimes I feel like I'm graded on how much my teachers like me. I say how can
they like me when they don't take the time to even get to know me!

Another problem in school came from issues about credits transferring, graduation
requirements, and grading. Here I am in the 12th grade and I have to take ninth grade
Hawaiian Studies as a graduation requirement. When I started talking to my advisor and
she told me that I had to take a ninth grade Hawaiian Studies class, I laughed. I thought
she was kidding. I wanted to test out. “The rules are the rules,” she said “If you want to
graduate, you have to take this class.” Fine, I didn’t want to, not because it was Hawaiian, but because I had so many other classes in history from the mainland and hoped that they would transfer. Besides, in the Hawaiian Studies class, all we learn about are the names of Hawaiians and what Captain Cook did. Then, the teacher expects us to learn how to spell the words; it’s like taking a foreign language. I thought we were going to learn about Hawaii, and all we learn are names, dates, and facts. Where’s the history? It sucks!

I came to the conclusion that my teachers do not care about me. They don’t really want to know about my feelings or have any interest in my African-American culture. The only people we talk about in school are Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks – as if they are the only two African-Americans who did anything. As the weeks passed more and more incidents of racism and racial slurs arose. The more I told the teachers, the more they swept it under the rug. It was like they were afraid to confront racism, and they especially didn’t understand what it felt like when someone called a black person a nigger. Three of my friends have been called names by their teachers, including nigger. Each of their teachers has told them that they are dumb or ignorant. The teachers are still teaching! I look around and wish for an African-American teacher to talk to, but they are not here!

During the school year, I tried to avoid the problems with the local boys as much as I could. They really hate the military kids, and they even more hate the black military kids. All of us base kids hang together, but when it comes down to fighting or racial incidents the conflicts between local vs. military, always turns into local vs. blacks. Then came football...
One day I was at football practice. I had been at the school for about a month, and a group of local kids surrounded me and started calling me a nigger. They were the same guys who made the comments the first day of school. They pushed and shoved me. I started cussing and swinging. Coach broke us up. I was hurt pretty bad, but no one was suspended. In fact, my parents came to the school and the principal would not meet with them. They finally spoke with him by phone and he made a lot of excuses. I’m sick and tired of this place. When my time is up I will never return to Hawaii because I feel like my culture does not exist here.

If I could divide my emotions into percentages, my feelings about being an African-American military student in Hawaii would probably look something like: 25 percent of the time I feel lonely, and 15 percent of the time I feel isolated in the classrooms because I am either the only African-American in the class or one of two or three. 10 percent of the time I feel weird, freaky, or different, and 20 percent of the time I stand out because I’m Black and people often stare at me. 10 percent of the time it is hard and horrible at school dealing with these issues, and 5 percent of the time I get no respect with regard to how the teachers treat me in class. 15 percent of the time I don’t feel safe at school and I feel targeted because I’m Black and military and often the locals and Samoan kids harass me.

I feel like an endangered species because with the exception of the military bases I rarely see other African-American males in Hawaii. Outside of the relationships that I’ve formed with other athletes (blacks and others) on the team, I have limited association with other teens because I think people are afraid of me. During football, it’s different because they see me as an equal, or someone who has something in common with them.
But, just going to school and sitting in class, some of the students here don’t want to know me. Regardless of my feelings and experiences, I am proud to be an African-American male student in Hawaii or anywhere else I may live because if I lose my pride, what else will I have to keep me going and making it in life?

Being an African-American male and a military dependent student in Hawaii means HELL! It often means total isolation, no respect from other ethnicities and constant stares from people. Although I must admit that the girls love us here, their parents and the local guys would rather see us leave. This has been the biggest challenge in my life and I know that I have to work on my patience and endurance while I’m here in order to be a stronger black man and survive.

Marsha’s Memoir...

“All we talk about in school is pretty much the same stuff. Math, science, and we learn about Hawaii because a Hawaiian teacher comes in once a week. Our books are pretty old, my math book is falling apart, but I still like math the best. My teacher is boring and she expects us to sit still all day. It’s hard because I like to talk and I get in trouble a lot. So far this year the thing that has upset me the most is the fact that we did not celebrate Black History Month. I mean, it wasn’t acknowledged in any of my classes. I asked my teacher why? But, she said nothing. Then I asked the principal and she said, “Our school just doesn’t do that.” WHY NOT! It’s a month, and we celebrate other holidays and talk about a lot of white and Hawaiian people. I wish we could talk about other people too. I was determined to do something, so I asked the principal if my friends and I could put up posters of famous African-Americans and display them along with the
things that they had done in the past. She did allow this. The pictures were up a total of
two days before someone defaced the majority of them, and ripped down the rest. No one
was ever disciplined for doing this, but this was emotionally devastating to me and the
other African-American students.

Why don’t they want to know about our history? Sometimes kids ask me about
slavery, especially when it is briefly mentioned in class. They ask why the slaves didn’t
fight back, and I tell them that they did, but the textbooks only teach one version of the
story. I tell them that slaves struggled, and that black people have always had to fight,
just like Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, and the Black Panthers, and thousands of
others. Maybe if we talked about black people in our classes, and even other cultures,
other than just what’s in the textbooks, then other students, including myself, would
understand more about the different cultures in the world. I feel like my teachers don’t
like me or understand my culture because it is not acknowledged in the lessons that they
teach. I wish they would take the chance to learn about my culture, instead of sending me
to the office for talking.

I know my brother William has his issues with the conflicts with the local guys
and his grades. I have similar issues, but most of mine focus around who I am as far as
being a black female. I have conflicts with all the girls, including the African-Americans.
Although most of my friends are black, they are sometimes jealous of me too. It’s hard to
explain...

I feel weird. Freaky, yeah freaky that’s how I feel, like everyone is looking at me.
People often stare at me or ask questions about my hair, skin color and race. I hate that.
I love wearing braids, but I get so many questions, it gets on my nerves. My mom and I
were at a store and this Japanese lady was looking at us and asking us about our hair and commenting on our smooth dark skin. I guess they have never seen a black girl or braids. I cry a lot because I’m dark skinned and I feel like some of these kids don’t like me or they are scared of me. I know I’m beautiful, and maybe that’s what makes them so mad.

I have had three major issues about being a black female that really stand out for me. The first one is with the local girls. First of all, when I say local I mean that they are usually a mix of everything (Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, Filipino, Latino, etc.). Some even have some African-American in them, but I had several of them tell me that they don’t claim the African-American blood. One girl even told me that her parents told her not to claim the African-American blood because being Black is not a good thing. Some other girls told me that when they were growing up, their parents told them to stay out of the sun so that they would not get black like the “Popolo” (black people). Being dark-skinned is not cool in Hawaii.

Anyway, the local girls love our black men, and that’s fine, but for some reason they stab us (black females) in the back once they got them. It’s like they use us to get close to our men and then once they have them, they kick us to the curb. I have had so many local girls comment on my clothes and hair, and then they come to school dressed the same way. They even get the braids and corn-rolls. They listen to our music, try to dance like us and even want to be apart of our step team (which is mostly black). This is all fine and dandy, but the moment we get into a disagreement, I suddenly turn into a “black nigger” or a “black bitch.” Also, the moment they get what they want (a black guy) then I am no longer their friend. I even had one girl tell me that I might try to steal
her man. Not all of them are like this, but this has happened to me too many times since I’ve been here.

The second incident that stands out is one with the Asian girls, including my Asian teachers. I am convinced that they are scared of me because I am a black woman. My Asian teachers have told me that I am loud and I voice my opinion too freely. Then came the “email incident.” I had a group of Asian girls (I know that they were Asian because they told me that they were via email, they just didn’t give their names), who emailed me and called me a black, loud, aggressive, nigger, and bitch! I can’t prove who it is, but I know who they are because during our English class I did a speech on being a Black Woman, and they got mad! Regardless, the email was horrifying. My parents reported the incident to the school; as of today nothing has been done about it.

Finally, as a black female I have found out that the darker you are the less popular you are with the local students. First of all, among my black friends we talk about this all the time. Of course the black guys want the light girls because if they are not dating the local girls, then they are dating the light-skinned black girls. Most of my light-skinned friends disagree with me on this one, but it’s a fact. So when we disagree amongst ourselves it is usually over the black men. Black men have a lot of control over “whose dating who” relationships in our school. However, when it comes to treatment from our teachers or issues of racism, we are all black, regardless of our skin tones. All of my African-American friends have been called a nigger at least once since they came to Hawaii. All of them have experienced negative stereotyping and all of them have been associated with the military, even the ones who are not military!
For some reason when I am insulted in school, I am either called a black ho or bitch and then I am accused of stealing their land. I can't win being black and military. I do have some black friends who are not military, but it is hard for the locals to separate African-Americans from the military because the majority of us are military dependents. The first day of school my teacher asked if my dad was in the military and when I said yes, she made a funny face, and then said, “Of course he is.” What is that suppose to mean?” It would be nice to talk an adult at school who can relate to me as an African-American.

All of the teachers at my school are White, Asian and local. The principal is local too, but I do know some African-American students who live in my neighborhood who go to different schools that have African-American principals and teachers. They say that the African-American principals and teachers are harder on them than on the other ethnic groups at the school, they expect more from them, and that they don’t get special treatment. One thing for certain though, they feel pride in having an African-American principal in charge at their school and African-American teachers as role models in the classrooms because they can go to them and discuss racism and being called a nigger. Often when they report the incidents to the African-American teachers and principals, the students who were calling the names are reprimanded.

Hawaii is the most different place that I have ever lived. Racism is so shocking here, and I really wasn’t expecting it. I have to say that being an African-American and living in Hawaii means that as a black woman I feel that I’m invisible, but yet I’m in a fish bowl, isolated, but my presence invades people’s sense of personal comfort and how they feel. It means that my skin, hair and body are seen second, after my blackness. The
darker you are, the harder it will be to make friends, get along with your teachers and be popular at school. I feel lonely, but I have friends. I feel freaky, but I look around and the other girls have the same hairstyles, listen to the same music, wear the same clothes and have the same man that I want to get with, but in a split second they are ready to reject me for who I am. I believe that you have to be prepared wherever you end up as a military transfer student, but really be prepared in Hawaii because the racism comes from all ethnic groups, not just white. On top of that, I am proud I am a black woman. I can’t and don’t want to change that. I just have to deal with it more here in Hawaii.”

William and Marsha’s first impressions of Hawaii were that it was paradise. They remember going to the Pali Lookout on a windy Sunday afternoon; the sky was blue and slightly overcast, and the clouds hovered about the mountaintops. When they looked over the great wall they saw valleys, towns and the beautiful ocean off the outlook. Palm trees were blowing gently in the wind and flowers that had become unattached from their limbs were floating in the wind and bringing a sweet smell to the air. In the distance, cars, trucks and other vehicles that looked as small as Match Box imitations were traveling in a hundred directions. Signs and other landmarks were hardly noticeable. In front of them was the endless ocean and the waves were crashing against the shore as the whiteness of the currents of each wave faded to blue in the sand. To the left, the mountains stood tall and proud, and the feeling of “aloha” embraced each ridge and peak. Hawaii looked so perfect, so unbreakable. There was a special presence here - a presence of peace, nature and God because no other place could be this perfect. But when William and Marsha got to school they began to realize just how difficult it was to be an African-American
military dependent. The countless stereotypes that haunted them and their ancestors were hidden amongst the “aloha.” Pleasant breezes and sunshine turned into harsh hurls of racial slurs from a society not willing to discuss the cultures and diversity that make the islands so unique.

William and Marsha found themselves at the bottom of a melting pot full of cultures, genders and ethnicities. From the outside of the pot, it appeared that everyone was alike since they had similar stories of oppression. The separate colors of white, tan, red, black, and yellow were seen in so many faces, yet at the last minute, the colors combined, except for black, which settled at the bottom of the pot. The colors in the pot became confused as cultures began to fade into one another, still not acknowledging African-Americans. Racism began to harden and collect on the spoon that mixed the pot’s contents. Pretty soon the melting pot became a layered pot instead. William and Marsha found that in this particular melting pot, called Hawaii, most of the colors go their separate ways, form their own opinions and leave black on the bottom.
The following three chapters are composites of personal journals, individual interviews, observations and autobiographies from the three female case study participants. The parents and teachers reflections are from individual interviews.
Chapter VI

PHASE II – CASE STUDY: SYMONE

"Black Queen"

“I’m not the average girl from your video and I ain’t built like a supermodel, but I’ve learned to love myself unconditionally because I am a queen.”

(India Arie)

Symone is a queen – a black queen, a drama queen, the queen of soul and gospel music and a queen to be reckoned with. She describes herself as a voluptuous, black and beautiful young lady. The first time I met Symone, she was singing the song “Video” by India Arie. She sang, “I’m not the average girl from your video, and I ain’t built like a supermodel, but I’ve learned to love myself unconditionally because I am a queen. I’m not the average girl from your video, my work is not determined by the price of my clothes, no matter what I’m wearing it will always be (my black history).” She changed the last three words of the song. The strength and dedication of each note she hit were as strong and determined as her personality. After she finished singing I told her that she was outstanding. She was glowing and beaming with appreciation. Symone told me that when she sings, she is free.

The next time I saw Symone was in her home. Her father was away on a six-month deployment, and her mother was holding down the household. At home Symone helps out with the cooking and cleaning because she is old enough to handle the responsibilities and because her mother is a full-time student too. She showed me her bedroom; to no surprise, musicians covered the wall. She also showed me a book of lyrics and poems that she had written over the past two years. When Symone grows up she wants to be a professional singer. She said that she wants to try out for American Idol.
one day, but she hesitated and said that it may be hard for her to make it because she has
the voice, but some people may not think she has the look. “I’m a big girl and I’m dark.”
I told her that she was beautiful. Then she asked me, “Do you have any problems, I
mean, you’re light skinned and people probably always accept you.” I began to tell
Symone about my childhood, growing up and being called names because I was light. I
told her about my experiences in Hawaii. She looked and me and said, “WOW!” I
explained that some lighter skinned people may have it easier, but we also get called
names too. We made a personal connection that day. Our love for poetry and our
concerns over our skin complexions were the two topics of discussion. When I left that
day, Symone thanked me for sharing my personal experiences with her and she said that
she was glad that someone understood how she was feeling. I was glad to too.

Symone has lived in Hawaii for almost two years. Over the past 16 months,
Symone experienced racism and sexism 50 percent of the time she spent in school. She
expresses herself in her writing focusing on race and using vivid description. She uses
poetry, song lyrics (others and her own), and illustrations to get her feelings out.

Symone’s Voice...

Hey, I am Symone and I am going to tell you a little about my life and being an
African-American in Hawaii. My parents’ names are Sylvester Jenkins and Sandra Dee
Jenkins. Our religion is Christian. When I was born my mom decided to name me Symone
because she liked the girl on the Cosby show, Olivia, whose real name is Raven- Symone
and because she liked the way she spelled Symone. But at first she thought I was a boy, so
my name would have been Sylvester, Jr. If I were a boy, I would have probably had a
horrible singing voice like my dad. But I was blessed with a nice singing voice like my mom.

My hobbies are singing and dancing. I started dancing in fourth grade and I started singing at the age of four in my daycare. I remember it like it was yesterday. It was almost snack time and there was this lady, my kindergarten teacher, who passed by the daycare area to get something. So she asked one of the teachers if she had heard me sing? The teacher said “no.” Then my teacher said, “she sings well.” The only reason she knew I could sing was because I would sing to get myself out of trouble and it worked. So she told me to sing for the other teachers, so I did, and they enjoyed it. They wanted me to sing for my mom because no one else knew I could sing. So I did and my mom cried. She said I had the most beautiful voice in the world and it was a gift from God. This was when I lived in North Carolina.

When I entered fourth grade at Paramount Academy I met this lady who was the music teacher. Her name was Mrs. Mayfield. She got me to open up and sing and she let me play a part in a play, which was “South Pacific.” I was Bloody Mary. I sang two songs, “Happy Talk” and “Bali Hi.” I was also in “All That Jazz.” The dance instructor was Mrs. A.(that’s what I called her), who was also my voice coach after Mrs. Mayfield left. I was sad when that happened because Mrs. Mayfield was like a second mom to me, but I know I will see her again one day.

When I got into fifth grade, I began to recognize racism at Paramount Academy. There was this white boy one day who was playing soccer and my friends and I were playing a game. We were having fun and I started laughing. Then all of a sudden I felt someone kick my butt. It was the white boy. So I chased after him. Then he says, “Well
at least Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation or you would have
still been out in the field and I would have been making that money off of you.” I was
like man you made a mistake. So I went and told the teacher and he got in trouble. This
was when I was in Arizona.

Then I moved to Hawaii. I had to move to Hawaii because my dad is in the
military. Sometimes it’s hard to be in the military because every time you move you have
to make new friends. Sometimes its fun because when we go shopping we can shop at the
Exchange and get special privileges, but in Hawaii the prices are high, especially off
base.

Hawaii, the place of paradise? Not! This island I am on is not. The island I am on
is Oahu. To me it is the most racist island. There are bunches of nice people that I know
but there are some people that are straight up rude. For example, this one local guy
comes up to me and says, “You eat black dog and you look like one.” And there is this
other local boy who made this joke up about blacks and it goes like this: Why are
Negro’s so tall? Because their knees-grow (Negro). See how stupid that is. Then people
sit there and call me monkey and say it is not racist when they know it is. Its stupid things
like that which makes me have a bad opinion about Hawaii. For example, my mom went
to work one day and some local guy asked, “Do you take a shower every day because I
heard black people didn’t. Is that true?” My mom got mad but luckily she is a Christian
lady because he would have caught the wrath of my mom and that’s not the nicest thing
to catch. But my mom answered the question real calmly; she told him sometimes she
bathes twice a day and ignored him for the rest of the day.
Another thing about Hawaii and school is that the whole thing with base boys against local boys is getting old. I mean I am tired of it and it starts over stupid stuff like a boy spilling juice on another boy. That was very stupid. Then it started that whole thing with base boys against local boys who are always trying to beat us up. But then "us" turns into black kids, not just military kids. And the local girls are not innocent. They are the worst of them all. There was this one base girl (black) going out with a base guy (black) and all the local girls liked him. When they found out he was dating a black girl, they got so mad they tried to jump the black base girls. But they didn’t do it because I convinced them not to.

It is hard to be black in Hawaii because the Hawaiians don’t understand African-Americans because they haven’t had anyone to sit down and talk to them about it. They think what they see in the videos are true. But it is not. They think all of us are gangsters and so dangerous. But we aren’t. They think we’re not well-educated. They think that we are so country and ghetto. But we aren’t. I just wish that they could understand who we really are.

I have a bunch of friends who are Black, White, Asian, Mexican, and other different nationalities, but mostly I hang out with black kids. It is hard to be a Christian in Hawaii because sometimes people get you mad and you can’t say anything. But, you have to follow Christ because if you don’t, bad things will happen and that is how I remember not to get mad in Hawaii.
Before I even got to Hawaii, I heard rumors about the school and about racism and I have to admit that I was a little scared for my daughter. On the mainland, Symone was called a nigger twice. Both times we were in North Carolina, and both times the student that called her the name was White. I explained to her that people in the southern part of the United States do these things and that they have grown up with racism from their parents. At school, the boys were suspended. So, when we got to Hawaii and Symone began school, I was shocked when she came home and told me that her teacher called her a nigger. I was angry and disappointed. I couldn’t believe that a teacher would do such a thing.

At this time, my husband was deployed, so I went to the school alone to meet the teacher. She was a local teacher, maybe White and Japanese mixed, and she explained that Symone was lying. She said that she did not say the N-word (as she put it), but she said that she said Negro. I looked at her like she was crazy. Did she really think that this made sense and that this word choice was better? I looked at her and told her that I believed my daughter and the other students who came to me and told me what had happened. The principal was present at the meeting and she was on the teacher’s side, both of them apologizing and claiming that this was a misunderstanding. I felt so lost because no one wanted to hear about how this had hurt Symone. I told them both that I was disappointed and that I was going to pray for them. I left crying, very upset and ready to leave Hawaii.

After that incident, the teacher was very standoffish. She would not look at me when I came to pick Symone up and whenever we did meet, there was always another
person present. I guess she was afraid of me, but there was no need. I put it in God's hands. This also told me that she probably did call my daughter a nigger and the guilt was eating her alive. That is one reason why I believe Symone was chosen for this study. When Mrs. Hairston came to interview the students at the school, the teacher did not return Symone's permission form. I contacted Mrs. Hairston directly and now my daughter has been given the chance to talk about issues like the previous ones and issues about her skin color and body.

Symone is very out spoken. My husband and I have taught her to speak up for what she believes in and be proud of who she is. Symone likes to be the center of attention. She is often loud and very talkative, but she is a good kid. In class, her directness intimidates her teachers. They always write or call home telling me that she is loud and confrontational. I tell them that it's her personality, but they tell me that I need to get her under control because she tries to take over. It is very frustrating. Symone also has to deal with being called names like blackey, darkie and chocolate chip. She is dark-skinned, but she is beautiful. I tell her to ignore the ignorance and pray for those who talk about her, but I know it's hard for her. Most of the time, the local kids make fun of her, but sometimes the African-American boys do too. She gets upset no matter who it comes from.

I think Hawaii needs cultural awareness about African-Americans. They need to focus on the diversity that surrounds them. There are many things that I don't know about Hawaii and I would like to learn, and the same is true for Symone, but in school none of the teachers focus on culture. They especially ignore or dismiss the African-American culture, and this is upsetting, especially since in the mainland African-American culture
was often a part of Symone’s education. Right now we are doing our time in Hawaii and I pray that it will get better. I just hope that the kids will accept my daughter because she is a beautiful, strong black queen.

Transitioning from an elementary school on a military base in Hawaii where 99.7 percent of the student body was military and 13 percent were African-American, to a local intermediate Hawaii school off base, where 23 percent were military and 4.1 percent were African-American, was a challenging experience for Symone. The following is a composite of her experiences during her 7th grade transitional year.

August – October 2003:

My first day of school was on Monday and it was great. I met some friends who were very nice. Then the trouble began on Thursday. I had cafeteria duty and some Hawaiian boy said, “Yuck, a black girl serving our food, I hope it doesn’t get dirty.” I gave him the meanest look I could, and he realized that I was not the one to play with and kept walking. The next day there was a big mess. A local kid tried to jump this base kid (a black boy) because at lunch the black boy was laughing and accidentally spit some food out of his mouth and it got on the local boy. A lot of the local kids backed up the local boy and they started calling all of the black kids from base names. One girl told me to go back to Africa. Another local boy said that when they were done with us, we would look like it rained and mud was on the ground because all of the black people would be beat down into the ground. There was a lot of name calling, and all the black kids were upset. We finally figured that the kids were all talk, because no one got into a fight, but the
words were flying. The only thing I could think was that this was just the first week of school and the racism was already starting.

During the second week of school, the drama continued. First of all, a lot of the local kids keep calling me dark and making fun of me. On top of that one of my white teachers yelled at me and told me that I was rude. I was going into her classroom and the door slammed. I promise it was a mistake, I guess the wind blew it, but she thought I was slamming her door. I said that I was sorry and I tried to explain, but she said, "You are so rude, stop talking and sit down!" I can't figure out why this made her so mad, especially since the day before a white girl did the same thing, and she said nothing to her. I don't think she likes me. I have a lot of friends, but I have a lot of people who just don't seem to like me, it's only the first month of school. Something has to change.

On September 22, I sang a song for my class. I sounded pretty good, and most of them said I sounded good, but two local boys started laughing at me. These two boys always make remarks about me, no matter how nice I am, or even when I ignore them. They, along with some of the local girls, talk about my color, my age (and how I look older than I am), my weight and even my religion. If they would just get to know me they would see that I could be just as pretty as Janet Jackson, Beyonce, Aiyah and Brittany Spears. The local kids only see the outside of me, not the inside that holds the tunes and something that is dying to be discovered. Don't get me wrong; I have a lot of friends. Some of them are Hawaiian, White, and Mexican, but most of them are Black and all but two are military kids. I'm glad I have my African-American friends. I feel safe when we are together. I have to tell you that I hear some of the comments from some of the African-American boys too (especially the ones about being dark and about my body),
but my girlfriends keep them in check for me. The bad things that people say hurt really bad, but I say:

I know that you see something in me and you want it to come out because my happiness makes you scream and shout. So just treat me like any other teen, don’t just treat me mean. I’m just taking my time and saying what’s on my mind. So just let me go. I’m about to flow my feelings out on y’all. Y’all say that you’re my friends, then what in the world is happening? (Reference – poem written by Symone)

In Symone’s diary, she drew illustrations to express her feelings and what was going on in her life. When Symone is happy the illustration is a full picture of a face, as she digresses, the face fades.

(September 26)

This is what I feel like when I am calm, how I feel when I’m the bomb. This is how I feel when I am strong, not how I feel when I’m wrong.
(September 27)

This is how I feel when I'm surprised, when I open my eyes and see a new day, need a new day.

(September 28)

This is how I feel when I'm alone, not on the telephone, when I'm thinking of a tone.
(October 3)

This is how I feel when I'm not together, you can only find me in cloudy weather.

(October 20)

This is how I feel when I've been put down. I've been put down, see I have a frown.
(October 25)

This is how I feel when I'm angry, people calling me names, taking me away. I am angry!

November 2003:

There was a talent show at school and I sang. It was fun and everyone enjoyed it. I sang India Arie, “Video.” The song is my favorite because it makes people stop and think about who I am, and who they are. After I sang, I got so many compliments and for participating in the show, and I got a free pizza!

Remember the boy from the first day of school that came through the cafeteria line? Well, he is in my English class and today he struck again. I was in class and I accidentally leaned on him while I was trying to get into my desk. He said, “If you do that
again I'm going to make you darker than you already are.” He had a black marker in his hand and he laughed. A few other kids laughed. I just looked at them. Then this Mexican boy started laughing really loud. I was confused because he told me yesterday that I was cute and that I had a nice body. I looked at them both and said, you are not funny and by the way, look in the mirror your skin is just as brown as some of the black people in this school. They both shut up!

The same day in class we learned about Jackie Robinson. The teacher talked about how he was treated and how he didn’t retaliate with violence. She talked about how one white man was nice to him, and that was all he needed; he didn’t need everyone to accept him. I think my teacher taught this lesson to make a point about what the boys had done to me. This was the first lesson this year about an African-American. It was also the first time that the teacher acknowledged the problem between the local boy and me. The other kids listened to her, but did they hear her? I know that God works in mysterious ways and this was an example because the lesson about Jackie Robinson fit so well with what had happened to be. It was God because we hardly ever talk about African-Americans in school. We usually talk about Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks, but this time the lesson was on Jackie Robinson. I was so glad. Thank you Jesus!

(November 15)

This is a gospel song by Mary Mary, and this is how I feel today:

There will be mountains that I will have to climb and there will be battles that I will have to fight, but victory or defeat its up to me to decide. I just can’t give up now, I’ve come to far from where I started from, nobody told me that the road would easy, and I don’t believe He’s brought me this far to leave me.
I'm tired of them (local boys and African-American boys) calling me monkey, gorilla, ugly monkey and gorilla ape. There's this one boy who was talking about me while I was eating chocolate. He said, "Boy Symone, that chocolate is darker than you." Boys - they talk about me on the bus, when I'm walking down the hall, when I'm not around because other people tell me. But, whenever I am alone with them, they are nice to me. This is a song by me and this is how I feel when boys make fun of me:

Another day of sorry, another day of rest, I will try better tomorrow, I have to get this off my chest. Just because I'm a different color than you don't mean you have to go boo, you're no different than me, why is that so hard to see? Yes I am darker than you, other people are too. Another day of sorrow, another day of rest. I will try better tomorrow, I have to get this off my chest. Even though you flirt with me and then leave me in the cold, I just want you to see I'm a lady and not a one-year old. Although I really loved you, I'm glad it didn't show, I thought that you loved me too, now I guess we will never know. I see you laughing on the street, laughing like you don't care; I wish that every time we meet, you didn't give me a glare. I guess this won't happen tomorrow and I got this off my chest, another day of sorrow, another day of rest. Another day of sorrow, another day of rest. (Reference - lyrics written by Symone)

I'm tired of the local and Hawaiians saying nigga! They keep acting like they are black. It's getting on my nerves! I was with this local girl, my friend, who said, nigga please. I looked at her and then she said that she was talking to this black boy that walked by. I told her that she still shouldn't say it. Then she got loud with me and started getting an attitude explaining that she wasn't talking to me, but she was talking to this black boy. A teacher overheard us and told us to quiet down and get to lunch. When we got to the cafeteria, she said it again, this time to me in an odd friendly way. I told her I didn't like it and that she cannot use the word. I told her it was not right coming from her. She looked at me and said that she would not say it again, but I didn't believe her. As a matter of fact, I heard her using it again later that week. When the wrong person
(another African-American student) hears her using the word she will be fighting because African-American students usually say that, “Those are fighting words!” I warned her.

December 2003:

What is going on in December? All of these things keep happening to me!

(December 8th)

In class today, this boy told me that I had fake breasts. I told him that I don’t like him talking about my body and he promised me that he would not say it again. He begged me not to tell the teacher and I didn’t. The teacher would not have done anything anyway. I really don’t like being more developed that other girls and ethnicities. Why do black people have to be more developed than other ethnicities? I have to find out my true ethnicity. I mean I know I’m African-American, but we were brought to America so I could be mixed with White or blood from Bolivia. I know this sounds crazy, but do Black people really know who they are and where they are from? We were taken from Africa, with no records. How do we know what happened to us? Some of us were raped as slaves, so I know we have all kinds of blood in us. See I know this girl who looks White and she’s from Mexico. I know this girl named Taylour who is an albino. She has white skin, but she is Black. So does it really matter what our skin color is. It doesn’t matter what skin color you might be; the skin color does not define your ethnicity or the group that everybody puts you in. I just think that people have to accept who they are first. People need to stop acting black or acting ghetto, I hate that. They want to be something
that they aren't. The world has a problem accepting its own color, kids are always trying to be something or someone else. Why?

(December 10th)

Today somebody called me a monkey. I got so mad, but I don't care. I've been doing pretty good controlling my temper, so I decided not to get him.

(December 12th)

Today I feel pretty good. School is fun and I have a lot of friends. They really like my singing and I’m starting to fit in.

(December 15th)

I’m a little sad today. My great-grandmother died and I am going back to Alabama. I’m happy to be going home to see my family, but I’m sad because my great-grandmother (Big Momma) was so nice and funny. I bet she went to heaven. I really don’t want to talk about it.

(December 16th)

I’m leaving for Alabama, I’m sad, so I’ll write when I get back!

January 2004:

I’m back. When I was home, I had fun, but some of my cousins were making fun of me because I’m dark. They called me a big black oil spill. We all laughed. I could tell
that they were joking. We went back and forth cracking jokes on each other, and we were just playing. It’s different at school when I know that the kids are doing it to hurt me. I thought about what Mrs. Hairston told me about when she was growing up and her cousins and other black kids made fun of her too. It hurts coming from people you know, but you kind of know they are playing, it is the people that you don’t really know, or the ones you know don’t like you that cause the most pain. Name-calling is wrong, but at least I can joke with my cousins and not have to fight about it, in school I am always defending myself. Regardless, I can’t wait to get back to school to see my friends.

(January 8)

When I got back to school, all of my friends missed me and they were nice to me too. Nothing bad happened. I’m glad I needed the break from the drama!

(January 10)

Today was a cool day. Me, Taylour and Valerie got together at Valerie’s house with Mrs. Hairston. It felt good to get together and get everything off my chest. I learned that Taylour and Valerie have some of the same problems that I have in Hawaii. Mrs. Hairston brought her daughter Maya along. She’s so cute and very out-spoken to be seven years old. Taylour is funny and outgoing. We really don’t hang with each other at school, so it was fun hanging out with her. Valerie is funny and interesting. She plays the violin and that is so cool.

Today we talked about a lot of things but the one that stuck was the how the local girls are the most popular in school. I said it was because of their looks. They have long
hair, they wear tight clothes and they act black. Yes, black! They dress like us, they get their hair braided, and they like the black boys. Valerie said at her school they are popular too, they listen and wear the clothes but they don’t date the black boys because there are not that many to choose from. We all laughed! Then Taylour made a good point. She said that a lot of times local girls will try to be your friend so that they can get close to the black boys. I agree, one girl at my school used to hang out with all African-American girls at the beginning of the school year. She really liked this one black guy. Once she got him, she stopped being friends with all the black girls. So, when he dropped her she tried to come back and be our friends again. We were all like, “No way.” We knew she was only using us to get close to another black boy so that she could steal him away too.

Valerie said that she thinks local girls are popular because they are the majority. They are pretty and everyone knows them. Taylour said that they may be pretty, but some of them are really mean and cruel. They say some mean things to black girls. I agree, they are always making comments about my boobs and asking about my dark skin and my hair. It was funny because one time a local girl made fun of my braids and then the following Monday, she came to school with braids. I just laughed and told her that she was trying to be like me. She did not like that. The next day she came to school and the braids were gone.
February 2004:

(February 6)

I just got back from my friend’s birthday party. It was off the chain! Man it was so much fun. There were a bunch of black people there, one white guy, and six white girls, two Hawaiians. The Hawaiians don’t like the base kids so that’s why only two of them showed up. We had so much fun!

(February 8)

Today at school the talk of the day was my friend’s party. It was so much fun. I overheard some of the Hawaiian kids say that they couldn’t come because it was on base and they didn’t have an I.D. to get on base. That is so much bull because I know for a fact if you go to the pass office and get a sponsor you can get on base. I think they didn’t come because they don’t like us! Who cares, we had fun anyway!

(February 13)

Today at school some boy made me so mad. This boy was mad at me because we were playing football in P.E. and I kept keeping the ball. I told him he was so mad at me because I scored so many touchdowns yesterday and I was still scoring them today. Then he called me a nigger, and another local boy said, yeah that’s right nigga, give us the ball sometime. I got so mad at him and in my head I thought, I’m either going to cry or hit him, but I didn’t do either. I ran as fast as I could to the bathroom and screamed. I found out that people were saying that I got scared. I wasn’t scared of them, I was scared that I may have tried to hurt them, then I would have gotten in trouble.
Later that day, I was standing in line in the cafeteria and this local Hawaiian boy behind me was talking, trying to act tough and he said yeah, what you gonna do Nigger. I heard you are scared. I walked away. I went to the office and called my mom. She got so mad, but then she calmed down and told me to calm down. She called the principal, but nothing happened.

(February 25)

Another thing about this month is that it is Black History Month. When I went to school on the mainland, my teachers and the school made a big deal about it. This year the only teacher who talks about it is my History teacher. I did see a few pictures up in the hallways, but no big display. I mean Valentines Day got more attention than Black History Month. I guess in Hawaii since there isn’t that many black people, the school feels that they don’t have to celebrate it. It’s fine though because my family and I celebrate our history year round.

March 2004:

This month began with one of the local girls spreading jokes about black people. She (a local Hawaiian girl) told me two jokes. The jokes are: 1) Why are black people always so mad? Man, I’d be mad too if I had pubic hair on my head and (2) Why are niggers so tall? Because they’re Negroes (knee grows). I asked her who told her these jokes. She said the first one her uncle told her and the second one a white boy told her on the bus. I told her that they weren’t funny and if she didn’t stop spreading the jokes, she
was going to make a lot of people mad. She looked at me and when she saw my expression, I think she got scared.

There was a big argument between the girl who told the joke and Taylour. I told Taylour about the joke and she got mad. She called the girl ignorant. The girl wanted to fight Taylour, but Taylour didn't want to get in trouble. I broke up the argument, then the girl got mad at me for telling the joke. I told her that the only reason why I told Taylour and other people about the joke was because they needed to know what she was thinking and saying about black people. She told me she was sorry, but I told her that right now I was so mad at her. I have been able to forgive her, but I will never forget because she just thought the jokes were so funny, and she didn't understand why I got so upset. I guess Taylour was right, she is ignorant. The truth hurts!

My teachers:

Now I want to take a moment to talk about my teachers. My teachers are pretty nice. They are all local and/or White. There is one teacher, I will not mention her name, but she is real nasty toward me. She always says I'm talking when I'm not. But the thing that got me the most is one day she started explaining that she doesn't hate black people. She said that she likes black people, but she does not like the way I act. She even pulled out a picture of one of her black friends and said that she was just like me except she wasn't loud. She then said, she is a great friend and she is an excellent writer and artist. I looked at her like she was crazy. I hate when teachers and other people try to prove that they like black people. Why do they feel like they have to prove it? I get that from a lot of teachers at school. Like this one teacher who said, "I don't hate black people and I love
the color of their black skin. Once I saw this man and he was so dark that he looked blue, I thought he was beautiful." Another teacher said the same thing about having a black friend. Are they serious? I really didn't care if they liked black people or not, but trying to explain it made it even worse.

My worse teacher so far was a substitute teacher. He told me to shut my big fat mouth. A friend and I were talking because my friend asked me if she could borrow my book. I said okay. The Sub looked at me and said, "Stop Talking." I said that I was sorry. Then he said, "Everyone be quiet and read!" Someone said, "No." He looked at me and said what did you say. I tried to explain that it wasn't me. He started screaming at me and said, "Regardless, shut your big fat mouth!" I was upset and I told him that he was wrong and that he would hear from my mom. He told me to, "Bring it on!" Then he wrote a note home to my mom. I went home, gave the note to mom and told her what happened. She called the school and there was a conference with the Sub, the real teacher and the principal. My mom said that a report was filed on the Sub and the real teacher apologized for the incident.

I really miss having African-American teachers at school. I look around and I only see one black teacher. One is really cool and she lives on base. Sometimes I stop by her room and say hello. One day I asked her where all the black teachers were. She said that there are not a lot of black people in Hawaii so it does seem like the presence of black teachers is missing. All of the black students who have her are so lucky. They are always doing cool stuff about different cultures. She teaches them about all cultures and she teaches them about a lot of African-Americans. I just miss my black teachers at my old school.
Symone’s Favorite Teacher’s Perspective:

I have been a teacher for eight years; seven of those years have been at this school. I have been in Hawaii 10 years. As a teacher and a white male, I see and hear a lot of racism. The military students have it very hard, but the African-American military students have it even harder. Right off the bat, if you’re military you get labeled and as an African-American it’s worse.

The military students should have their own schools. I say this because a lot of teachers cannot deal with the transitions and moving in and out every three years or so. Also many military families bring problems with them, like deployment issues, divorce and infidelity. The kids suffer from these things. The African-American families come in with the mainland mindset of racism. It seems like they are always on their guard and so are their kids. Locals see the military as the landowners. They get jealous of the benefits they reap from paying lower gas prices, to shopping at the commissaries and the exchanges. So when local kids see military kids they see the differences and I think they get jealous. They also have impressions that have been planted in them by their parents.

Being an African-American is even worse. They are automatically labeled as military, regardless. But, in Hawaii instead of classes ruling, races rule here. There is constant racial grouping going on. Unfortunately, locals see African-Americans as the bottom of all other racial groups. They base their assumptions on what they see on television and hear in the news, and most of the time African-Americans are getting a bad rap in the media.
At this school, most teachers are often clueless and in total denial about racism. Racism is undercover. If they don’t see or hear it, then it didn’t happen. Among the students, they do it behind the teacher’s back, but once again they repeat a lot of things that they hear at home and on television.

As far as Symone, I have to say that she is a whole lot of girl! She is a 12-year old girl who is very developed for her age. She is proud of her culture and it shows. She is full of energy. She wants to be known and often she does things to draw attention to herself in order to be noticed. I know she has experienced racism here at school. I have disciplined her and other students for some of the incidents, but Symone is an “in your face” kind of student. I’m not condoning the racism, but sometimes she seeks it out by bringing attention to herself. She is the opposite of local girls in Hawaii. These characteristics are seen as negative in Hawaii. She doesn’t fight or cause conflicts, however she voices her opinion about everything.

Symone is a great girl. I am very straightforward with her, and all of my students. I am also very open and I listen, and if there is a problem I resolve it immediately. That’s what teachers need to do. I once gave Symone some advice. I told her that she needs to be real. She doesn’t have to draw attention to herself because she is talented in so many ways. I told her to look around and open her eyes a little before she steps through any door and not to let what people say affect her.
Symone's Final Reflections:

If I were to describe my year, I would say it was fun, crazy, cool, funny, scary, hectic, breathtaking, frustrating and it made me think about how I act now vs. how I acted in the 6th grade. I found out who my friends are and who aren't.

It was fun because I did a lot of things I never knew I could; like singing in front of my friends in a talent show, passing my math test every time, and being nice to someone when that person was not being nice to me. Sometime those who were mean to me actually became my friends.

It was funny, crazy and cool because there was a lot of stuff that happened at my school. Like this one time I was talking and walking off the bus and I fell in front of everybody. I was so embarrassed. Another time is when my friends would make everyone be quiet and do crazy things to make everyone laugh. It was cool because it was fun being in middle school. It was scary because if you messed up with one Hawaiian, you messed up with them all, especially if you were black and lived on base. I was scared.

It was hectic, frustrating and breathtaking because it was hard and overwhelming. Sometimes I just sit back and I can't believe I made it this far and see how many friends I have. It is also funny to see how many people notice you and you don't even have to say anything. My escapes are my music and church. I find peace in both of these because they are very important to me.

I learned a lot about myself and when I look back at this journal I will remember and think about myself and my life in Hawaii. Being an African-American and living in Hawaii means that people may make me feel weird for being a black person, but they can
only make me as weird as I let them. I am proud to be an African-American female. It’s
my history and I’ve decided that I am an African QUEEN!
Chapter VII

PHASE II – CASE STUDY: TAYLOUR

“Colorless in a Rainbow”

“Just as our skin provides us with a means to negotiate our interactions with the world – both in how we perceive our surroundings and in how those around us perceive us – our language plays an equally pivotal role in determining who we are.”

(Lisa Delpit)

Taylour’s skin is as white as snow and her eyes are light gray. However, her other physical features are African-American. She has albinism, a deficiency of pigmentation in the skin, hair, and eyes and affecting one in 20,000 individuals in the world. Taylour is the youngest of three children in her family, and the only girl. At home she is surrounded by culture - the walls are covered with African, Hawaiian and Japanese masks and African-American and Japanese furniture, paintings and sculptures fill each room.

Taylour’s family has long been associated with the military. Her father is a Gunner Sergeant in the United States Marine Corp, and has served for twenty years. Her mother is a Chief Petty Officer in the United States Navy Reserve; she served active duty for twenty-two years. Both of her brothers attend military academies. Her oldest brother is at King’s Point Military Academy and the other is at West Point Military Academy. The family has lived in North Carolina, Michigan, Okinawa, California, and in Hawaii twice during her mother and father’s military careers. Taylour spends a lot of time with her parents going out to dinner, sewing and going to the movies. She says that her mother is her best friend because she can talk to her about any and everything.

Taylour loves to sew and the family business, “Taylour Made Embroidery” is named after her. She is very creative with her hands. The first time I went to her home,
she showed me quilts, pillows and a jean skirt that she had sewn out of two pairs of old jeans. For the past two years she has been taking Karate and in April 2003 she earned her green belt. Over the past ten months she was awarded two additional stripes. When she grows up, she wants to be a Navy attorney because she feels that people are mistreated in the world for being different with regard to their culture and ethnicities, and she knows that she will come in contact with many cultures if she stays connected to the military.

The following is a composite narrative of Taylour’s experiences from birth to present. The words are taken from her personal journal, a written autobiography, personal interviews and interviews with her family and teacher conducted over the past 16 months. The words of Taylour’s parents are also interwoven throughout the narrative.

*Taylour’s Voice:*

*I was asked to describe myself as an African-American female living in Hawaii. I thought about it for a long time and I had to ask Mrs. Hairston to rephrase the question to: What is it like to be an African-American female with albinism living in Hawaii. I added the albinism because even though my family and friends don’t talk about it everyday, I see it every time I look in the mirror. When I think of who I am, I often don’t mention the albinism though. I’m not ignoring it. I’ve just gotten used to it so when people call me names because of it, that’s when it bothers me. So, what is it like here in Hawaii? I’m colorless in a rainbow. There are so many people and cultures here, so many tans, shades and colors, and then there is me. My color is inside and I am filled with African-American culture, but I am white on the outside. I hate the sun because it burns my skin and eyes. Although I could say that I’m white because of my skin, it is still*
a color that no one else relates to me when they call me names like ghost and banshee. These things are invisible, so, I say I am colorless in a rainbow!

My life story starts as far back as I can remember clearly, at the age of five. First, I’ll start with my family and the way I feel more than half the time about things that deal with my family. I am the youngest of three kids. My mother’s name is Jill and she is 41 years old. My father’s name is Antonio and he is 38 years old. I have two older brothers, Allen, 23, and Jermaine, 21.

The relationship I have with my parents is getting “stronger” each passing day. I know they do what they do for a reason (to prepare me for life), but I’m scared to grow up and the changes that are happening to me are happening so fast. I want so much out of life - to go to the prom, get a driver’s license, and go to college and become a lawyer. Sometimes I feel like I just can’t do it, but my mom and dad keep me focused. Life for me has been better than this past year, but I have tried to stay far away from complaining so that I can build a good strong system of discipline. I have been feeling sort of sad thinking about my life. Sometimes I just don’t fit in. All people, including black people, often say I’m not black because I have white skin. They reject me. One thing for sure is that my family will never reject me. When I need them and when the world gets overwhelming, they will always be there and I am thankful for that. That’s how I feel about my family and myself.

I often get stares on the street from strangers. It’s different in Hawaii. The people talk about me right there in earshot, and they can’t even wait until I’ve passed. I face the biggest problems of people treating me different and talking about me in school. When I moved to Hawaii the second time, (we have lived here twice), the most unexpected turn in
my life happened (my parents tell me that it was worse the first time we lived here, but I can't remember). I was in the 5th grade, and the first day of school was awful. Never in my life, including all the other schools I had attended, did so many classmates talk about me like they did in Hawaii. That much I can remember. I was called so many names and it was because they didn't know me. My parents remember every incident that happened to me. They remember all the tears that I cried. I try to forget them as much as I can.

Now I am in the 8th grade and I'm almost a freshman. I asked my parents if we could move from Hawaii and go to New Baltimore, Michigan. I want to go to school there, or at least be there my senior year so that I can graduate from a good school like my brothers did. It is a very clean place and everyone is nice and knows everyone else. It's beautiful and to think about graduating there is wonderful. Although this year has gotten better for me, I am so ready to leave Hawaii.

I know I'll do fine when I get older as long as I study and work hard. The only person keeping me from my work is myself. The only reason why anyone is afraid of me is because they never take the time to get to know me. I may be different on the outside, but on the inside I am a person who wants to do the same things that every teenager wants to do. If black people with dark skin think it's hard in America, it's twice as hard for a black person with white skin because it just is. (ADD)

Mrs. Smith:

"Taylour was born on September 10, 1990 and I kind of knew I was having a girl, even though I didn't have any tests, ultrasounds or anything to find out what I was having. When she was born, I looked at her and her hair was beak red and her face was
so bright. I asked the doctor right away, does my baby have albinism? At the time I asked if my baby was an albino. I didn't know that saying "albino" was politically incorrect. The doctor said no and that she was just fine. So they only gave her to me briefly because they had a six-hour waiting time before the mother could see the baby again. All the time that they were cleaning her up, my husband Antonio was over her taking pictures. I kept telling them that I needed to see my baby again and that my baby was albino.

During my waiting period, I was supposed to relax, but I couldn't because I kept wondering if my baby was going to be blind, and why wouldn't anyone listen to me? Finally it was about the fifth hour and I asked the nurse to check on the baby and she said that she was all cleaned up. I said that I saw my baby and she has albinism. The nurse kept saying no, no she's fine. So, they brought her to me, and I asked to see a physician, the one that was on duty. The nurse wanted to know why? I said because I am concerned about her vision, can she see? The nurse then looked at me, she looked at Taylour, then looked at me and then looked at Antonio, and then she said, 'all black babies come out light.' I responded that they may come out light, but they don't come out with blond hair. This made me think that maybe she thought something else was going on in my marriage. So, she took Taylour back. A few minutes later, the doctor came in and said, 'I hear you have a concern.' I asked him if he had seen Taylour. He said no. I told him that my baby has albinism and I asked him if she could see? I was so frustrated by then. So, he went out of the room and when he came back he had Taylour and he said, 'Yes, I do think she's albino and I'm going to be back with you in few moments.' Then the same nurse who had been with me all day became so apologetic to me, and she said that
she had never seen an albino baby before. She explained that this was the first child born with albinism at this hospital."

During the next two years, the family educated themselves and joined the National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation, which is a support organization for people with albinism. Taylour’s infant and toddler years, her parents dealt with the stares and questions from people they came in contact with about their daughter’s albinism. It wasn’t until Taylour turned three that her parents began to see how she understood her albinism.

“On Taylour’s third birthday, I asked her what she wanted as a gift. She said a baby doll. I was so excited because I had been waiting for this moment. I could remember when I was little and I collected baby dolls. They were all African-American and I kept them clean and organized in my room. So, as we were walking through the aisles of dolls in the toy store, I immediately stopped in front of the black baby dolls. I began to point to this one and that one, and when I looked around, Taylour’s focus was on the white baby dolls. I can remember asking her, ‘Taylour don’t you want to get a black baby doll?’ She replied, ‘I want this one, (she was pointing to a white Barbie with blond hair), it looks more like me.’ I realized that she wasn’t choosing the doll because it was white; race had nothing to do with it. She chose the doll because it resembled a person with albinism. At that point, I realized that my child related more with having albinism than I thought. You have to understand that although Taylour has albinism, we still focused on our culture and ethnicity at home and never thought about the white skin as a factor.”
Over the next three years, the Smith family moved from state to country to state as a result of military relocations. Taylour began kindergarten in a local Hawaii public school. She attended the same school in Hawaii through second grade.

"Taylour had become so defensive and built a wall around herself because of the hateful words that students at school have said to her. Not one day passed during kindergarten through second grade that my daughter did not come home crying or upset because of the other children teasing her. All the kids made fun of her, white and local students called her names like, albino nigger, white nigger, snowball, black ghost, banshee and powder puff, and black students told her that she is not black. If people could just look past the albinism, they would see the strong willed, sweet, pretty and courageous daughter that we have raised. During her second grade year, we had a conference with the principal and teachers at the school. I have to say that the teachers and principal were very supportive and protective of Taylour, so when problems did arise, they immediately handled them. But, this particular year, we (me, my wife, the teachers and principal) all decided to get a professional speaker to come in and talk to the student body about albinism. We all agreed that maybe if the students were educated about albinism and could ask questions, they would be less hateful toward Taylour. Unfortunately, this plan backfired; it made it even worse for Taylour. The teasing increased. Kids can be so cruel."
During the next three years, the Smith family went to California for two years and spent one year in Okinawa. During her time in Okinawa, Taylour attended a Department of Defense (DOD) school. In Okinawa, Taylour had a different experience. Taylour explains in the following excerpt:

“\textquotesingle\textquotesingle I liked living in Okinawa. I know that I am different because I have albinism, but for some reason the people didn\'t stare as much there. In school, the kids made jokes and still called me names, but it wasn\'t as bad as when I was in Hawaii the first time. In Hawaii, people pass me on the street and talk about me right there. I can hear every word and every comment. In Okinawa, if they were talking, they spoke Japanese, or they just waited until I was out of their hearing range. I guess it was good that I didn\'t understand Japanese; that way I didn\'t know if they were talking about me or not. School was fun. We learned about all the cultures in the world; we celebrated Black History Month, along with other cultural holidays, and I felt safe. Maybe it was because it was a DOD school (Department of Defense) and all the students were military dependents. I remember the day my parents told me that we were moving back to Hawaii. I was a little anxious. I mean it was exciting because I loved the weather, even though the sun is terrible on my skin because I burned so easily and it hurt my eyes. But, the last time I was in Hawaii, school was not a good place to be. I was not looking forward to returning to school, being the blunt of the \textquotesingle\textquotesingle black ghost jokes,\textquotesingle\textquotesingle and crying everyday in my mom\'s arms when I got home from school. But what could I do? We are military and we go where the U.S. Marine Corp says we go. I had no choice, so I planned to make the best of my return.\textquotesingle\textquotesingle
On July 5, 2000, the Smith family returned to Oahu, Hawaii. Taylour began the fifth grade at a local school because the enrollment on the military base school was too high.

Mr. Smith’ Perspective:

“These past three years have been the hardest years of my daughter’s life. From our end and the school’s end, we have established what Taylour needs with regard to her eyesight. She has been declared legally blind, so in school she uses a special device to help her read. She likes this because it looks cool and the kids like it too. Anyway, when we arrived back in Hawaii, we immediately went in and advised the teachers and administrators about Taylour’s needs. Once again they were supportive and she received the necessary services. But, we cannot stop the mistreatment that comes from the other kids. This is where a lot of the social problems come in. From fifth to sixth grade, Taylour got into trouble at school for defending herself. She has an attitude, but the attitude is a defense mechanism. Elementary school was hard, but the past two years of middle school have been a little better. In seventh grade she did get into a fight with a boy for calling her an albino nigger. The boy was suspended for two days, and she had two days of detention. This really upset her, but she managed to get through it. She came home about two weeks ago and told us that a rumor started at school by some local kids that she was from another planet. They called her an alien freak, and told her she was different, so she had to be from another planet. This devastated Taylour for a few days, but she jumped right back on the horse and held her head high. On a positive note, she did say that she has made friends who like her, take up for her and accept her. This summer (2003),
Taylour made more friends on the military base and these relationships carried over to school. She’s not crying all the time anymore. I know that she is growing up and the kids have been around her now for almost three years, so they are getting used to her, but most important she is being accepted for who she is and that makes us all happy.”

This go around in Hawaii, Taylour has developed some good peer relationships. Taylour has one “true” friend, as she puts it. She is an African-American and she lives on base. She and Taylour see each in and out of school. Her other friends are also African-American military students who she rides the bus with and/or has classes with at school. Taylour says that she gets along very well with some of the African-American males from base too, most of them are in the 7th grade and younger than her. She says that they laugh and joke about everything, and they even take up for her when some of the local boys make fun of her. She has two other friends who are Mexican females. They live on base too. She goes to their house after school and on the weekends and sometimes they go to the movies together. Outside of base kids Taylour does not have any peer relationships with the local students at school. She speaks to them in class, they talk in the hallways, however she does not consider any of then close acquaintances. As Taylour transitions into the 8th grade, her current friendships grow stronger and Taylour’s acceptance and self-esteem levels begin to increase. The remaining narrative is from August 2003 – April 2004, Taylour’s 8th grade year at a local intermediate school in Hawaii.
August and September 2003:

"The year has been going well. It's so good to be back in school and see my friends. A lot of them moved during the summer. I hate when my friends move away because that means I have to wait for new friends to get used to me. This is the worst part of being in the military! My teachers are okay, so far. I've been in school three weeks and I am already the victim of a rumor. It never fails. Someone starts saying I'm a "black ghost" or "banshee" because I look different. Yesterday (September 10, and my birthday) at school, my friend got into a fight with a local boy on the basketball court because he was making fun of me. He called me a freak and an albino nigger. When he was down, I ran over and kicked him in the stomach! It felt so good. I got in trouble and had to have a parent/teacher conference, but it was great to have someone else take up for me and it was great to kick him. He did apologize later. The kick had to hurt because I just earned my green belt in Karate. My sensei would really be upset with me if he knew I did it, but hey self-defense is self-defense -- words hurt just as bad as punches sometimes. Anyway, we both got in trouble. First nothing happened, then, I went home and told my parents. They were upset about the incident and not too mad at me. They went to the school and had a conference with the principal. She gave the local boy, my friend, and me detention. Although the other boy started it, my friend and I got in trouble for hitting and kicking him.

After this incident, everything seemed to cool down at school. If rumors were still spreading, I wasn't hearing them. People think I'm mean because I defend myself and speak my mind, but I can't change who I am.
October, November, December 2003:

In October, my mom came to school to teach embroidery to my Home Economics class. All of my classmates said that she was so beautiful. Some of them asked me if I was adopted because I looked nothing like her. I pretty much said, “duh I have albinism!” Other students said that she was a beautiful black woman. When I told my mom this, she laughed. That night we sat down in front of the mirror and looked at the things we had in common. The only difference we both saw was the color of our skin. My mom is such a great mom, hard at times, but great!

November was a sad month because my mom was gone most of the month to conferences and reserve duty leave. I am glad my dad is home now and he doesn’t have to deploy this time around, but my mom leaves a lot. I want to tell you what it feels like when your parents go away. It is really hard. Sometimes I can’t concentrate on my homework and when I come home from school and she’s not here, I get sad sometimes. My dad is so cool though. Usually it’s my mom who is at home with me, so now my dad is here. At school when I don’t have my homework, the teachers get mad and call home. They just don’t understand that I miss my mom. I know I have to keep on track, but I’m just saying, it’s hard!

December is coming and that means Christmas break and my brothers are coming to visit. I cleaned for two weeks straight and cooked for a week straight to get ready for their arrival. I was so excited about seeing my brothers, but when they were here, one blew me off and the other was never at home. On January 3, 2004, I broke down in tears because Jermaine was ignoring me and Allen made so many plans outside
the house, I hardly saw him. I guess I'm too young to hang out with them, and it hurts really bad!

January and February 2004:

January 10 had to be the coolest day of my life. Today Mrs. Hairston took Symone and me to Valerie’s house. We got to eat and talk about life as African-American females in Hawaii. I feel that today was a good day. I am happy that I am participating in Mrs. Hairston’s study; it gives me a chance to tell my story about how I feel. Sometimes I feel that people don’t really care about my feelings. Anyway, today was great. Mrs. Hairston picked me and Symone up, and we drove to the other side of the island to meet Valerie. Symone and I are pretty good friends; she really speaks her mind. Valerie was so cool and she cracked me up. As I listened to them talk, all I could do was nod my head, especially when we were talking about how the local kids wear the same clothes as us, walk and talk like us, but they are still racist. It does seem like me and Symone see racist acts at least once a week at school while Valerie doesn’t. Regardless, I know that what we all said today was true and I don’t think, no, I know I’m special and that I’m wonderful. I don’t need anyone to tell me that much — I wish we could have had a sleep over!

February has been the worst two months of my life. At home, I’m in trouble for everything - at school, I just wish that people would leave me alone and give me my space. Sometimes I just want to go up to them and scream in their faces, “Leave me alone, just let me breath!” If I do or say one thing wrong to anyone, there will be fireworks; I’m just trying to stay to myself!
At school, sometimes it would be nice to learn about other cultures. When we talk about history, it is usually Hawaii, but I love my history class and the teacher is my favorite teacher. She is cool and she lets me bring in African-American information and artifacts. For Black History Month, I brought in information on famous African-Americans, but whenever I bring in anything at anytime, she lets me share it. The other students are really interested in the things I bring in. At the beginning of February to acknowledge my history, I brought in an African-American Trivial Pursuit board game. No one knew the answers, not even the black kids, so we all ended up reading the cards instead. I was cool because we were learning about so many African-American contributions to American history. Finally we were talking about my culture. I need these connections in my life; cultural heritage is important to my family, and me and it is great to share with other people.

March 2004:

This month (March) I have been doing some soul searching. I need a spiritual connection, so Lent is coming and I am giving up meat and chocolate- OUCH! I have been going to church on base. I am really enjoying church. It is a time for me to sit, listen and reflect on who I am and what I really want out of life. My parents have always taught me to treat people with respect. When we were on the mainland we use to go to church a lot, but now with the family business it is hard for my parents to go every Sunday. I think I'm going to keep going. At church I feel safe and connected to God.
April 2004:

A lot of people say that I am mean. I guess I come off that way sometimes because I speak my mind. My parents have always taught me to speak my mind, so I do, but when I over do it, I get in trouble. My mom keeps telling me to choose my battles wisely, but sometimes it’s hard. I am trying to control my actions. I’ve been going to church and I really want to be baptized. I memorized the Lord’s Prayer and I feel pretty good about myself.

When I am in church or with people from church I feel safe. During this time, I don’t have to defend myself or worry about people calling me names. This is one reason why I love going to church. When I learned the Lord’s Prayer, it reminded me that God is with me at all times and no matter how evil people can be, he will protect me. My favorite part of the prayer is – and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. That is real. No meanness, no hurtfulness, just peace for me to be who I am – Taylour!

From a local and teacher perspective, Taylour’s “favorite teacher,” gives her perspectives about African-American military students, the local culture and Taylour’s experiences in school.

A Teacher’s Perspective:

I am a local. I was born in Hawaii, attended the public school system here, graduated from a local college, and now I am a teacher of nine-years in the Hawaii school system. When I was growing up I rarely came in contact with any African-
Americans or military people. If I did, I don’t remember anything about them. In school everyone was local, so all of my friends were local. If I were to define racism, it would be a little different from the mindset of those that come from the mainland. Racism is putting someone down based on their race, but in Hawaii often it is taken lightly through joking and laughing at stereotypes. I don’t think its right, especially now as a teacher and I see how it effects the students. However, in school, I stay to myself, so I have not really witnessed any issues of racism firsthand; I only get the rumors and tales from my students.

As Taylour’s teacher I see her as child who handles herself very well. She is very respectful and I know that this has been instilled in her through her parents. They are both very involved and good people. Socially, Taylour has a lot of friends, but when there is a problem she doesn’t back down. She speaks her mind and stands up for what she believes in and she doesn’t hide her ethnicity. I mean she wears her hair in braids, she is always bringing in information to share about different African-Americans and she is very proud of who she is. In my class, the albinism is not an issue, but I know that she has had some incidents in school where kids called her names and were very cruel to her. She doesn’t really talk about it with me.

One thing that I don’t understand is the military transitions. Why do they move these poor families at a moment’s notice? I mean the kids are coming in the middle of the year, during a quarter term, at the end of a quarter term and some even come with a week or two left in school at the end of the year. As a teacher it is very hard to catch these students up or even get them prepared to test. To me it just seems like the military
should take this into consideration when they move the families. Why not shoot for the beginning of a school year or in January after Christmas break?

I think the students handle the transition better than I do, I guess because they are used to it. At least most of them handle coming into a new school. They usually have one or two other students who are just arriving. The parents are pretty involved. I have noticed that the military students and especially the African-American kids have a hard time with it. They seem to have more social problems. It is hard for African-American military students because they are only here for a short time and really don’t get a chance to learn and experience the different cultures and us locals really don’t know that much about their culture either. I think they come with a lot of negative preconceptions of Hawaii and this often hurts them socially because it is almost like they are looking for something to happen. They bring their mainland ideas about racism. Every thing isn’t always about race, but sometimes I think they may feel that it is.

Overall, I think Taylour is happy. I don’t think she wants to live in Hawaii forever, but she seems to be dealing with it pretty well. If I had known her before she came and could have given her some advice, I probably would have told her several things. First, stand back and observe and don’t take everything so personal. Second, try not to be so outspoken because a lot of locals are not use to it, and third be proud of who you are regardless of the stereotyping. The stereotyping is often in fun, it does hurt, but try to remember that most of the people who are using the stereotypes don’t know the history behind them.
Taylour's Final Reflections:

In Hawaii, it is really hard to be African-American and a military dependent. The local and Hawaiian kids don't like us (military kids) because they blame us for taking their land. I know what racism is; because the kids here judge me before they even know me. I used to think that it was just because of the albinism, but I know it's because I'm African-American and military too. I have some really cool friends this year; they are all black and I think it's because we have more in common and we band together whenever there is a racial incident at school. I have been called so many names in my life. The ones that hurt the most, and the ones that I remember the most are white nigger, albino nigger and black ghost. The local and white kids that called me these names realized that I'm African-American and that I don't just have albinism. What they don't realize is that I have been declared legally blind. Do they even care? I have to wear contact lenses and use eyeglasses and special magnifying scope, and when I read a book it takes a long time. This summer I read the Harry Potter books, and it took a long time because my eyes hurt if I try to read too much at one time. But, I don't think that I have a disability because I can see and I know that having albinism doesn't make me disabled, I'm just different.

I am your typical teenager; I have my ups and downs. The end of the school year is coming so quick and a lot of my friends are leaving. It's so sad! My parents told me that we would be leaving soon too, possibly this summer. I am excited about moving because that means I can go to a good school on the mainland. When I say a good school I mean, no dirt flying all over the place, air conditioner, classes about black people and our history, and a school building that you don't have to walk outside of to get to your
next class. We are going to buy a house too! I can’t wait. I hate living on base; the house is too small and I miss living in a big, unattached house.

Doing this study with Mrs. Hairston has taught me some things that I never really thought about before. I do realize that you have to be willing to forgive other people especially when they don’t have a clue about who you really are. I’m getting baptized in three weeks (May 1, 2004) and as a Christian, I have to be able to forgive and change my ways too. My mom and dad are very happy and very proud of me because I made this decision on my own. I also realized that I know that I have the ability to do whatever I want and I will do whatever I want until I die. I am an African-American, and being an African-American and living in Hawaii means having to adjust to the culture and the way they do things here, but also remember my own culture. I am African-American, its my specific culture, I don’t care what others feel, I’m African-American, military dependent, female, person with albinism, and I will soon be a Christian. Although 60 percent of the time it is tough, I’m happy with who I am.
Chapter VIII

PHASE II – CASE STUDY: VALERIE

“I Make Them Laugh”

“It is imperative that a woman keep her sense of humor in tact and at the ready. She must see, even if only in secret, that she is the funniest, looniest woman in her world, which she should also see as being the most absurd world of all times. It has been said that laughter is therapeutic and amiability lengthens the life span.”

(Maya Angelou)

Valerie is a young lady who captures your attention the moment she walks into a room. Her positive outlook on life and her pride and self-esteem radiate when she smiles. When I met Valerie during the initial focus group interviews, I was enchanted by her personality and great sense of humor. During the interview, issues regarding racism came up and she discussed them intellectually and maturely. During the focus interview sessions, the other students literally paused to listen to her when she spoke about how she deals with ignorance and racism. At home, a loving and dedicated family surrounds Valerie. At school, most ethnic groups embrace her, and her best friends are a mixture of Filipino, Asian, White, Hawaiian and local ethnicities. The positive attitude and strong family values have contributed to her experiences as an African-American female in Hawaii. The first time I asked her how she handles racism or stereotypes, she simply stated, “I just make them laugh!”

I observed Valerie playing her violin on three occasions. The first time she played for me at her school in the conference room where we were holding her individual interview. She played with so much grace and as the music floated through the air, people walking by stopped to listen. When she was done everyone applauded. The other two occasions she was playing with the Hawaii Youth Orchestra. Her parents were there for
the two performances, and both times I saw tears fill her mother’s eyes because she was so proud of her daughter. When Valerie is playing her violin she has complete control over her feelings and her emotions. She told me that it is a time of peace for her because it’s the one other time that she doesn’t feel pressure and she can have fun doing something that she really enjoys.

Valerie’s Voice:

*I am a joyful, victorious person who has an aspiring life. My first name means joy, my middle name means victorious, and my last name is derived from an old English root name, which means palm-bearing pilgrim...one who has an aspiring life. I was born at 9:07 pm on March 12, 1989 at Tripler Army Medical Center, which is located in Honolulu, Hawaii. My father is Guy T. Plummer, a retired Navy Chief and government contractor. He was born to Garnett and Shirley Plummer and raised in Wheaton, Maryland. My mother is Sharon D. Plummer, a registrar at a private Christian university. She was born to John and Shirley Brewer and raised in Mountain View, California. My paternal great-grandmother, grandmother, grandfather and a host of relatives reside in Maryland. My maternal grandmother and grandfather are deceased. However, other maternal relatives reside in Hawaii, Washington State and North Carolina. I am the second child out of three children. My older sister, Leticia, is 20 and my younger brother, Garnett, is 11. After moving from Hawaii to Guam in January of 1995, we moved to Oak Harbor, Washington, where I attended kindergarten through third grade. I attended a private Christian school, Lighthouse Christian Academy, for three
During my third grade year, I enrolled in violin lessons from a group instructor, Ms. Shima. After two years, I switched teachers to Mr. Cardenas, who currently serves as my private violin instructor. I decided, with backing from my parents and teacher, to audition for the Hawaii Youth Symphony. I did not make it the first year. However, I auditioned again and accepted an invitation into the program. I have been in this program every year since 2000.

Being an African-American female in Hawaii means that I am unique, which makes me hold my head high. I am often placed in situations where I play a vital role in dispelling stereotypical myths. I am the only African-American in the Hawaii Youth Symphony’s Concert Orchestra. I have not experienced any overt prejudice, but there are times when I get stares from faces that convey, “What is she doing here?” However, I am quite comfortable with my achievement. I am not overly concerned with what other people think about me knowing that my achievements are a result of hard work. I expect results based on what I do and not what I look like. Contrary to popular opinion, many other African-Americans have excelled in classical music. My choice in participating in a youth symphony is not an exception in the mainland. For whatever reason, my place in the symphony is an exception in Hawaii. That, by itself, makes me extremely proud to represent the African-American female in the classical music arena.

I believe my Christian faith plays a vital role in how I interact with people and handle situations. I have a strong belief in God and have attended church for as long as I can remember. Therefore, to me, church is something that cannot be easily taken for
granted. I sometimes wonder what people do when they do not have a relationship with God. Home is where principles are taught, the church is a place where people reverence God and learn about attributes that make them better human beings, and the world is where faith and principles are put into action. I see why the church is a valuable institution in the black community. It is a place where people receive strength to endure the uncertainties that occur in their everyday lives.

At home, while she is playing her violin, and at church are three places that Valerie says she feels safe, warm and happy. At home she is the “perfect child.” Her little brother made the comment during the family interview, “I wish I could be as smart as Valerie because she is perfect.” However, Valerie does not define herself as perfect. She just says that she is different and she wants to be defined as an individual. She and her siblings argue just like all siblings, her room is the typical teen room, filled with posters and other collectibles, and her opinions are honest and open, and she has the characteristics of a young adolescent female. However, there is something unique about Valerie. The way she approaches and handles situations and her strong desire to achieve academically are very mature characteristics for her age. Above all, she is determined to be the first African-American female violinist to make a name for herself.

Valerie’s Parents’ Perspectives: “Family Values”

Instilling principles that make a difference in the lives of our children is an ongoing process in the Plummer household. As parents of three children, we believe that a strong foundation, involvement in activities, and positive reinforcement are key elements to our children’s success in life. Our second child, Valerie, is a source of joy due to her progress in life thus far. She is a product of our faith in action and we look
forward to being a source of encouragement for her future accomplishments.

Acting on what we believe is a vital component that allows our family to succeed in Hawaii. Due to our decision to reside in Hawaii without the support of extended family, our faith in God and adherence to principles contained in the Holy Bible is extremely important to our family. Faith enables us to build our family values based on a Christian foundation. We are active members of a local, predominately black church congregation where we attend services regularly. Our participation in Sunday school, Bible class, and Worship services, as well as interaction with church members, gives our children a sense of belonging to an extended family unit.

We constantly strive to rear Valerie in loving and supportive environments where her well-being and talents are nurtured. The past 14 years have been a blessing, in every sense of the word, due to Valerie's unusually positive outlook on life, even when faced with the challenge of adapting and excelling in a culture where she is a minority. As parents, we follow the principle of positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior and taking away privileges for inappropriate behavior. As dual working parents, we have a strong work ethic at home and place of employment. Therefore, we expect Valerie to follow the same pattern at home and school. Valerie's grade point average ranges from 3.6 - 4.0. She is happiest when involved in extracurricular activities such as playing the saxophone in the Kapolei High School Band. She is also an accomplished violinist in the Honolulu Youth Symphony. Participation in various activities is Valerie's reward for doing well in school (she is also rewarded monetarily with $10 for each "A" grade and $5 for each "B" grade. In the event Valerie falls behind in school, or becomes a discipline problem, she may not participate in extracurricular activities, use the
telephone, computer, and interact with friends.

Raising Valerie is very simplistic in that we utilize various resources in order to provide her the opportunity to develop her interests. In turn, she possesses the ability to interact with people from different cultures and lifestyles.

Valerie has lived in Hawaii for 11 years. During this time she has attended three local schools. The elementary school feeds into the intermediate and the intermediate feeds into the high school, so Valerie has maintained consistent peer relationships throughout her education in Hawaii. The following is a composite of her past 16 months in Hawaii and the transition she made from intermediate to high school. Valerie focuses overtly on the school and its curricula, and inadvertently on race. The schools are on a track schedule, which means they go for two months, are out for a month, and so on. The dates reflect the school’s track schedule.

July 2003:

(July 25th – The first day of school)

The first day of school was pretty much cool. I put names to the teachers’ faces and I found out who was going to be in my class for the rest of the year. There are hardly any black people at the high school, but I’m not devastated about it. It has been this way ever since I started school here in Hawaii.

From this first day of high school, I learned that homework gets piled up on you quickly. For instance, in Photography class, which is one of my electives, the teacher told us that we have to write a paper on the history of photography. Not too bad right? I don’t find that to be too hard. Just another challenge I have to overcome.
(July 28\textsuperscript{th})

Since the school is brand new, the buildings are very cool and clean. Plus the school just opened the gym. That's a total plus. High school is very different from middle school. Buildings are larger and if you’re late to class you have to get a late pass.

(July 29\textsuperscript{th})

My teachers are very cool and funny. I can get along with every single one of them, except for my science teacher who I think is so mean. I really don’t like him and I don’t think he cares too much for me. I wonder why. Could it be because I’m black or because I’m a girl? I really don’t know what it is.

(July 31\textsuperscript{st})

Being an African-American student in Hawaii means nothing different to me, except not seeing many people who are like me. At school, mostly all the African-American students group together, but I don’t. I don’t fit in with them at school. Besides I don’t really worry about it because when I go to church, I see and hang out with a lot of blacks there.

At school, there are some stereotypes like, you are an athlete if you’re black, your parents are military, or you came from the ghetto. When actually, I am a musician who was born here and my dad is retired from the Navy.
During one interview session, Valerie made it clear that she wants to separate herself from other African-Americans at school because she does not want to fall into the stereotyping. She wants to be known as a musician. During this session she became a little agitated. She was angry because she didn’t fit in with the African-American students at school, but at the same time she didn’t want to fit in. Her emotions were all over the place. However, she did say that sometimes she wished she could talk to someone at school who understood how she felt, she said that she usually had to wait to get home at talk with her mother. She ended the session saying,

“I’m not denying my culture at school, but it would be nice to see more people like me (African-Americans who love music). I am happy with my circle of friends because with them I don’t have to worry about the stereotypes.”

August 2003:

(August 4th)

Unlike last year, I’m starting to like Math. Last year, the teacher was a little strange, the class was boring and the teacher did not show any interest in me. This year, math seems to be a challenge and I like that. I’m thinking about signing up for honors math.

Also unlike last year, school has become boring. I get to school early and I talk with my friends. School starts and I can’t wait till it ends. I get good grades, so it’s not like I’m slacking or anything. But since I’m in Marching Band, that keeps me busy along with my violin.
(August 6th)

My friends are very caring and understanding people. They are very funny, like me, and that's why we all like each other. They are all different ethnicities, but I don't have any black friends at school because there aren't that many anyway. My friends and I are very simple people and we all get good grades, so I don't hang around people who are bad influences. We all want to go to college and we all know each other's dreams and goals.

(August 8th)

Some of the people in my classes are very annoying and I'm stuck with them for three periods because everybody in your core classes (Social Studies, Science, English) is going to be in the same class. Some people I wish could be transferred because they make class go slow by asking stupid questions, making the teacher have to go into a lecture and eventually go back to the lesson. It's going to be a LONG year.

(August 11th)

Lots of projects are starting to pop up at school; it is about time. Since I have been in Hawaii, I think my biggest complaint is the school system. I need a challenge and sometimes I feel like I'm doing elementary work. Sometimes I feel like my teachers don't have high expectations of me either. I always have to prove myself. Once I've proved myself, then the teachers seem to be more accepting.

(August 14th)
I am now entering my third week of school and classes are becoming more interesting, except for Social Studies. I thought we were supposed to learn about history and other cultures, but instead the teacher has us reading a chapter. If you finish early, he'll make you read it again. I find that to be boring. Sometimes I think about African-American culture, but in school no cultures are really taught, except Hawaiian. It’s okay, I guess.

(August 20th)

The ways the classrooms are set up at high school are weird. They are in pods and only blackboards separate two classrooms. You can see and hear everything the other class is doing. I find that to be very annoying especially when my class is courteous to the other class by being quiet. The other class is full of popular girls (local girls) and they get a lot of attention, but do they have to talk so much? You can hardly hear yourself think sometimes!

(August 27th)

My classes are now starting to get harder and I like that because now I don’t have to sleep in class and now I can do the work and help other people along the way. Maybe that can go towards college or something. Tutoring is a very nice thing to do for someone who needs help.
September 2003:

(September 3rd)

Marching Band is pretty much cool. But, there are only two black people, myself and another boy. We make jokes and we have fun, but we don’t hang around each other. I really don’t feel the need.

(September 10th)

Been busy these last few weeks. Competitions are in November and December, but I love it. High school so far is pretty cool.

(September 17th)

I don’t think there are any other blacks in the concert orchestra. I am the section leader for the second violins. I am proud for my accomplishments so far, but I think that there are hardly any black people in classical music anyway. Living in Hawaii and on the west side of Oahu, there are hardly any blacks in anything out here.

(September 24th)

I’ve seen one black teacher on campus. She is a math teacher. It’s good to see a black teacher on campus. What I really don’t like is that when she saw me she thought we were related. Why do they do that? Whenever they see black people they think you’re related to them. I guess they think that way because almost everyone has some type of relative here.
This may sound silly, but this whole thing bothered me because I was with my friends and this black teacher walks directly up to me. She didn’t acknowledge my friends, just me. It was because I was black. Don’t get me wrong she was nice, but there were no introductions she just started asking me if I knew so and so. Then she wondered if we could be related. My friends were looking at me. I felt so embarrassed. I don’t know why I felt embarrassed maybe it was because I felt like she put me on the spot. Now whenever I see her, I wave my hand quickly and try to avoid her.

October – December 2003:

(October 1st)

I get to go to a lot of other schools since the Marching Band plays at the football games. From what I’ve seen, there are not a lot of black people at those schools either. They have more than my school, but the numbers are low. It’s so funny because in Hawaii, African-Americans are almost considered a “rare breed.”

(October 8th)

A lot of people around here think that whatever they see on television, like stupid movies and things like that, is what all black people are like. When in actuality we are all different individuals. I overheard some local kids saying “nigga,” not nigger, but “nigga.” I asked them why they were saying that. They explained that they didn’t mean any harm and that they heard the word in a rap video. I told them that they probably should not use the word because black people do not like it when other people say the N-word. At first they just looked at me, some of the boys started laughing and another one
asked me if I was offended. I told him that I was offended by the use of the word. I told him that he shouldn't just repeat things because they sound cool. Then he explained that they were calling each other “nigga.” They weren't talking or calling a black person the word. I told them that they didn't even know the meaning of the word and that they should really try to come up with another word before someone (like a black kid) hears them and takes it the wrong way. Again they laughed, looked puzzled and walked away. I don't know if I changed their minds, but I did give them something to think about.

(November 5th)

All of the finals at school are coming up and winter break is just around the corner. I know if I study hard I will do fine on the exams. The last days of practice are coming up for band. I'm looking forward to that because then we switch to Concert Band.

December 2003- January 2004:

(December 9th)

Almost everybody around here accepts you for who you are. I did say almost because there are times when I get the stares from people. I simply smile and say, “Hello!” I guess I fit in here.

I can remember one incident when I was called a nigger. It was last year in middle school. When something like that happens, you don’t forget, especially to a person like me who tries to fit in. Anyway, an Asian girl called me a nigger one day when I bumped into her by mistake. I told her to look up the word and understand what she was
saying before saying it. I walked away. I didn’t tell my teachers; they wouldn’t do anything anyway. The teachers don’t get involved in racism here. When I got home I told my parents. They were mad that I had been called a nigger, but proud that I had walked away with my head up. I just wanted to share this.

(December 16th)

Finals are done and I’m free from studying for a while. I have nothing planned for break except practice on Tuesdays for band and violin practice on Sundays after church. We go to church every Sunday and sometimes during the week too. It is a lot of fun. My brother and I are involved in youth activities and the church is always having a picnic and fun things to do. I have a lot of friends at church. They are different from the friends that I hang with at school, and I keep them separate because the interest levels of the two groups are totally different.

My friends at church are all black. We all go to church together and hang out during picnics and other activities. We talk about new music that is out, new videos and other kid’s stuff. Most of them are military and go to schools near military bases. Some of them are local black people. What is a local black person? It is a black person who was born or has lived in Hawaii five or more years and they are not in the military. For example, I consider myself a local black person. My dad is retired military and I have lived here for ten years. But, most local people cannot separate my family and I from the military association. My mom wonders how long do you have to be non-military in Hawaii to gain the local status. We own our own house, we live far, far away from any military base, and my dad has been retired for many years now. So I say, I’m local. I
really don't care what other local people say because once again they see black and they see military.

(December 31st)

My Christmas break was pretty mellow. I really didn't do anything but stay at home. The only time I got to see my friends was on Tuesdays when we had band practice. I wish my break was at least a little more exciting.

(January 10th)

Today Mrs. Hairston came over and brought Taylour and Symone. We talked about a lot of things that go on in school in Hawaii. Talking about this made me feel so different from them. I told them my feelings about being black in Hawaii, but some of the things that they are going through are much worse than my experience here. Symone is very talkative, but she is funny. She loves to sing and she is a proud person. I saw that when I met her. My impressions of Taylour are, she is very outgoing and she is nice. I really did not have as many problems as they are having in middle school and I feel so blessed. People who live on a base or near a base are really associated with the military. They have to deal with a lot of changes too, wow!

At one point during this day I felt a little left out. I mean Taylour and Symone were talking about all the things that they do on base and with their friends. They are so different from me, our personalities, our hobbies and interests are at extreme ends. This whole process and today really make me focus on being a black female in Hawaii. It is really cool to see other black females with the same things going on with them. We all
agreed that the stereotypes are out of control. We also all agreed that using the N-word is just WRONG no matter who says it. Most important we all agreed to stay in touch, talk on the phone and get together again at a later date. I really hope this happens!

(January 21st)

Today at school I noticed that a lot more black people are moving out to this part of the island. I'm starting to see more black people at school; maybe we're not so rare.

Cool!

February – March 2004:

(February 6th)

Since a lot more black people are moving out here, everyone would think that we would just gravitate towards each other, but actually its quite the opposite. We all have a lot of multicultural friends. Sometimes I do wonder if I am the only black person at school who doesn't have black friends. Once again, I think my musical interests keep me separate. I don't know.

(February 18th)

A lot of people are starting to think that just because I'm black I have to act a certain way. Sometimes that really makes me mad. We are all different people with different personalities. I think television has really gotten into people's heads. Its funny to watch it sometimes, but I think some people take it to be that we are all the same way.
Staring 4th quarter. It's the last quarter of 9th grade. I want to make sure I make a good quarter. I want all A's. If I just work harder then I should be able to. I have a performance coming up. I'm glad I went into music. I love it!

Today is my birthday. I have a performance tonight. I am so glad that I have friends who support me, unlike some people, whose friends are just there because they look a certain way, play a sport or because they are popular. I can't ask for a better group of friends.

Sometimes I wonder why people act the way they do or, why they act without thinking first. A lot of people do that at my school. I know I am not perfect and I sometimes do it too. I might talk about people with my friends, but no fights. I prefer to joke around and make light of the situation. I've found that this keeps people from becoming angry, or they just walk away because they realize that comments are just that, comments. In my school everything seems to be going fine with everybody, but there are cliques. The popular people hang out, the pretty girls hang out, the music people hang out. It's funny to see them dress like hip-hop and African-Americans too. They like hip hop music and clothes. One time, this boy got into a fight because his friends told him that he was acting "black." He didn't like that! I just say, once again, what does acting black really mean. There goes that thinking we are all the same again. Another thing that
bothers me is that some of the local kids will just come up to you and hit you. They poke you and act like they haven’t ever touched a black person. This is weird! I just blow it off. The third thing is that the local girls are the most popular girls. They think they run the bus and they are very snotty. They are the most popular at the school; I don’t even care or want to fit in with that crowd. In high school there is always something going on with somebody.

(March 31st)

School is starting to get boring now. It’s like an everyday routine that is starting to get old. But, all I have is two months left in 9th grade and then it’s 10th grade. I hope that year has something more interesting. My family is moving next year to the mainland. I’m going to miss my friends, but I am ready to leave Hawaii. Hey, it’s an island and it gets boring here! There are only three highways. I’m ready to go because I know the mainland, will be more interesting and I will have better opportunities with my music. I might still get the looks of surprise from people when they see me playing the violin, but it probably won’t be as obvious as it is here in Hawaii. I wonder if there will be more black kids at school and if so, will I fit in? On the mainland, I’m sure that there are more black students interested in music because there are more black students in the schools there.

Valerie’s Favorite Teacher’s Perspective:

I have been teaching in Hawaii for the past 25 years. I am a local born Japanese Hawaiian man. I have always taught music and band at the local high school. Hawaii’s
educational system is slow-footed, but changes are occurring everyday. As a child, I went to the public schools here, and I have seen a difference, especially as a teacher.

At this particular school there are not a lot of African-American students. Most of them are military-associated though, and most of their parents are retired service members. My perceptions of military students in general are that they lack solid roots and most of them are ready to leave Hawaii at some point. It is sad when a student has to leave in the middle of the year. I often get attached. Once there was a student who left right before a big performance. She had prepared and worked so hard, but her father got orders and she had to go. That's probably the hardest part for me as a teacher.

My perceptions of African-American students at this school are that they fit in, but they expect to be treated differently. They are immediately accepted by the other cultures and the color of our skin is not the primary factor here. There are very few African-American students her, and they blend in with all cliques and this probably decreases racial tensions. A lot of African-American students test their limits by using their race as a factor, and this causes tensions sometimes for them.

In band the kids get along great. There are only three African-Americans students, two boys and one girl – Valerie. Valerie is a wonderful student. She has an extensive music background. She made an immediate positive impression on me because she is quite talented. As a freshman, she is in the second seat position and this is a really big honor. She is also the only freshman and only African-American in the school’s Wind Orchestra. In this orchestra, we play harder music and we have higher expectations. Valerie is in this band with only a handful of other students.
Valerie loves to laugh, she loves to make me and the other students laugh. She has a big heart, which has been taught from family and church. She has a very positive attitude toward life and she holds her friends very dear to her. She is bright and she is very responsible. The thing I like about Valerie is that she lightens the issue of being an African-American, she fits in better. For example, she will make jokes and say things like, “It’s a black thing, right?” Sometimes she crosses the line and I tell her not to say these things, but this is how she fits in. If you get too serious about race and ethnicity then you get emotional, and Valerie handles this through laughter. I know that Valerie and me get along so well because music is a part of who she is and it is her life. She is also very interesting to talk to and we have a lot in common.

In Hawaii, racism means that people are closed-minded toward anyone else’s ethnicity. However, in Hawaii we don’t look for or expect racism like on the mainland. So when African-Americans and military children come here, they understand acts of racism and conflicts occur. There is a lot of tolerance in Hawaii with stereotyping due to our Hawaiian nature. Most people are pretty tolerant of joking, but I think African-Americans have a hard time dealing with this. I think about tolerance and in a way it can be a very closed-minded attitude toward other ethnic groups. However, tolerance has given Valerie a great experience here.

Valerie’s Final Reflections:

Since I have been participating in this study, I have really had time to reflect on who I am. I am a Christian, a funny person, I dress normal, I wear glasses and I love music. I am an African-American. I have decided that I want to become a professional
violinist. There are not that many black professional violinists. I am the only African-American in the Hawaii Youth Symphony and the only African-American in the first and second chair (this means that I'm good). Hopefully, I will make a name for myself. As an African-American female in Hawaii I feel that I fit in. I feel a little different sometimes, but I really don't let it bother me. I get angry when people stereotype all black people into one category, especially at school because that is the one place that I know I'm different from other African-Americans in Hawaii. At school I am an individual.

I have learned how to take special pride in the person that I am today. The support and encouragement that I receive from my family members helps me to achieve new accomplishments. My family members, through their legacy, have taught me that hard work is the key to success in life. My parents, grandparents, brother, sister and other family members are all sources of inspiration to me. It is a pleasure being a member of an elect group of African-American people.
Chapter IX

FINDINGS

"Whether we are called 'colored,' 'Negroes,' 'Afro-Americans,' or 'blacks,' we are marked with the caste of color in a society still determinedly white. As a consequence, we are shaped, molded, and changed from what we might have been...into what we are."

(Derrick Bell)

Critical race theory was used to analyze the data for this study. I used this framework to understand the ways in which race, gender, culture and racism influence the perceptions and experiences of the participants. In addition, black feminist theory was also used to analyze data relating to African-American females. The data analysis revealed the following broad themes: (i) racism in Hawaii; (ii) mimicry; (iii) transience issues, and (iv) coping strategies. There is a considerable overlap among the four themes. Overlap is found in the ways in which race, perceived racism, and/or cultural dissonance negatively affected the participants in this study. Intersectionality is the overriding explanatory theory that ties the other four themes together to demonstrate why and how racism impacts individual experiences differently. Overlap is further evident in the differing ways the participants' social relationships and personalities defined their experiences, and the ways the participants' parents and teachers supported, challenged, and/or advocated for the children's behaviors. All four themes arose in Phase I (pilot study) of the study and were further exemplified in Phase II (case study). However, themes two through four became more distinct in Phase II through the in-depth case studies of three African-American females. Each theme has certain defining characteristics, and represents the responses of 115 focus group participants (including the three girls in the Phase II), individual interviews with 22 African-American parents...
(including the parents of the three girls in Phase II), five African-American teachers, six local principals and teachers (Phase I and Phase II), and three African-American principals.

Theme one, experiences with racism in Hawaii public schools, addresses how the local vs. the African-American perception of racism effects the following: (a) racial epithets and stereotyping, (b) the absence of multicultural curricula in the classrooms and schools; and (c) the lack of culturally responsive teachers. This theme also addresses the lack of African-American role models in the Hawaii public school system. Theme two, mimicry, depicts the past and present dehumanization of African-American women and addresses issues of (a) self-definition and (b) African-American female aesthetics. Embedded in theme two are colonial and post-colonial perceptions of African-Americans and the military. Theme three, transience issues, addresses the effects of military transitions on African-American military students. Theme four, coping strategies, illustrates the value and importance of support from parents, peer relationships, and religion are for African-American students. Finally, intersectionality, addresses the interplay of the awareness of how characteristics and external factors influence individuals' experiences.

In Phase I of this study the following two research questions were investigated: (1) What are the perceptions and experiences of African-American military students in Hawaii regarding race, ethnic identity, and self-concept? (2) How and to what extent do issues of transiency (e.g. coming to a new school, making friends, and experiencing new cultures) affect the experiences of African-American military students in public schools both academically and socially in Hawaii? In Phase II, the following research questions
were also addressed: (1) What factors contribute to African-American females in Hawaii being socially accepted into the local culture? (2) How do self-image, personality, and social interactions affect the way African-American females are accepted in or rejected by local Hawaiian culture? Henderson (1993) investigated the self-perceived needs of African American students in Hawaii public schools and in 1999, Kreifels, Kubota, and Tighe reported racial incidents toward African-American students in Hawaii public schools in the Star Bulletin. However, this is the only research addressing the experiences and perceptions of African-American military students in the school system.

The participants in the study experienced the following (a) negative experiences with racism from both teachers and students; (b) limited learning opportunities about African-American culture and school curriculum in general; (c) the lack of African-American role models and African-American culture in schools; (d) military transiency issues; and (e) aesthetic issues (Phase II). The following analysis represents data from focus group interviews and questionnaires (Phase I), individual interviews (Phase I & II), autobiographies and personal journals (Phase II).

Theme 1: Encounters with Racism in Hawaii Public Schools:

Local vs. African-American Perceptions

African-Americans as a group have a harder time culturally assimilating in Hawaii (Lee, 1948; Blair, 1998; Jackson, 2001; and Takara, 2002). In Hawaii a person’s race defines who they are, where they live, and how others view them in the local community. The data from this study provides evidence of cultural conflicts occurring between local and African-Americans regarding their personal interactions, as well as
their perceptions of racism. These cultural conflicts were apparent in (i) the actions and reactions to racial slurs and stereotyping; (ii) the local teachers reactions to African-American students; and (iii) in the differences between African-American and local mannerisms.

Blair (1998) points out that racial and ethnic preferences “profoundly influence island society.” He states, “While many – perhaps most – Hawaii residents would freely acknowledge their “preference” for people like themselves, few would call themselves prejudiced” (175). Hawaii residents do not talk openly or directly about race relations; while African-Americans are aware of and expect racism to occur (Takara, 1977; Tatum, 1997; Blair, 1998; Jackson, 2001). Blair (1998) points out that the local culture has a local identity, “a side that unites some while it keeps others out” (59). Tatum (1997) asks, “Why do Black youths, in particular, think about themselves in terms of race? Because that is how the rest of the world thinks of them. Our self-perceptions are shaped by the messages that we receive from those around us, and when young Black men and women enter adolescence, the racial content of those messages intensifies” (54). As discussed in Chapter II, locals use stereotyping for comedy and non-locals are often offended because they are not aware of the local culture (Awaya 2003). The lack of cultural knowledge from both local and African-Americans in Hawaii about one another, heightens cultural conflicts between the two distinct ethnic groups. Rodgers-Rose (1980) points out that as colonialism spread, the image of “blackness” became more threatening that any other ethnic identity. She discusses the historical roots of African-American stereotyping saying that:
"These popular negative images – rooted strongly in the minds of whites as a result of their elaborate rationale of slavery – preceded the development of the disciplines of psychology, sociology and anthropology. Whites carried these negative perceptions and misinterpretations of us [black people] and our behavior into universities and systemized them through the mechanism of scientific research in the behavioral and social sciences” (pp. 302/304).

Racial Slurs and Stereotyping

Critical race theory emphasizes the harm and internal damage of racial insults to minority children. Delgado (1982) states, “Racial insults, relying as they do on the unalterable fact of the victim’s race and on the history of slavery and race discrimination in this country, have an even greater potential for harm than other insults” (162). Focus group interview data revealed that 86% of the student participants had experienced racism in school through negative stereotyping from their teachers and other students. During informal sessions with local principals and individual interviews with the three local teachers, they explained that the darker a person is in Hawaii, the harder it is for them to “fit in.” They stated:

- “Most adolescent girls have it hard, but I’m going to say that I feel black girls have it harder in Hawaii, especially the darker their skin.”

- “At our school we try to make sure everyone is treated equal, but skin color can be a barrier in Hawaii. The darker the skin, the harder it can be for someone.”

- “In Hawaii race is a person’s bloodline and when people stereotype and make fun of other ethnic groups they do it to “mark” them. The darker the person is, the easier it is for them to be marked by some locals.”

A student made the following comment:
• "All of the local people treat me different because of my skin color. It is hard for me to get a job because some people won't hire me because I am dark." (11th grader)

A total of 92% of the focus group participants referred to name-calling and stereotyping as a form of racism. The names that students reported having been called in school include the following:


The participants that were the recipients of these epithets felt that the words are attacks on their race. Some said they laughed as the names were spoken, but not in response to the harsher words like Nigger, Cotton Picker, Black Ho, Black Bitch, and Popolo because they felt these words were the most offensive. I asked them to explain the word, Popolo. A student stated:

"Popolo means purple and the students explained that when African-Americans arrived in the islands, this is what the Hawaiians called Black people. The locals say that it is not a bad word, but when I hear it, it is used as an insult. There is usually a cuss word in front of it." (10th grader)

Another student commented:
"One time I told my teacher that this local girl called me a black bitch. She told me to stop over reacting. What was she talking about? The name hurt and she didn't understand or care about how it made me feel. I am a black girl and that name means something nasty, and she just blew it off." (10 grader)

The students stated that although the slurs were used during arguments, written on walls as graffiti, or used in more friendly situations, they still were offended. Moreover, 100% of the students reported that they were called names involving racial slurs, and all of them had been called a nigger at one point or another. Principals, parents and teachers in the study acknowledged that the use of the word nigger was common and causing many conflicts among the local and African-American students.

- "I have been in two fights with some local boys who called me a nigger. I was just playing basketball and they shouted out, "Look at that nigger." I dropped the ball and started swinging. No one was suspended, but we had to go to the principal and talk. I am disgusted by the word and I hate it." (7th grader)

- "A second grade Asian girl called me a nigger one day when I bumped into by mistake. She stuck her tongue out at me and kept walking. I was so mad; I don't even think she knew what she was saying!" (4th grader)

- "Some girl, I think she's Samoan, got my email address. She did not give her name, but called me a NIGGER (in capital letters). She would not identify herself, but she said she hated me because I thought I was better than her. I'm still trying to figure out who she is. I laughed, but I am angry and I want to fight her." (10th grader).

One African-American teacher commented:
"There is a considerable amount of name calling toward the African-American students, especially using the word nigger."

When speaking with local teachers, the three individual participants agree that race is what determines a person's status in Hawaii. In Hawaii, African-Americans tend to be at the bottom of the ladder. In response to the question what is it like being an African-American and living in Hawaii, demonstrates that African-Americans feel that it is:

- "I'm invisible, but yet I'm in a fish bowl isolated, but my presence invades people's sense of personal comfort and how they feel." (A principal)
- "You're one of many groups, numerically you're in the smaller group, but you stand out because you are Black." (A teacher)
- "People say that there is no racism in Hawaii, I don't know how they can say this. In order to fit in here you have to make a lot of money or be a different color. Hawaii makes me always remember what the 60's were all about." (A parent)

In addition, all three female participants in Phase II were called a nigger one or more times in the past 16 months. Symone was called a nigger by her teacher in the 6th grade and there was a joke about "Negroes" that spread around her school campus. Taylour was called a "white nigger" in the 3rd grade and an "albino nigger," in the 8th grade resulting in an altercation with a local boy. Valerie was called a nigger during her 8th grade year.

Data from the questionnaires revealed that the student 80% of the participants had been called a nigger in Hawaii more often than on the mainland. Moreover, during the focus group interviews, 12 of the elementary students revealed that their first experience of being called a nigger was in Hawaii. All of the participants in the focus group and individual interviews were asked why they thought the use of the word nigger was so
prevalent in Hawaii. In response, 52% of the participants indicated that they felt that the use of the word nigger came from the local students’ home environments:

- “I know that I learn a lot about people at home from my parents, so the local kids probably learn about us at home from their parents too.” (4th grader)
- “I have always been taught that racism and hatred start at home.” (6th grader)
- “One day I asked this kid why he was telling jokes about black people and where he heard it from, he told me that his uncle told it to him at home.” (11th grader)

Data from the Phase II individual student interviews revealed that in some instances the local students thought it was okay to use the word because they heard other black students using it or they heard it in music and/or on television. A group of local boys told Valerie that they had heard the word in a music video and were calling one another “nigga.” They seemed to have had no idea that they were offending Valerie. Valerie stated that,

“I overheard some local kids saying “nigga,” not nigger, but “nigga.” I asked them why they were saying that. They explained that they didn’t mean any harm and that they heard the word in a rap video.”

Other student participants’ comments included:

- “The local kids use the word nigger wrong. They call each other the word. I try to tell them that they can’t say it, but they usually say that they heard it in a rap song.” (6th grader)
- “I had one of my friends scream across the courtyard, ‘What’s up my nigga?’ I couldn’t believe it. I asked her if she knew what she was saying and she said, they say it in that rap song all the time. I told her it wasn’t right!” (8th grader)
Out of the 115 participants, 97 students stated that no one understood what it was like to be called a nigger if they were not African-American. As revealed in the following remarks, when some students reported the racial slur to their local teachers, the teachers either ignored the incident or told the students not to take it “so seriously.” African-Americans participants in this study took race seriously. Valerie’s teacher stated: “If people take race seriously in Hawaii, they will have an unpleasant experience here.” In such ways, African-Americans often are blamed for their perceived problems assimilating into Hawaii schools. Two of the three local teachers interviewed in Phase II stated that some African-American students look for trouble. Symone’s teacher stated, “She brings issues of racism on herself.” While Valerie’s teacher stated, “Black students expect to be treated differently and often trouble finds them.” The African-American students are constructed as the problem, rather than racist attitudes and actions.

The students stated that the list of slurs were used during arguments or written on wall as graffiti, and so they were offended. Participants mentioned segregation within their classrooms, racist graffiti on the walls, and teachers being prejudices and unfair. One 12th grade student summed it up saying:

“I have been in Hawaii since the 6th grade. I have enjoyed my stay in Hawaii but some things are insulting. A lot of people don’t know what month is Black History Month. Many of the locals call blacks niggers. The only time I had a black teacher was when I attended a private school. In high school here, many teachers place all their black students in a corner. But that doesn’t matter because I still received my education. I always wonder what it would be like to be more respected here.”
Critical race theory states, "Minorities perceive themselves as victims of institutional discrimination perpetrated against them by dominant group members...involuntary minorities respond to prejudice and discrimination differently from the way voluntary immigrants do" (Brown, 1993, p. 375-376). African-Americans are involuntary immigrants. In addition, Brown concludes that when involuntary immigrants experience prejudice and discrimination in society, they relate it to their history as members of a victimized group. "Thus, involuntary minority students often face the dilemma of choosing between academic success and maintaining their minority cultural identity" (376). In response to the question about being an African-American and living in Hawaii that was stated previously, 107 out of 115 African-American students stated that they were victims of racist acts because they were black. Additional comments from the students in the focus group interview sessions include:

- "I am always on guard and defending myself. This is the biggest challenge I've had to face since I have been alive. Hawaii tests my patience and my endurance for racist acts." (12 grader)

- "I stand out because I'm black." (7th grader)

- "People pick on me because of the way I look." (4th grader)

- "People look down on me because of my race." (11th grader)

They believed that their race was the primary factor for the negative experiences that they were having. CRT scholars would concur, as they see race as the predominant factor in discrimination and oppression for these youth (Harris, 1990; Caldwell, 1991, Crenshaw 1993; and Delgado, 1982). Calmore (1995) states:
“Critical race theory begins with the recognition that “race” is not a fixed term; instead it is a fluctuating, decentered complex of social meaning... The challenge thus presented is to examine how individual and group identities, under broadly disparate circumstances... are formed and transformed historically by actors who politically contest the social meaning of race” (p. 318).

Critical race theorists concur that the lack of cultural knowledge promotes racist acts (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Pellar, and Thomas, 1995). They also assent that the image of African-Americans as the “other” targets them for racist acts. Pellar (1995) explains,

“Racists perceive the world through a false structure of “same” and “other” which utilizes a concept of blacks as Other and denies that the attributes characteristic of white exist in blacks... Racists make the mistake of “essentializing” racial categories and believing that there is some necessary, intrinsic relationship between race and particular social characteristics” (130).

It is evident in Hawaii that African-Americans are considered socially inferior due to historical implications of racism and colonialism. Local students use racial slurs and epithets, as well and colonialized perceptions to objectify African-American students in school. The data from this study suggest that race was the primary factor in the incidents involving 107 of the student participants, in which they were objectified as “Other.”

Theme 2: Mimicry

The negative stereotypes and racial slurs that have impacted the experiences of the study participants in Hawaii are derived from Westernized perceptions of blacks on the mainland. As Jackson (2001) explains, “The American way was felt to be the best way for Hawaii in 1900. This meant that local politics were to be American style, which included the racial attitudes of the southerners” (39). Over time the local culture adopted and imitated many of the colonizer’s cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, without necessarily internalizing them (i.e. local identity and speech). This is known as
mimicry (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 1998), and can be applied to the perception and treatment of African-Americans in Hawaii. Mimicry has two components: (1) ambivalence, in which a person has conflicting emotions or thoughts about a person, object or idea; and (2) mockery, which entails a deliberate act of ridicule toward the colonizer. Ashcroft (1998) explains that ambivalence describes an attraction and repulsion between the relationships of the colonizer (military) and colonized. He adds, "The relationship is ambivalent because the colonized subject is never simply and completely opposed to the colonizer" (p. 12). Porter (2001) states that Asian and Pacific Islanders "are sometimes enthusiastic imitators of Whites" (129).

Through mimicking Western attitudes towards blacks, constructing them as "other," the "label of oppression" can be shifted from locals to African-Americans. Awareness of this surfaced in the following statements by three local teachers in Phase II.

- "Local people do not have historical roots for judging African-Americans and their perceptions have been adopted through the media and Westernized views."
- "When African-American students are called a "nigger," local teachers often cannot link the emotional historical roots to the word."
- "Local students are repeating words because they hear them in songs, on television and in jokes."

Valerie and 11 other student participants had conversations with local students regarding the meaning of the word nigger. Their comments included:

- "Local students know the word was hurtful, but don't understand why it's hurtful to black kids." (10th grader)
• "Copying someone because they think it is cool is just wrong. Saying nigger in any way is wrong, so they need to stop saying it if they don’t know what they are saying." (6th grader)

• "Local kids have got to stop repeating what they hear in songs or on television. Hearing nigger from them is not a good thing. I keep telling them they probably won’t stop until someone hits them." (8th grader)

Despite the stereotyping and racial slurs, many of the student participants in the study made reference to the local kids mimicking African-American styles, and trying to "act black."

• "Local kids try to act like us and act like they know more about our race or culture by wearing our style clothes and listening to our music." (12th grader)

• "People try to be black and at the same time stereotype us for it too. It is ignorant and obnoxious." (11th grader)

• "The Hawaii kids wanna be like us." (7th grader)

• "People are so ignorant about our race, but they like us by dressing and acting like us, and they dislike us by calling names, it’s strange." (11th grader)

• "The local kids try to imitate something they’ve seen on a movie and try to say it to me. For example, the movie ‘Rush Hour’ featuring Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker. When Jackie Chan says, ‘Wassup my nigga?’ I have heard that saying a lot of times and it does not feel good. I get mad at it, but what can I do except be mature and know that those people are ignorant." (11th grader)

As previously noted, many of the same people that used these styles to negatively stereotype African-Americans, were the very one mimicking them, demonstrating an
ambivalence to African-Americans and their culture. They wore hip hop clothing, listened to “black music,” wore their hair in braids, and some addressed each other as “nigga.” Several African-American boys dated local girls who had pursued them. According to Bhabha (1970) mimicry represents an ironic compromise. The local students were imitating the African-American students, while constructing them as “other” at the same time. They were like the African-Americans, but not like them. Although appropriating some African-American styles and behaviors, identities remained distinct. “Bhabha’s argument is that colonial discourse is compelled to be ambivalent because it never really wants colonial subjects to be exact replicas of the colonizers – this would be too threatening” (Ashcroft, 1998; p. 13).

**Theme 3: Transience Issues**

The teacher participants interviewed emphasized that they do not like military transitions that occurred during the school year. Out of the 22 parent participants interviewed, 19 stressed that it is difficult getting their children settled in at a new school because there is a lack of assistance with the transitions, records often arrive late or are lost, and many of the school personnel cannot answer their questions or address their concerns. Teachers explained that transitions interrupt instruction, students need an adjustment period when arriving to a new school, and it is hard for most military students in both the academic and social domains. Parents, teachers and principals explained how difficult it is for local teachers to deal with military parents and students, in general, because parents have preconceived notions about the Hawaii school system. The teachers and principals explained that some parents could be critical and defensive when they
come to enroll their children in the new school. As demonstrated in the parent comments below:

- "Before I arrived and when I arrived in Hawaii, I heard so many bad rumors about the schools system. One person recommended that my children go to private school if we could afford it."
- "When I got here I heard that the school on base had books so outdated, they were falling apart. I also heard that the school was terrible."
- "Old books and red dirt. Those are the first two things I heard to describe the schools in Hawaii."

Students expressed both positive and negative aspect of military transience. On the positive side:

- "I love learning about new cultures and going to new places. Being military gives kids a chance to see other countries and states in America." (4th grader)
- "Every time we move I get a chance to start over and wipe away any bad things that may have happened at my old school. It’s like getting a second chance." (11th grader)
- "I enjoy the packing and the traveling experience, if we weren’t military I probably would not get to see so much of the world." (9th grader)

However, some students began to cry when discussing leaving their old friends. Two commented:

- "You’re here for three or four years and during that time friends come and go. When it’s your time to leave, it gets hard…it makes me sad." (4th grader)
• “I’m leaving next week. I’m going to miss all my new friends. Sometimes I wish we all going to the same place...it’s rough.” (10th grader)

Participants stressed how hard it is coming to a new school. They expressed feelings of anxiety, fear, and fitting in, as revealed in the following:

• “If I could bring my old friends with me it would be easier transitioning into a new school. That way I wouldn’t feel so alone.” (4th grader)
• “It is hard coming to a new school. I get all stressed out!” (6th grader)
• “I always hope my teachers are going to like me for me and not pre-judge me.” (8th grader)
• “As a senior, this time I transferred, I was really concerned about my credits transferring and graduation requirements.” (12th grader)

High school participants expressed concerns about credits transferring and graduation requirements. Several stated that they were 12th graders and had to take 9th grade Hawaiian history as a graduation requirement. They wanted to test out or become exempt, however taking Hawaiian history in Hawaii is mandatory. Comments from some 12th grade participants included:

• “It’s not that I don’t want to take Hawaiian history, but in the past years of high school, this will make my third state. I took history before and I just want the credit to count. They should make an exception for military senior students transferring in.”

• “I’m serious about my classes because I’m planning on going to college. I want to take some other electives and I have already taken several history classes. I just want the option to test out.”
This issue often brought conflicts because parents felt that by 12th grade their child had satisfied history requirements. When speaking with administrators they explained that each individual school decides if a 12th grade student transitioning in can become exempt or test out of the history requirement. 27 out of 54 high school participants were in the 12th grade, 11 had just transferred to their school and all of them were required to take Hawaiian history with 9th grade students. At one site, two students stated that their teacher told them, “Get the grade to pass and get out, you’re only here to get the credit anyway.” Issues surrounding military transitions for students were not being addressed at five of the participating sites. However, at three of the sites, plans were in place to implement a transition program for all incoming students were in progress for the 2003-2004 school year.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a theme recognized by critical race theorists (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Proponents of intersectionality see race, gender and class as linked and intertwined. The multiple identities become complex and can be both dominant and targeted at the same time (Davis, 1983; hooks, 1990; Tatum, 1997; Ogbu 2003), resulting in both internal and external conflicts. Critical race theorists recognize these intersecting factors, however, they emphasize race as the primary factor in most oppressive racial incidents (Bell, 1990; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). Three categories comprise the intersectionality theme: (a) African-American and military; (b) African-American, military, and male; and (c) African-American, military, and female.
Jackson (2001) discusses racism toward African-Americans who were associated with the military. He explains that racism toward African-Americans derived from mainland White perceptions of blacks. Jackson found that in the mid-1980’s that most of the cases that came to the Hawaii NAACP were offenses “typically aimed at young, single, Black men in the military” (36). The military is seen as the “land takers” and locals cannot relinquish past perceptions of the military (Kunkle, 2003). These mainland perceptions of Blacks have also reached the islands, resulting in a two-fold negative impact, (“double whammy”) on the experiences of African-American military students in Hawaii schools.

All focus group and interview student participants in the study, at some point made reference to the belief that if you are black and live in Hawaii then you are automatically associated with the military. Comments include the following:

- “Whenever my family and I are out in town, it never fails, someone asks if we are a military family.” (5th grader)
- “I do have some black friends who are not military, but it is hard for the locals to separate African-Americans from the military because the majority of us are military dependents.” (7th grader)
- “The first day of school my teacher asked if my dad was in the military and when I said yes, she made a funny face, and then said, “Of course he is.” What is that suppose to mean?” It would be nice to talk an adult at school who can relate to me as an African-American.” (11 grader)
• "The first day of school my teacher asked if my dad was in the military and when I said yes, she made a funny face. Why?" (9th grader)

• "Freaky, yeah freaky that's how I feel, like everyone is looking at me. I feel that because I'm military, they think I want their land. I can't win being black and military." (6th grader)

The African-American Military Male Student

Out of the 115 focus group student participants, 39 were males. During the focus group interviews, 28 of the African-American males explained that during the first two weeks of the transition into school, local and Samoan males challenged them to fights. Their remarks included:

• "I have been in two fights with some local boys who called me a nigger. Both fights were during my first week of school. I was just playing basketball and they shouted out, look at that nigger. I dropped the ball and started swinging. No one was suspended, but we had to go to the principal and talk. I am disgusted by the word and I hate it." (7th grader)

• "One day I was at the school for about two weeks, and a group of local kids surrounded me and started calling me a nigger. They pushed and shoved me. I started cussing and swinging. Coach broke us up, I was hurt pretty bad, and no one was suspended. In fact my parents came to the school and the principal would not meet with them. They finally spoke with him by phone and he made a lot of excuses. I sick and tired of it, and I'm not going to stand for it." (11th grader)
• "I was at recess by second week of school, and these Samoan kids were playing around and one of them shouted, 'Let's do the Samoan drop on the black kid.' That's when they ram you real hard and drop down on you. I ran! It happened to my other friend a few days earlier and he got hurt pretty bad." (5th grader)

During the altercations the African-American males’ race was the primary target. They were all called a "nigger" before, during and/or after the arguments or fights. African-American military males had physical altercations with local and Samoan males. Local and Samoan boys initiated the fights using racial slurs to get the African-American males’ attention. Out of the 11 incidents reported, only two reported slurs were associated with the military. In one instance, the local kids told an African-American male to "Go back to the military bases because that was where you belonged." In another instance, an African-American male was called a "Military Brat." Parents of the African-American males reported several incidents where their sons were in physical altercations with local and Samoan male students the first week of school:

• "I couldn't believe it the first week of school and my son was already in a fight at school. He told me that some local boys had been picking on him since the first day."

• "I was told my other African-American mothers that their sons were targets for local and Samoan boys at school. My son had never been in a fight, and then when he gets to Hawaii, a Samoan kid starts calling him names and a fight breaks out."
• "It seems like a lot of the black boys and local boys are in conflict at school. Every day my two boys come home with incidents that are going on between them."

African-American were often popular among the local females. Approximately 50% of the intermediate and high school male participants stated that when local girls talked to them they were interested in their military association. As referenced in the comments below, the local girls wanted to be invited on base so that they could go to cheap movies, shop at the Exchange, and see what it was like to live on a military installation:

• "The local girls love the black guys. One girl approached me and begged me to take her on base, she wanted to go shopping at the Exchange." (11th grader)

• "One of the first questions that a local girl always ask me is if I will take them on base." (10th grader)

• "Local girls at my school love black men and they love black military men." (10th grader)

Although the female attention can be perceived as a positive factor, this female interest in African-American males often-ignited conflicts.

• "The sistas have a real problem with us dating local girls. There is always an argument about it." (8th grader)

• "I've seen some serious fights between the black and local girls. One of my friends was two-timing these girls and instead of knocking him out, they beat each other up." (11th grader)
"I have several African-American female friends who tell me I better not data a local girl. They begged me not to sell out – they don’t have to worry about me, I love the sistas." (10th grader)

The African-American Military Female

In the focus interviews with the 76 African-American military females, only two participants confronted issues regarding their military status. However, their military association was often the basis for friendships. As previously noted, the majority of the intermediate and high school female participants stated that most of their friends were African-American and/or military dependents. Some stated:

• "I hang out with a lot of black girls from the base, we see each other in an out of school. My other friends are black too. I feel safer with them because the local girls are always trying to start something." (9th grader)

• "My friends are like me. They are mostly African-American. We seem to get along better." (6th grader)

• "There are three African-American kids in my class and we are all girls. We hang out, talk, and go to the movies on base. They are my best friends." (11th grader)

Collins (1990) argues that race, gender, and class represent the three systems of oppression that most heavily affect the black woman resulting in what Delgado and Stefancic (2001) call "an intersection of recognized sites of oppression" (51). In this study, race and gender, in particular, intersected in different ways and are discussed below.
Objectification

Objectification distinguishes a person as different, in a negative sense, and inferior. Collins (1990) explains that, “Objectification is central to the process of oppositional difference. In either/or dichotomous thinking, one element is objectified as the “Other,” and is viewed as an object to be manipulated and controlled” (69). Tatum adds, “People are commonly defined as other on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age and physical or mental ability” (22). She goes on to say that in each group there is a dominant group (systematically advantaged by society because of group membership), and a subordinate or targeted group (systematically disadvantaged). Objectification and “othering” characterized the experiences of many of the African-American females generally in this study.

Self-Defining Factors

African-American female participants fell into two categories: (1) those who have lighter complexions, are considered to be soft spoken and/or well behaved, have local friends or limited association with other African-American students, and/or are involved in social activities outside of sports; and (2) those who are darker skinned, have primarily African-American friends and/or are considered loud and out spoken. Those in the first category, whose looks and behaviors are more similar to the “local” population in Hawaii, tend to have an easier time adjusting. Category one comments include:

- “I am in gifted and talented and so are my friends. We are all ethnicities, I’m the only black girl. I fit in though, some of my friends tell me that I look local.” (6th grade)
• “My friends are nice. I don’t have any black friends, so hang out on the weekends with my local friends. We like the same music, clothes and activities. My boyfriend is local too.” (8th grader)

• “My teachers and friends treat me nice. They don’t believe that I’m black because I’m light skinned, but it’s cool, we all get along great.” (5th grader)

• “I have accepted the local culture because I know most blacks are not native here. Since I am bi-racial, I have had no bad experiences with my teachers.” (12 grader)

As evidenced in Valerie’s descriptive narrative, she tended not to associate with other African-American students in school. Valerie explains:

“My friends are very caring and understanding people. They are very funny, like me, and that’s why we all like each other. They are all different ethnicities, but I don’t have any black friends at school because there aren’t that many anyway. My friends and I am very simple people and we all get good grades, so I don’t hang around people who are bad influences. We all want to go to college and we all know each other’s dreams and goals.”

Aldridge (1980) concludes that African-American females who succeed in becoming socially accepted have to be brighter, more talented, and more specialized in order to be ranked high in society. Self-definition entails members of minority groups to take on the mannerisms of the dominant group in order to adopt an illusion of acceptance in their society. Lorde (1982) explains:
"In order to survive, those of us for whom oppression is as American as apple pie has always had to be watchers. This “watching” generates a dual consciousness in African-American women, one in which Black women become familiar with the language and manners of the oppressor, even sometimes adopting the for some illusion of protections, while hiding a self-defined standpoint from the prying eye of dominant groups” (p. 114).

Collins (1990) explains that there is power behind self-definition because it allows the black woman to explore two lives, one for the dominant group and one for themselves. She goes on to say, “Denial is another characteristic [of self-definition]. By claiming that they are not like the rest, some African-American women reject connections to other Black women and demand special treatment for themselves” (84). Consciously Valerie acknowledges that she is an African-American female, at church, Valerie has several African-American friends and acquaintances, yet she denies this identity at school. Valerie strives to be an individual at school, but associates with African-Americans at church. She explains:

“I have a lot of friends at church. They are different from the friends that I hang with at school, and I keep them separate because the interest levels of the two groups are totally different. I like going to church because I can be me.”

Valerie’s reference to “being me.” Implies that when she is away from the church setting, or at school, she is another person. She often became upset when comments were made that placed her in the “African-American” category at school. She explained:

“Whenever they see black people they think you’re related to them. I guess they think that way because almost everyone has some type of relative here. This may sound silly, but this whole thing bothered me because I was with my friends and this black teacher walks directly up to me. She didn’t acknowledge my friends,
just me. It was because I was black. Don’t get me wrong she was nice, but there were no introductions she just started asking me if I knew so and so. Then she wondered if we could be related. My friends were looking at me. I felt so embarrassed. I don’t know why I felt embarrassed maybe it was because I felt like she put me on the spot. Now whenever I see her, I wave my hand quickly and try to avoid her.”

Valerie resisted the attention she received from the only African-American woman teacher at her school; she felt embarrassed and even avoided the teacher for the remainder of the year. The teacher was a symbol of her African-American identity, and Valerie needed to separate herself from this identity to feel comfortable in the local school setting. This is evidence of denial. Takara (1977) explains:

“First, the process of categorizing Black people on the Mainland is different from the traditional process of census-taking in the islands. On the Mainland, due to the previous inferior status designated to Negroes who were forcibly brought to the United States as slave labor, all people of any Negro ancestry were classified as Negro. By contrast, the former census-taking policy in the Hawaiian Islands was radically different. For example, a person with any Hawaiian blood could be considered part Hawaiian. A person who was part-Japanese or part-anything could claim and be claimed by the family parent who was other than Negro... It should be no surprise, therefore, that some Blacks in the past chose another race in with which to identify that was more acceptable in the community in order to avoid the latent antagonistic feeling indirectly introduced into the islands against Negroes as a group” (85).

As Takara points out, Blacks chose to identify with the local culture in order to be socially accepted. By Valerie and the other seven female students disassociating themselves from their African-American culture in school, they gained access to the local culture. In Valerie’s case when she was at church, she was in the presence of a majority of African-Americans. At school the local culture was the majority. She is proud of her culture, however in front of friends she is embarrassed and does not want to be labeled.
Valerie thus, walks with “one foot in two worlds,” shifting her identity to fit the situation. However, Symone, Taylour and 66 other female focus group participants experienced issues being the “Other.”

The “Other”

Christian (1985) asserts that in America, “the enslaved African-American woman became the basis for the definition of our society’s Other” (160). The image of the black woman is the opposite of the colonizer she is no male, white and generally not affluent. Christian goes on to say that as long as the image of “Other” is attached to the black woman, it will provide an ideological justification for race, gender and class oppression. Marking a person as “Other” contributes to the process of dehumanization. Examples of this process were provided by the study participants in response to the question: Have you been called any names simply because you were black and a female? The responses included:

- “Life as an African-American woman is challenging, especially since there are many stereotypes to overcome in Hawaii. They say, ‘Black women are loud, ghetto, lazy, ignorant and most of the time pregnant before the age of 18.’ These are just a few stereotypes I have encountered, not to mention the snooty glares, suspicious gestures, and the derogatory questions and comments I have received. My favorites are: “You’re really smart.” “You’re pretty for a dark skinned girl.” “Is that your hair, black girls can be very creative with their hair!” “Are you mixed with something?” Unconsciously one begins to feel as if one has something to prove, not just to oneself or one’s family, but also to the world. It’s sad that
these statements are made, they are intended to degrade me as a woman.” (12 grader)

• “There is so much racism down here. Some people look down upon me because of my race. Some people automatically expect so many things from me because I’m black. They first think I can dance, sing or talk black (whatever that means). I have been called some terrible names (bitch, ho, winch). It all gets on my nerves. I am who I am, not who they want me to be.” (11th grader)

• “I have been called a bitch, ho, video ho and an black winch!” (10th grader)

• “Just the other day this local kid called me a black bitch, he was made because he thought I passed him in line.” (9th grader)

• “I was called a black heffa by this girl, that really made me mad!” (7th grader)

As explained by Parham (2002), “For too long, Africans in the diaspora have been other-defined, other-defended, and other-reliant under the wake of European enslavement and colonialism” (14). Taylour and Symone’s cases present additional evidence of this occurring.

**Taylour – Who Defines Me?**

The mystery of the African-American with skin as white as snow challenges the color line and clearly implies that an African American can be white, if affected by albinism. Critical race theory, feminist, and disability theories discuss the ways in which society objectifies people based on their race, gender and ability. For Taylour, this occurred primarily through being the recipient of racial epithets and stereotypes. The names she was called referred to the color of her skin (white, albino, powder), and to her
race (nigger, black). Waugh (1999) adds that teasing and name-calling are very
dehumanizing to a child with albinism and, “almost all children with albinism will
encounter this during the school years” (p. 129).

In addition to the racial epithets, Taylour was also told that she was “from another
planet,” and called a ghost, a banshee, and a freak, implying that she was other than
normal or human. During the 1800’s African-Americans with albinism were considered
as disabled freaks of nature. Waugh (2000) explains:

“Albinism carries with it myths in cultures throughout the world. These run the
spectrum from the notion that those with albinism have magical powers to the
belief that they are retarded...the media including literature and film, have
contributed to stereotypes of albinism. The character with albinism is often
portrayed as villainous, deviant, supernatural or sadistic. Also some news reports
and encyclopedia articles have included false or incomplete information about
albinism. It is difficult for the public to know what is true and untrue about
albinism” (p. 2).

For over thirteen years of Taylour’s life, her identification with being African- American
and with having albinism has intersected. When Taylour was three she chose a white
Barbie Doll because it had similar features to her, however, now at the age of 13, the
majority of her friends are African-American military dependents. She says. “We
have more in common and band together whenever there is a racial incident at school.”

Throughout her adolescent years, some African-American students have rejected
Taylour stating that because she did not have black skin, she was not a black person.
Taylour explained that in 7th grade a group of African-American girls refused to talk to
her because they had decided that Taylour was trying to “act black,” by wearing her hair
in braids, listening to hip-hop music and having other African-American friends. She
could not convince this group of girls that she was black because her skin color was
white. She asked the girls, “If I’m not black, then do you think I’m white?” One of the
girls replied, “We don’t know what you are, you’re just different.” Another time a group of local kids were teasing Taylour and calling her black ghost. They told her she wasn’t white or black. Taylour said that these two incidents were the most hurtful times in her life. She explained that she did not feel like a person. For a brief moment, Taylour questioned who she was and if she fit in anywhere.

Unfortunately, the lack of education about albinism led to discrimination and placed her into the category of disability based on societal perceptions, myths and stereotypes. Pfeiffer (2001) explains, “Many people with disabilities live lives not acting as if they are disabled. It is only when they encounter acts of discrimination based upon artificial barriers that they feel disabled...They are not being treated fairly and not being treated as other, non-disabled people” (41). Neither the general public nor those with the albinism agree about whether to identify albinism as a disability. This ambiguity creates a problem in the language used to talk about albinism. The disability is the eyesight impairment, not the lack of pigmentation in the skin, however the appearance of a person with albinism draws more attention and less attention is focused on the concept of legal blindness. In Taylour’s case, race and disability intersected in ways that dehumanized her, and constructed her as a racial and social outcast.

Symone- “Am I really a Black Queen?

Delgado (1982) points out that when minority children constantly hear racial messages, they begin to question their competence, intelligence and self-worth. Symone drew pictures to illustrate the impact that racism was having on her. In the first picture, Symone described a perfect day when she was feeling good about herself. The
picture is a complete face with a smile. As the pictures progress, Symone’s illustrations begin to fade. The face becomes less distinguishable and in the final illustration; the picture is only a set of eyebrows. On this particular page she writes, “This is how I feel when I’m angry, people calling me names, taking me away. I am angry!” This series of illustrations depicts the ways that Symone questions her identity, self-worth, value, and place in society. As argued by Collins (1990) objectification can be so severe that, “the other simply disappears” (69).

In addition, Symone explained that her voluptuous body made her a target for jokes from the local boys and girls, as well as from African-American boys. Symone is very well developed for her age. She has a large butt, developed breasts, and broad hips. She described herself:

“I’m a big girl. I have dark skin, a round phat butt, (that’s P-H-A-T not F-A-T). I get a lot of attention because I have big boobs for a 12-year old. I get attention from the boys and the girls too. Most of them want to know if my boobs are real.”

She added:

“Sometimes, I think it’s easier for them (the boys) to see me as a piece of flesh instead of a person. The attention is embarrassing because the local girls make fun of my big boobs and my dark skin when the boys say these things to me.”

Porter (2001) writes about the construction of the African-American body by whites as gross and unappealing, saying “The lusciousness of her full lips, the voluptuousness of her full figure, the richness of her dark eyes, and the delightful texture of her hair were purposely degraded and made “ugly” by patriarchal male society” (pp. 75 & 77).

Symone’s personal characteristics, along with her well-developed body and dark skin
color combined in ways that shaped her experiences and defined her as “other” in Hawaii.

Valerie – Are They Laughing With Me or At Me?

Valerie’s experience in Hawaii was very unique in comparison to Symone and Taylour’s experiences. Valerie has lived in Hawaii the majority of her life. She moved here when she was three years old, and has lived in Hawaii for ten years. She has attended the same school system and maintained the same circle of friends. Hawaii is Valerie’s home; she was raised here and does not have to face constant military transitions because her father is retired. Throughout her personal journals and autobiography, Valerie’s primary focus was on academic achievement and her musical endeavors. She said she had experienced racism, but was not a victim of it. Instead of feeling victimized she excused racist incidents as being due to ignorance.

Valerie’s dual identities between school and church as stated in the section on self-definition, is evidence that she shifts from one situation to the next in order to fit in. Valerie identified herself as a local: She said:

“What is a local black person? It is a black person who was born or has lived in Hawaii five or more years and they are not in the military. For example, I consider myself a local black person. My dad is retired military and I have lived here for ten years.”

The shift between two worlds exemplifies the importance of self-definition for Valerie. Her comment, “I like going to church because I can be me,” suggests that she is performing her identity at school while masking her ethnicity as an African-American. In
one sense she claims a local identity and in the latter she claims her African-American identity, however these shifts allow her to experience a sense of agency in the situations that she is in. “The journey toward self-definition offers a powerful challenge to the externally defined…and this change empowers us” (Collin, 1990; p.106).

**African-American Female Aesthetics**

West (1982) states that the way black people define themselves influences the “analytical weight” one gives to black identity. Skin color, light vs. dark, is an issue for African-American females, in what has been called color-caste hierarchy system. In this system, the lightness of one’s skin and/or the straightness of their hair enhance one’s social value (hooks, 1990, 1992; Williams 1997; Takara, 2002). Color-caste hierarchies embrace both the issue of skin color and hair. “Since lighter-skinned black people are most often genetically connected to interracial pairings of both white and black people, they tend to look more like whites...To this day, the images of black female bitchiness, evil temper, and treachery continues to be marked by darker skin” (hooks, 1995, pp. 178-179). Out of 76 female participants in this study, 70 had what would be called darker skin complexions. Gwendolyn Brooks (1972) explores the meaning of skin color and hair texture for Black women in her autobiography. As a member of the “darker Blacks,” during her childhood, Brooks saw first-hand the difference in treatment from her group and the lighter complexioned African-Americans, that she refers to as “bright” skinned:

“One of the first “world” – truths revealed to me when I at last became a member of SCHOOL was that, to be socially successful, a little girl must be Bright (of skin). Bright you marvelously needed to be” (37).
African-American females take pride in their hairstyles. Wiley (1991) says that hair for African-American women is “an endless ongoing curling circle mass of black people who have been straightening, frying, processing, conking, waving, texturing, cutting, shaving, parting, hot-ironing, cold-waving, stocking-capping...brazing, dreading and otherwise fiddling with for years” (9). He goes on to state that hair care for African-Americans has become a one-billion-dollar-a-year business. Several African-American females stated that they took pride in their hair, and in the many styles they could change it into, sometimes on a daily basis.

- “One thing about braids is that they are easy to manage. I can wear them for weeks at a time. It’s cool.” (8th grader)
- “Some people think that it’s funny because I change my hairstyles so often, but I want to be a cosmetologist. I like creating new things with my hair.” (10th grader)
- Braids and cornrolls are so cool. Alicia Keys and a lot of male singers wear them.” (5th grader)

African-American female perspectives of local girls:

African-American females described local girls as light-skinned brown girls, with long straight or curly hair, who tried to dress like African-American girls and pursue African-American males:

- “Local girls try to be just like us. They want our black men. On the mainland we have to worry about white women taking our men, but over here it’s the local girls. They kill me with their long hair and half-naked clothes.” (6th grader)
- “The local girls are the popular girls. This is their island.” (5th grader)
• “Some local girls are really pretty. They have long hair and nice skin. Others are big like black girls, with the big butts, I guess that’s why the black guys like them.” (9th grader)

• “The local girls wear our clothes, try to walk the walk, talk the talk and get with the black guys, but I say they are still racist. They don’t like black girls and I think they use the black boys to make us mad.” (7th grader)

• “Local girls are a trip. They are very pretty, but they talk about and make fun of me. I say everyone can’t be a size two. They try to dress and act like black girls. It’s crazy because they like looking like us, but they don’t like us. They like our men though.” (7th grader)

• “The local girls are the most popular girls. They think they run the bus and they are very snotty. They are the most popular at the school; I don’t even care or want to fit in with that crowd.” (9th grader)

The African-American principals and teachers stated that sometimes there are conflicts amongst African-American girls, however the majority of the conflicts were with local girls and it was usually over African-American male students. Out of 76 African-American female participants, 52 commented that when an African-American male chose local girls it was because they were lighter, prettier, and more popular at school.

• “You see a lot of black guys and local girls together. I think they choose them because they are the closest things to being white. They are built just like us, but the skin is lighter and the hair is straighter.” (7th grader)
• “It's really strange because some brothers are attracted to the local girls who
dress like me, have their hair in braids, and listen to the same music. It's the
brothers preference though.” (11th grader)

They also stated that local girls wanted African-American males because they were
different. Comments included:

• “Why does anyone date out of their race? I say it's because it is something new
and different. Local girls see the images of black guys on television, and want to
try it out because it's different.” (10th grader)

• “I asked my mom why black people and local people get together. She says its
love and difference. She said the unknown is always interesting.” (5th grader)

Tatum (1997) discusses how she grew up with the expression “good hair.” “Good
hair” was straight hair, the straighter the better. The majority of intermediate and high
participants in the focus group interviews stated that the African-American male students
liked the local girls because they were light-skinned and had good hair. They maintained
that they got more attention from African-American males when their hair was longer
and straighter. In response to the question, what do African-American males like most
about African-American females, 31 stated hair and skin complexions. Some comments
were:

• “When I wear my hair in extensions, the black guys comment on it. They like long
hair, big butts and light skin – I guess two out of three ain’t bad.” (7th grader)

• “I'm not saying that all black guys like local girls, but those that do see a pretty
face, good hair, and pretty tan skin.” (11th grader)

• “It's the hair, long and flowing, it's gotta be the hair.” (9th grader)
In Hawaii where the humidity does not coincide with African-American hair texture, braids are often an option for both male and female African-Americans. The female participants stated that they get their hair braided because it is easier to manage and it is trendy. In addition, Symone, Taylour and Valerie stated that, they wear braids to please their mothers because it is less stressful in the mornings when they are getting ready for school. The female participants who wore braids expressed that they often get questions and stares, particularly from local and Japanese females. When an African-American females’ hair was braided, they were frequently stopped by a Japanese or local female who liked their hairstyle that wanted to know how to do it. Some participants stated that some local boys made fun of their braids and told them that they had “fake hair.” Taylour was told she was trying to “act black” because she wore her hair in braids. However, many local kids came to school with their hair braided, emulating the African-American style and “acting black,” according to some of the participants. Braided hair was something that African-American females did not want to share with other ethnic groups, as noted in the following comments:

- “I see so many cultures trying to mimic us, it makes me more aware of who I am. Why can’t they just leave the braids to us?” (12th grader)
- “Straight hair in corn rolls and braids does not look right. Braids are a black style. We created it, so at least give us that.” (9th grader)

Many felt that these same people who were mimicking or imitating their cultural style were also the ones that used these styles to negatively stereotype African-Americans.
Possible Explanatory Factors

The absence of multiculturalism in the curriculum, culturally responsive teachers, and African-American role models in the schools may explain, in part, the perpetuation of such stereotyping.

The Lack of Multiculturalism in the curricula:

Banks (2002) emphasizes the importance of multicultural education goals. He explains that a primary goal of multicultural education is to help individuals’ gain understanding of, respect for, and perspective of other cultures, and to provide students with cultural alternatives in learning. He also discusses a second goal, which “is to reduce the pain and discrimination that members of some ethnic and racial groups experience because of their unique racial, physical and cultural characteristics” (Banks, 1994; p. 2).

In the focus group and individual interviews, the participants in this study discussed the schools’ curricula. In response to the question, “What types of cultures do you learn about in school?” Students reported that they learned about Hawaiian history, but not about other cultures. Rather than learning about the people, places, and events in the past. Many of the intermediate and high school participants stated that they wanted to learn about the local culture.

A total of 92% of the participants made references to concerns regarding the absence of African-American culture from their school’s curriculum. In most schools, Black History Month was not even celebrated or acknowledged, as documented below.
• "I don't think it's fair that we don't talk about black people in class. During Black History Month, my teacher might mention Dr. King or Rosa, but the school does not celebrate Black History Month." (6th grader)

• "I'm mad! I asked my principal if we could celebrate Black History Month, and she said, 'No, we don't do that at this school.' I said why, and she just walked away. I threw my hands up and shook my head." (5th grader)

• "During Black History Month we watched a movie about Dr. King. Some people were laughing during the movie and being mean. I was glad my teacher showed the movie because sometimes I think some kids believe that all black people were slaves." (4th grader)

• "Please, Black History Month? Please, they don't even acknowledge me!" (12th grader)

• "It feels weird that we don't celebrate Black History Month. Hawaii does not acknowledge it like they do on the mainland." (7th grader)

Only one of the high schools in the study acknowledged Black History Month. At this school the African-American students held an assembly during a "free-time club block." Everyone was invited to attend, however the majority of the participants that showed up were African American. In the other schools, there were two incidents, reported by focus group high school participants, related to Black History Month. At these sites pictures of famous African-Americans were put up by African-American students, but were torn down and defaced by other students.

In the focus groups, the following question was asked: "Do you agree or disagree that if people in Hawaii learned more about African-American culture there would be
fewer racial incidents?” In response to the question, 88 students, five African-American teachers, and 22 African-American parents agreed that if others were given the chance to learn about their culture, then maybe the name calling and stereotyping might decrease.

Comments included:

- “I am in a state of gratitude to my ancestors, and I know that if others hear and learn about my culture, they would get a better understanding of who I am.” (A teacher)
- “Prejudice in Hawaii is due to the lack of exposure.” (A principal)
- “The teachers have to see the racism. They may not be racist, but they should teach everyone about it.” (8th grader)
- “During Black History Month the assembly was not a mandatory assembly. This would have been a good time for everyone to come together and learn about who we are. They seem to always wonder who I am, especially some of my teachers, but when I looked around at the assembly, I didn’t see them there either.” (11th grader)

Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks were mentioned in most classrooms, and high school students often discussed slavery in America. However, students reported that they never discussed the slave rebellions or the impact that slavery had on African-Americans. Many of the focus group students interviewed made reference to the fact that there are hundreds of African-Americans that are not acknowledged in their classrooms who have done and are doing great things. Their comments included:
• "One of my favorite people in the whole world is Booker T. Washington. I did a report on him in class, but if it wasn't for my report, no one would have heard his name in my class." (4th grader)

• "There are so many African-Americans out there. I remember on the mainland we discussed them all the time, we're lucky if we hear two or three names here in Hawaii." (5th grader)

• "I just want everyone to know more about black people. Martin and Rosa are known, but so many others did so many things." (10 grader)

The Absence of Culturally Responsive Teachers:

In addition to the lack of multicultural curricula in Hawaii public schools, students felt that some teachers were not being culturally responsive with regard to their emotional and academic needs. Over the past 30 years, multiculturalists and other educational scholars have been concerned with the academic achievement problems among children of color (Banks & Banks, 1995a, 1995b; Ogbu, 1995; Delgado, 1995; Grant & Sleeter, 1998). From this concern, scholars and researchers including Geneva Gay, Kathryn Au, Roland G. Tharp, A. Wade Boykin, Sonia Nieto, Lisa Delpit, Jacqueline Irvine and Gloria Ladson-Billings, all of whom have key works in the field of multicultural education, have constructed a theory of culturally responsive pedagogy (Banks, 2000).

Gay (2000) defines culturally responsive teaching as practices and curriculum that are effective with the ethnically diverse group. Assessment and achievement trends of students of color need to be a focus of the teacher, in order to ascertain the effectiveness of the strategies. When teachers combine content knowledge, sound teaching techniques,
positive perceptions of themselves as professionals, and affirming relationships within the diverse cultures and ethnicities, they are practicing culturally relevant teachings (Ladson-Billings 1994). Gay and Ladson-Billings explain that the students need to know that their teachers care about them and their cultures. Caring, understanding, learning, and implementing culturally responsive teaching practices and techniques (which are discussed further in the Chapter X -Recommendations), will assist students in their awareness of diversity and its related issues.

During the focus group interview sessions, 72 of the student participants made comments expressing feelings that their local teachers did not like them, based upon the way the teachers treated them in the classroom. Student and parent comments included:

- “It’s sucks being black in school. The local teachers favor the other kids. They don’t like black kids, they even cuss at us.” (10 grader)

- “Some of my teachers think I’m a troublemaker because I talk and speak up in class. I challenge her a lot and she hates it. She doesn’t call on me. I don’t think she likes me.” (9th grader)

- “I work hard to get good grades and sometimes I get B’s and C’s. I keep all my papers and show the teacher that I made A’s. My mom had a conference with the teacher to see what the problem was and once the teacher realized I kept my paperwork, she changed the grade. I think she gave me the lower grade because she doesn’t like me.” (11th grade)

- “Sometimes I feel singled-out by my teacher, it is like she is trying to embarrass me or something.” (11th grader)
• "I feel a little out of place because my opinions are different from my teachers and they don't like that." (10 grader)

At one site, another student made the following comment about Symone:

"My teacher treats all the black people different. She really picks on this one girl named Symone a lot. Symone is darker than the rest of us. The teacher picks on people who are different. Symone is cool, but loud and different. I don't think she likes Symone or any body different, especially black kids."

Five out of eight African-American and local teachers interviewed in Phase I and Phase II, stated that several teachers at the schools where there are high military populations have the "why bother" attitude. They seem to feel that the student will be transitioning soon, so why bother teaching them? One African-American teacher stated:

"I think that a lot of teachers can't deal with the students’ transitions in the middle of the school year and sometimes I think they take it out on the kids because they are military dependents. I have noticed though, that more black military kids are referred to the office for behavior problems than other military students."

A local teacher stated:

"I think that the military should have their own schools. There are a lot of problems that come with the transitions. I've overheard some teachers say that the kids are only here for three years, so there is only so much they can do for them anyway."

Interview data revealed that many African-American students, parents, and teachers felt that some of the local teachers labeled African-American students as
behavior problems. As evidenced in Symone’s experiences, she received several reprimands in school for talking and being aggressive. According to Symone’s mother:

“She is often loud and very talkative, but she is a good kid. In class her directness intimidates her teachers. They always write or call home telling me that she is loud and confrontational. I tell them that it’s her personality, but they tell me that I need to get her under control because she tries to take over. It is very frustrating. Sometimes her mannerisms may be considered as being a bad kid, but she is just speaking her mind.”

Symone reports:

“The Sub looked at me and said, “Stop Talking.” I said that I was sorry. Then he said, “Everyone be quiet and read!” Someone said, “No.” He looked at me and said what did you say. I tried to explain that it wasn’t me. He started screaming at me and said, “Regardless, shut your big fat mouth!” I was upset and I told him that he was wrong and that he would hear from my mom. He told me to, “Bring it on!” Then he wrote a note home to my mom.”

Symone’s favorite teacher described her as loud and stated that she brought a lot of problems on herself. In addition, in response to the question, how does your teacher respond to you in class when you are explaining or asking questions? 52% of the student participants in the focus groups reported negative reactions on the part of the teacher to their mannerisms and behaviors. An African-American teacher stated:

“Body language is big here in Hawaii and sometimes I think the local teachers take the body language of African-American students in a negative way. They use gestures to speak and this could be seen as negative.”
The students added:

- "If I put my hands on my hips or roll my neck, I have a temper. I’m just expressing myself.” (10th grader)
- "Every time I try to explain my answers to the teacher, she tells me that I am being disrespectful, I’m just trying to make a point.” (5th grader)
- "When I get nervous, I laugh. So, on the first day of school my teacher thought I was trying to be funny. I tried to explain that I was a little nervous. She told me to stop it or she was going to send me to the office.” (10 grader)
- "I don’t think my teacher cares to much for me, she always sends me to the office for talking.” (5th grader)
- "Sometimes I feel like I spend more time in the office. My teachers send me all the time. Sometimes I act up on purpose just to get out of her class.” (6th grader)

Some of the student and parent participants remarked that some of the local teachers pre-judged them and lacked cultural awareness about African-American mannerisms. In Symone’s case, she had conflicts with her teachers in school. The majority of the time, when Symone was reprimanded it was because she was talking too much or too loudly in class. One teacher stated that “Symone’s tone of voice intimidates others.” Symone explained,

"I’m was just trying to answer the questions or explain to the teacher why I was doing what I was doing. The teacher told me I was being disrespectful.”

Symone’s parents defended her aggressive behavior, defining it as,

"She is very out spoken. She also likes to get her point across. She is confident and she tries to explain herself out of situations. She does this at home too."
Sometimes her tone is taken as being disrespectful, but she will say that she is explaining and not trying to be disrespectful. I'm the same way, so most of the time I believe she is just being outspoken.”

The Absence of African-American Role Models:

The absence of African-American teachers in Hawaii public schools was a re-occurring concern that surfaced during the interview discussions. The question was asked, “Do you (your child) have any African-American teachers at your school?” In response, as evidenced in the following comments, many students and parents stated “no,” to the question, and wanted to know why there were not more African-American teachers in Hawaii schools.

- “Sometimes I wish my teacher or any teacher was black at my school. I’m not use to not seeing any black teachers.” (7th grader)
- “The absence of no African-American teachers is an issue, the locals don’t understand our children.” (A parent)
- “Sometimes in class I feel like I don’t have anyone who relates to who I am. Even the teacher seems like she doesn’t get who I am, it’s hard sometimes.” (11th grader)
- “I feel like my teachers do not try to understand where I am coming from and the daily struggle I go through trying to transcend over the invisible boundaries set in front of me as a black woman.” (12th grader)
- “It makes me feel as if I am surrounded by teachers of other ethnicities who don’t even like me because of the color of my skin. There is every other ethnicity
"teacher here, except for black. It would be nice to have a black teacher." (11th grader)

Out of the 73 female participants, three students at one school and six students at another school had a class with an African-American teacher. However, sixteen of the students went to these teachers for advice, just to talk, and for assistance with homework and other concerns. Although Valerie rejected the African-American teacher at her school, she did acknowledge the lack of African-American role models on her school campus, stating: "I've seen one black teacher on campus. She is a math teacher. It's good to see a black teacher on campus."

During interviews with the African-American teachers, all five stated that several African-Americans look up to them as role models. Their comments included:

- "When students and parent see me for the first time it is a look of pleasant surprise. An immediate connection is made, and they usually come by and see me or stop and talk to me in passing."
- "Sometimes I feel like a mother and a teacher. The girls come to me to talk about personal and academic problems. I don't mind. I'm always available if they need to talk."
- "The African-American students do not have many African-American role models here, I often find myself solving more issues with them because I am Black, and the parents come to me with more concerns."
- "I feel like a role model to all of my students, but I really do feel a connection to the African-American female students."
• "Some of them are seeking role models and seek-out African-American female teachers and adults at school to connect with, sometimes there are only a few and I know that at other schools there aren't any to seek out."

They said that students in and out of their classes come to them to discuss issues and concerns in school, and come to them for social and academic advice. Concerning their perceptions of African-American male and female students they made the following remarks:

• "As individuals, the students are perceived as achievers, but as a group, they are considered a threat based on negative stereotypes."

• "Some teachers pick on them because they are Black."

• "People in Hawaii are unaware that they are prejudiced toward the African-American students, and many do believe the stereotypes."

• "It is very hard for some of the African-American students to adjust and adapt and they have negative attitudes because it is so hard."

• "The African-American females fight amongst themselves or with the local girls. The fights are over the African-American males, who are often dating local females."

• "African-American females speak up in class and are eager to teach the local students about the African-American culture."

**Theme 4: Coping Strategies**

This theme represents findings that indicate how African-American students receive support from their parents, other African-Americans, and religion in order to cope with
racism. Stewart (1999) states, "The African-American family and extended family have insulated members from full dehumanization by the larger culture" (92). It is evident that African-American parents in this study advocated for their children's behaviors.

Comments included:

- "Some of my sons teachers say he is out-spoken because of his tone of voice. The local teachers react to him and take it out of context, they think he is being mean, but it's just a cultural thing. My son speaks his mind."
- "My son is very bright. He keeps track of his work and he is organized. Sometimes his teacher implies that he is a "Know it all." I say he is just on par and this makes her uncomfortable when he challenges her."
- "Sometimes I get notes from my daughter's teacher saying that she is intimidating other students. When I ask my daughter what happened, she tells me that she was explaining herself in class and the teacher got mad. I'm happy that my daughter is not afraid to challenge the teacher's opinion, but the teacher takes this the wrong way."

As mentioned earlier, Symone's mother defended her as well. In addition, all three female participants in the case study had strong parental support structures in place, documented in their respective chapters.

Stewart (1999) states, that parental support provides healing for pain, affirmation instead of belittling, and incentives to bond with people who really care for them. In response to the question, "What do you do when someone calls you a nigger?" 72 of the 115 focus group participants responded that they always went home and told their parents. They shared the following:
• "The first time I was called a nigger here in Hawaii I cried like a baby. I ran to
the office and asked if I could call my mom. I told her what happened and she
came and picked me up from school. We spent the rest of the day talking about
racism and how when she was a kid she had went through the same thing. She
said people are ignorant and not to let them get me down." (5th grader)

• "My parents were angry when I went home and told them a local kid called me a
nigger. They called the school and scheduled a conference with the principal and
my teacher. They told me all black people go through this at some phase in their
lives. They were both called a nigger when they were young too." (7th grader)

• "I got into a fight with this local kid that called me names. I thought I was going
to be grounded for life. Instead, my parents talked to me about racism and
controlling my actions. My dad said he was proud that I had defended myself."
(9th grader)

• "This kid called me a nigger once, and I went home and told my mom." (4th
grader)

• "I was getting off the school bus one day, and I guess they were high school kids,
screamed from a car, "NIGGER!" It scared me. I ran home and told my dad." (5th grader)

• "I tried to tell my teacher that this boy called me a nigger, she wouldn't listen. I
asked to be excused and went to the office and called my mom. She came to the
school and boy was she mad."

In addition to parents providing support for African-American children, students also
looked to one another for support as well. Tatum (1997) explains that it is in peer groups
in which answers are found to questions like, “What does it mean to be a young Black person?” “How should I act?” “What should I do?” Tatum states, “They [the students] know how to be Black. They have absorbed the stereotypical images of Black youth in the popular culture and are reflecting those images in their self-presentation,” thus, seeking each other out for support (60). During the focus group interviews, 58 of the students stated that they do not feel safe at school. When asked how they coped with this, 52 of them responded that they hang around with other black students during lunch, recess, on the bus and in between classes. At the elementary and intermediate sites, all of the focus group participants and individual interview participants stated that they had several friends from other ethnic backgrounds, but most of their friends were African-American. At the elementary sites, all of the focus group and individual interview participants stated that they had several friends from other ethnic backgrounds, but most of their friends were African-American. Although the elementary students had the opportunity to interact with other ethnicities in their self-contained classroom 50% of the elementary participant’s friends were still African-American.

At the intermediate and high school sites, 65 of the intermediate and high school students in the focus group interviews said that their friends were African-Americans. The students emphasized that it was safer to have African-American friends. Several students used the phrase “safety in numbers,” as one reason for their friendships with other African-Americans. African-American students who were involved in sports and other school activities had more local friends, however the majority of their friends were still African-Americans. Comments included:
• "We have breaks in between class and at lunch and all the black kids hang around each other at the B Building. It makes me feel safe." (10th grader)

• "After school sometimes we have to wait a long time for the bus to pick us up, so all the black kids hang out under the tree. We are all military and black and I feel safe. I know that the local kids won't start anything with all of us around." (8th grader)

• "The more the merrier. If I'm with a lot of black friends, I get less harassment from other kids at school." (12th grader)

In addition to parental and peer support for African-American students coping with racism in school, the value of religion was also evidenced in the findings. Stewart (1999) states, "While many blacks were indeed dehumanized and decimated by the experience of slavery and racism, many blacks were able to rise about the devastations through the practice of spirituality" (p. 39). Six of the focus group interview participants and all three of the case study participants made reference to their religion when discussing how they responded to, or coped with racial incidents. Tatters, Chatters & Levin (2004) found that individuals report using religious coping to confront depression, disabilities and a number of adverse life circumstances. They go on to state, "African-Americans are more inclined to employ religious coping strategies than their white counterparts" (p. 83). In addition, Baer (1984) states:

"Blacks have devised to deal with the ambiguities of their condition. The Spiritual religion...may be included among various strategies for coping with social realities of living in a stratified and racist society. Like many other Afro-American religions...the Black Spiritual movement provides Blacks with a theology for existence and survival" (p. 180).
Symone came from a strong Christian family household. She and her family attended church, participated in activities and included their religious beliefs in all aspects of their lives. Symone felt that she had the freedom to be herself when she was at church. In addition, although, she was confronted many times with harsh words, she never retaliated with violence. She either used her words or a stare to defend herself. This is connected to her religious upbringing. She had the ability to “turn the other check.” She said:

“It is hard to be a Christian in Hawaii because sometimes people get you mad and you can’t say anything. But, you have to follow Christ because if you don’t, bad things will happen and that is how I remember not to get mad in Hawaii.”

Taylour discovered a religious connection as well. Although her family did not attend church regularly, they still emphasized the importance of faith and treating people with respect. She attends the chapel on base and is learning daily about Christian beliefs. She states:

“When I am in church or with people from church I feel safe. During this time, I don’t have to defend myself or worry about people calling me names. This is one reason why I love going to church.”

Taylour was baptized on May 1, 2004. Through her religion, she has found peace in herself and in the way others treat her.

Valerie also comes from a strong Christian family. She and her family are active members in the church, and this is the one place where Valerie exemplifies her African-American culture. Unlike in school, all of her church friends are black, and they acknowledge Black History year round. She does not separate nor deny her ethnicity and
she feels comfortable in the church setting. Stewart (1999) points out that African-American spirituality solidifies self-identity and self-unity. When Valerie was in church she was herself, an African-American female. In her own words, she stressed, "I can be me."

In addition, six other students discussed religion in the focus group interview settings. Their comments were:

- "I am very proud to be an African-American. God made me and through him I deal with the craziness. If God made me, I have to be beautiful." (9th grader)

- "There is discrimination in Hawaii, but when I go to church and see all the different ethnicities I escape the discrimination that exists. In my church there is no racial discrimination between religious beliefs or people." (9th grader)

- "Sometimes I don’t try to figure it out, I just give it to God. Then I’m free from the stress of trying to figure it out." (11th grader)

- "God made me and black is beautiful. I talk to Him when I am sad or when I am about to go off on some of these local kids." (12th grader)

One male focus group participant was a junior minister at his local church. He commented:

"There are all types of cliques at school: locals, athletes, etc. I belong to the "church" clique. A lot of my African-American friends go to the same church that I go to. As a junior pastor I talk to my friends about some of the racial incidents that occur. I know that my faith guides me. God is good and I feel safe." (12th grader)
It is evident that for these African-American students, church is a valuable part of their lives. They used their religious beliefs to relieve stress, problem solve, and deal with daily occurrences. As shared by Valerie:

"I believe my Christian faith plays a vital role in how I interact with people and handle situations. I have a strong belief in God and have attended church for as long as I can remember. Therefore, to me, church is something that cannot be easily taken for granted. I sometimes wonder what people do when they do not have a relationship with God. Home is where principles are taught, the church is a place where people reverence God and learn about attributes that make them better human beings, and the world is where faith and principles are put into action. I see why the church is a valuable institution in the black community. It is a place where people receive strength to endure the uncertainties that occur in their everyday lives."

Stewart (1999) concludes, “Because African-Americans spirituality remains one of the humanizing, radicalizing, and holistic forces in black experience, blacks have practiced a freedom of expression that directly defies the various process of devaluation and repression of the larger society” (p. 43).

Summary and Reflections

This study represents the experiences of 115 students and an in-depth case study analysis of three African-American females. Critical race theory draws attentions to the ways in which racism has been normalized in society. In this study, the use of this theoretical framework has illuminated the voices of African-American military students’
experiences with racism in the Hawaii school system. All of the students, teachers, parents and principals in this study acknowledged that racism exists in the school system. However, there were distinct differences in the ways that local and African-Americans interpreted the experiences.

Intersectionality addressed the Interplay of race and gender and how these factors contributed to the differing types of experiences African-American military students are having. Symone was often ostracized due to the interplay of race and her well-developed body; Taylour's albinism placed her in a unique category of otherness; and Valerie, due to living her life in Hawaii, walked with one foot in two worlds; one in which she denied her race, and the other in which she claimed it.

The military association is a subtle, yet defining factor, with regard to friendships, social acceptances, identity and adjustments into the Hawaii school system. Transitioning into Hawaii is similar to moving to another country. The culture and dynamics of the culture are different from the other 49 states in America. Being military is associated with the negative aspects of U.S. imperialism in Hawaii and being African-American is associated with historically rooted stereotypes resulting in what can be considered a "double-whammy." African-American males are often targeted for physical altercations from local male students, and African-American females face social and emotional issues related to acceptance and aesthetics. As coping strategies, some students rely on peer interactions and religion. Others, like Valerie, opt for identification with locals, rather than other African-Americans. Almost all of the students were helped to cope with negative situations by their parents.
The findings further identified issues in the Hawaii school system that contributed to the negative experiences of African-American children. These include: (1) the absence of multicultural education; (2) the absence of culturally responsive teachers; (4) the rationale and goals of critical multiculturalism and anti-racist pedagogies; and (3) the absence of African-American role models. Recommendations regarding these issues are addressed in Chapter X.

This study is not exposing racism in Hawaii because it is evident that it exists everywhere. What it does do, is give voice to African-American students living and going to school in Hawaii, while providing insight into the nature and impact of racism. Critical race theory served as a lens, placing race at the forefront of this study, and pointing out that race exerts its own unique influence on school experiences (Brown, 1993). The phenomenological research method allowed the personal construction of African-American students’ worlds to be revealed through in-depth interviews, observations, personal journals and autobiographies (Tesch, 1987).

It is my hope that this study will give other researchers the motivation to conduct additional investigations about student experiences in the Hawaii school system. This study can serve as a resource for educators and researchers who want to learn more about the perceptions and experiences of African-American military students in Hawaii, and more specifically the African-American female student in Hawaii. Such work holds potential to open up new programs for the military to assist and offer information for African-American military families transitioning to Hawaii. In addition, the data can open up new venues for researchers, schools and communities with regard to addressing cultural differences and enhancing multiculturalism. The findings of this research can
also contribute to teacher education and professional development for in-service teachers in Hawaii.
Chapter X

RECOMMENDATIONS

"Multiculturalism is a philosophical position and movement that assumes that the gender, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society should be reflected in all of its institutionalized structures but especially in educational institutions..."

(James and Cherie Banks)

This study represented the descriptive stories of 115 African-American military students in the Hawaii public school system. The goal was to capture the essence of their school experiences in general, and then to get an in-depth perception of the African-American female experience through a case study analysis. There are three areas of implications arising from this study that need to be addressed: 1) implementing multicultural education; 2) utilizing culturally responsive pedagogy; and 3) supporting African-Americans students in Hawaii schools.

Implications of Teaching Multicultural Education

Hawaii is the most diverse state in America. As stated in chapter two, the 2001-2002 Federal Survey Card reported a total school population in Hawaii of 183,629. African-American military students made up 1.9 percent of that population. These students share the public schools with Hawaiians, part-Hawaiians, Filipinos, Whites, Japanese, Samoans, Chinese, Hispanics, Portuguese, Koreans, and others that are not specified. Through the findings in this study, there is evidence of racial discrimination, but very few, if any means for racial resolutions. Multicultural education offers a solution.
Multicultural education is a philosophical concept and an educational process. It integrates critical and social pedagogies and ideas that focus on diverse cultural beliefs, attitudes and behaviors in schools and other educational settings. Multicultural education rejects one-sided curriculum that focuses on Eurocentric and dominant westernized views in America's public schools. Banks (1995) developed the five dimensions of multicultural education, which have been used as a conceptual framework for multicultural development. The dimensions are (i) content integration, (ii) the knowledge construction of process, (iii) prejudice reduction, (iv) equity pedagogy, and (v) an empowering school culture and social structure. Sleeter (1995) confirms that in order to implement multicultural education effectively, teachers and administrators must attend to these five dimensions. Within these components and definitions lie the rationales and goals of multicultural education.

The Rationale and Goals of Multicultural Education

Multiculturalism is the inclusion of the study of different cultures within the classroom environment. Multicultural scholars suggest that the implementation of multicultural education can help unify a divided nation (Banks, 1994; Derman-Sparks, 1995; Delpit, 1995; and Gay, 2000). They believe that multicultural education is for all children and no one should be left out. Stemming from issues of equality and understanding across cultural lines, several goals have been developed within the multicultural education framework. Underlying each goal is the need for prejudice reduction and respect for others (Pang, 1950; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Irvine, 1995; Sleeter, 1995). According to Banks (1995), early efforts to introduce prejudice reduction
can improve relations among diverse groups. Pang (1950) addresses issues of prejudice reduction in school through multicultural education because prejudicial attitudes (or one-sided curricula views) can shape the way children learn, interpret and receive information. By addressing these issues upfront in the classroom and teaching multiple perspectives of historical experiences, respect for others through learning and understanding can occur. In this study, the majority of the students' local teachers did not teach multicultural curricula. Issues of racism and prejudice reduction were often ignored. Marshall (2002) stresses that prejudice reduction is a "dimension of multicultural education intended to empower all students. Teachers who incorporate this dimension attempt to create opportunities for students...that are more consistent with democratic ideals of justice and equality" (p. 24). Consequently, if parents, teachers and principals are concerned about prejudice reduction, multicultural education needs to be implemented in the schools. To effectively integrate multiculturalism into the curriculum, teachers must be aware of the nature, quality, and value of multicultural curricula and how to implement it in ways that are relevant to students.

Effective Multicultural Implementation:

Derman-Sparks (1995) discusses implementing effective multicultural curricula. She explains how a classroom that centers solely on the dominant culture encourages biases and stereotypes among children. She discusses three models of multicultural curriculum: 1) dominant culture; 2) color denial; and 3) tourist. In dominant culture curriculum, students are learning the history of the Euro-American culture. There is little evidence of books, activities or materials that include other cultures of the world. In
color denial curriculum, teachers ignore the diversity of cultures in the classroom because they feel all children are created equal. However, in this type of classroom setting, the dominant culture is still the center of the curriculum. In tourist curricula, teachers have a few multicultural posters and books, but these multicultural units are only being taught during holidays, special events or months, and not throughout the year. This type of learning is harmful to students' futures, and in the long run harmful to society because students are being influenced stereotypes; which could affect their perspectives of and interactions with other ethnic groups.

It is essential that teachers in Hawaii schools teach effective multicultural curricula. Multicultural education should integrate the history and experiences of different cultures into the daily learning of the students. The implementation of multicultural education must be a school and community effort and begins with the teachers, parents, and administrators working together. Banks (1999, p.42) argues that in order for teachers to implement good multicultural curricula, a re-structuring of the school must take place, and in order to restructure we need educational leaders who have a vision and want to implement new ideas and include lessons and activities that address cultural, societal, and multicultural views on a daily basis. Moreover, by addressing the "total experience" of race and history of all ethnic groups, teachers are practicing culturally responsive pedagogy, an important component of multicultural education.

**Implications of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

Gay (2000) defines culturally responsive teaching as practices and curriculum that are effective with the ethnically diverse group. Assessment and achievement trends of
students of color need to be a focus of the teacher in order to ascertain the effectiveness of the strategies. Gay believes that being culturally responsive is the key to understanding how to implement a multicultural curriculum effectively. Culturally responsive pedagogy uses information, personal experiences and professional strategies that include obtaining cultural knowledge, and building on the prior experiences and diverse learning styles of students so that they can learn effectively in school. Some examples of teachers who use culturally responsive methods are found in Gloria Ladson-Billing's book, *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African-American Children*. She introduces several teachers from different ethnic backgrounds who teach or have taught African-American children. The culturally responsive practices of these teachers was based on the following commonly held premises; (1) When students are treated as competent they are likely to demonstrate competence; (2) When teachers provide instructional “scaffolding,” students can move from what they know to what they need to know; (3) The focus of the classrooms must be instructional; (4) Real education is about extending students’ thinking and abilities; (5) Being an effective teacher involves in-depth knowledge of both the students and the subject matter (pp. 123-125). Effective multicultural education requires critically responsive pedagogy because it constructs a framework through which teachers can focus on the total teaching-learning experience.

When teachers combine content knowledge, sound teaching techniques, positive perceptions of themselves as professionals, and affirming relationships within the diverse cultures and ethnicities, they are practicing culturally relevant teachings (Ladson-Billings 1994). In order for teachers to implement multicultural education, they must be culturally responsive in their actions, views and classroom practices. Students will gain knowledge
that shows them that differences are a part of being an American. Implementing an
effective culturally responsive curriculum can bridge gaps between different cultural
groups.

African-American students in this study expressed a desire to learn about the local
culture. Many of them took references and information about African-American culture
to school throughout the year. Others were eager to learn more about the local culture
instead of data and facts about the history of Hawaii. The students were seeking
multicultural curriculum. Some of the students explained that no cultures were taught at
their schools, so when African-American culture was not taught, it did not matter
anyway. Multicultural education and culturally responsive pedagogy are geared toward
valuing and appreciating one’s own culture and expanding these beliefs to others.
Teaching multicultural education in Hawaii’s schools is necessary to make major changes
in the education of students. Doing so will help to address the ethnic stereotypes and
discriminatory practices in Hawaii, thus resulting in a decrease in the negative
experiences of African-American military students. The results of this study also suggest
that teachers and principals need to work together in order to develop school-wide
multicultural curricula. Hawaii’s diversity and history is going unacknowledged, and
through an effective multicultural education program changes can occur among the
respective levels of the ethnic groups.

Multicultural education needs to begin at the local college levels for pre-service
teachers. The University of Hawaii at Manoa College of Education requires that their
pre-service teachers take three credit hours of formal multicultural education. Pre-service
teachers do get a glimpse of multicultural education because some professors and
instructors integrate multicultural education into their classes. However, there needs to be more multicultural education courses offered and the number of credit hours needs to be raised by the university. Within the course racism needs to be the primary focus to address the issues of African-American military students in Hawaii.

Rationale and Goals of Critical Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism

From the range of meanings and pedagogy attached to multicultural education derive two other dimensions that primarily focus on racism as a social entity in American education and link multicultural education to critical pedagogy: critical multiculturalism and anti-racist pedagogies.

Critical Multiculturalism:

Many contemporary scholars of multicultural education often examine the pedagogy without connecting it to power or critical analysis of racism. Sleeter (2001) says that it is because the majority of classroom teachers and administrators in America are White and often condone existing class and race relations. With this mindset in place, a group of multicultural scholars began to focus on the permanence of racism in education that explicitly addresses social justice. In order to distinguish perspectives from non-critical orientations toward multicultural education, some scholars began using the term “critical multiculturalism” (e.g. Kanpol and McLaren, 1995; May, 1999; Obidah, 2000). Some conceptions of the pedagogy are at the forefront of racism. According to McCarthy (1995), “Critical multiculturalism links the microdynamics of the school curriculum to larger issues of social relations outside the school” (p. 92). Similarly, May
(1999) stated that critical multiculturalism "incorporates postmodern conceptions and analyses of culture and identity, while holding onto the possibility of emancipatory politics" (p. 7-8). Critical multiculturalism is a direct link between anti-racist pedagogy and multicultural education. It focuses on race from the minority perspective; anti-racism focuses on racism through addressing school structures and situates culture within power relations.

\textit{Anti-Racist Pedagogy:}

Antiracism is the opposition to racism. Within multicultural education, reducing prejudice acts and increasing equity and equality coincides with the goals of antiracism pedagogy. Blum (1991) defines antiracism as a value that "involves striving to be without racist attitudes oneself as well as being prepared to work against both racist attitudes in others and racial injustice in society more generally" (2). There are five main implications of antiracism for multicultural education: 1) it directs attention specifically to challenging racism in the education system; 2) it addresses racial structures, like tracking and grouping that are not addressed in multicultural education; 3) it places culture at the center of power relations; 4) it connects the school with community; and 5) it focuses on Whiteness as a problem in dominating curriculum and power in education (Sleeter, 2001). Antiracist pedagogy and multicultural education have interchangeable goals with regard to equity and equality for all children. They are both dedicated to multicultural integration across all races.

Culturally responsive, critical multicultural education and antiracist pedagogies are intimately linked to multicultural education. The goals, beliefs and ideas of each
camp centers around culture, community and reducing racism through education. Although multicultural education and culturally responsive pedagogy are geared toward valuing and appreciating one’s own culture and expanding these beliefs to others, critical multiculturalism and antiracist pedagogy share the same goals, by placing racism at the beginning, center and ending.

Today, numerous scholars are writing, researching and implementing critical race theory within multicultural education both at K-12 and post secondary levels (Sleeter 2001). These scholars include: Ladson-Billings, 1998, 1999; Lynn, 1999; Parker, Deyhle & Villena 1999; Delgado 1995, and Tate, 1997). In addition, special journal issues on CRT in education have appeared in Multicultural Perspectives, 2003; Qualitative Inquiry, 2002; and Equity and Excellence in Education, 2002.

Implications for African-American Students

As evidenced in the descriptive narratives, almost all of the African-American students had a strong desire for African-American teachers as role models. More African-American teachers and principals are needed in the school system in Hawaii. The Hawaii Department of Education (DOE) needs to seek out African-American teachers and place them in schools where there is high African-American student populations. In addition, the DOE needs to recruit more African-Americans for principal positions in Hawaii. There are currently only three African-American principals in the entire state of Hawaii.

It was evidenced in this study that African-American students valued support from other African-American teachers. This is evident in both Symone and Taylour’s
experiences. Gay (2004) states that African-American educators play a crucial role in African-American children's development and social needs. At the high school sites, many of the males and females were involved in extracurricular activities, for example being part of an all black step team. At the intermediate and elementary sites, the majority of the African-American students got together during lunch, recess or after school because they all lived on base. However, I believe that more programs are necessary to get more African-American students motivated. Participation in such groups allows them to discuss similar issues and concerns about their race, gender and class.

In addition, African-American females also need to be encouraged to branch out and get involved with other school activities as well. In Valerie's case, she was the only African-American female in a band. If the majority of the females feel the need to stay as a group, then maybe they can join other activities together. This way they can experience social interactions with other ethnic groups outside of classroom settings. However, in Hawaii I believe that programs targeted specifically toward African-American males and females are necessary.

**Implications of Military Transiency Issues**

African-Americans need to educate themselves about the local Hawaiian culture, and the local Hawaiian culture needs to be educated about African-American and military cultures. Currently, the Hawaii Joint Venture Education Forum (JVEF), which is a cooperative group that includes military, community and school participants, are working to assist the Hawaii Department of Education in their understanding and support of the needs of military children and families transitioning to Hawaii. The JVEF offers courses
in military culture to local teachers, however the courses are not mandatory. The JVEF is an essential link between the military and local community.

It is my recommendation that the JVEF use the data from this study to address issues regarding African-American military students in their current military courses. I also recommend that the DOE consider making the military culture courses mandatory, especially for those teachers that teach at heavily impact military schools. As an incentive, that can recommend the course as a professional development credit course. In addition, the military needs to provide information to families coming to Hawaii that incorporate both the positive and negative factors about the local culture. This may decrease cultural shock among African-American students attending local Hawaii schools. It is evidenced that the families heard many rumors about the schools system, however the majority of the student and parent participants were unaware of the racism and the lack of education regarding African-American culture. Moreover, the families were unaware of their cultural history in the islands. I encourage everyone to read the book, And They Came. I highly recommend the book to all African-American students, parents, teachers and service members, so that they can gain insight of their African-American history in Hawaii.
Chapter XI

FINAL REFLECTIONS

"Moving Into the Rainbow"

"Historically a study of Black women in Hawaii is complicated. It is sometimes difficult in fact to know who the Black woman is in the Islands. There are several reasons for this."

(Kathryn Takara)

This study has addressed many concerns and issues regarding African-American military students in Hawaii. It has raised many questions, brought to light some answers and, above all, it allowed the voices of African-Americans who are involved in the public school system to be heard. There are issues that arose from the various intersecting roles I possess, as the researcher, which prompted the research for this study. Berry (2002) explains that, “One’s life experiences influence all aspects of the research process: The topic one chooses to research, the kind of research one chooses to do, how one interprets the data collected, and even the conclusion to which one comes” (145). My experience in Hawaii was the foundation for the chosen topic.

Multiple Identity Roles

As an African-American I came to Hawaii looking for peace and paradise. I did not realize that I would miss my culture so much. I see other African-Americans on base, at church, in the beauty shop and at functions specifically for African-Americans, such as the NAACP, Black Sorority Functions and Black History Events. Still the presence of African-Americans in Hawaii is very limited. When I discovered Dr. Jackson’s book, And They Came, I learned the history of the first Blacks in Hawaii. Prior to this book, I had no prior knowledge of African-American history in Hawaii. This book was the first
sign for me, as an African-American, that there were historical roots of my culture in the islands.

As a military wife in Hawaii, I became up close and personal with the military experience for the first time. Over the past 14 years of my husband's military career, this was the first assignment in which our family lived on a military base. The base segregates the military community from everyone else. We shop at our own stores, have our own medical and judicial facilities, and everyone on base has one common factor - we are all military. During our first year in Hawaii, we lived off base and I am thankful for that experience. It gave me the chance and courage to explore the local culture Hawaii away from “base life.”

One fact that became clear to me very early is that the majority of African-Americans in Hawaii are associated with the military, being either in the military, retired military or once military-affiliated. It can be irritating to always be associated with the military as a dependent because dependents are not active duty service members. We usually have civilian jobs, our children attend local schools, and we are just different from our active duty parents and spouses. Living in Hawaii as a military dependent has given me a chance to experience the segregation associated with the military. Issues surrounding my military class were under attack simply because of association.

As an educator in Hawaii I gradually began to see just how few African-Americans lived here. I came to Hawaii with the expertise of a Virginia teacher. In Virginia the majority of my students were African-American. There were seven other African-American teachers at the school where I taught, and the principal was an African-American woman. Everywhere I looked, I saw black people.
In my education program in Virginia, I was required to take 12 credits of multicultural education courses. In each activity and lesson that I wrote, diversity and multiculturalism had to be addressed. From the time I became a teacher, I incorporated and taught multicultural curricula. So when I came to Hawaii, I applied the same teachings to my classroom here. The students at the school were all military dependents, who came from all ethnic backgrounds, and who had lived in many places around the world. Multicultural education fit perfectly in my classroom. However other issues arose.

As the only African-American teacher, I became the role model for many African-American students. Students who were not at my grade level stopped by to see me. Parents began to come see as well. The questions, concerns and conversations always included the fact that they appreciated my presence and it was “about time” that a Black teacher was teaching at this particular school. In this role as an educator in Hawaii, the bulk of the issues and concerns I encountered formed the research questions of this study. The school system and the military, in my opinion, were not addressing crucial needs for African-American military students and their families. I also believe that the school system lacks the implementation tools necessary to address cultural diversity and multicultural education.

As an African-American female in Hawaii, I was stereotyped. I know that my personality has a lot to do with the way people judge me. However, in Hawaii my womanhood was under attack. As a black woman teacher, I was called loud, aggressive and a “typical black woman.” African-American students came to me and often told me that I reminded them of their mother. Black female students formed a bond with me and we talked about being black women. However, my gender and ethnicity were never
separate. I was always described as the "black woman teacher" or the "black lady" in room 5C. Often, other black women approached me to talk about personal needs and their experiences in Hawaii. When African-American students got in trouble, the teacher and the administration came to me for advice. They stated that as a mother, military wife and teacher, I probably understood what was going on with the black kids at this particular school. They always emphasized that the black girls connected better with me - a black woman teacher. My gender is an important part of my presence in Hawaii and the study includes personal female experiences and perceptions that possibly only black women encounter in Hawaii.

*Role as Researcher*

This particular role was the most challenging of them all. I have been an African-American and a female all my life, a student all my life (at home and in school settings), a military dependent for 10 years, and a teacher for seven years. Patton (2002) points out that background characteristics such as race, gender, age and ethnicity may be relevant for a researcher because "such characteristics can affect how the researcher is received in the setting under study and what sensitivities the inquirer brings to the issues under study" (Patton 2002, p. 566). In addition to understanding the general aspects of the cultures involved in a study, the researcher must understand how personal characteristics and status might affect the fieldwork and the relationships with the individual participants the researcher encounters (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). The researcher must build a professional rapport with the subjects involved and be intellectually and professionally equipped to do the research as accurate and as unbiased as possible. The case study
researcher must write the narrative story and represent the voices of the participants with credibility, professional integrity and methodological competence (Stake, 1995; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; and Patton, 2002).

At the beginning of this reflection, I described each significant role in my life that affected the quality of this study. In collecting the data for this study, these roles were an obvious strength for me in creating a rapport with African-American military students and their African-American parents because of our shared connections and collective experiences. My experience as a teacher, parent and student helped me to capitalize on my interactions with the teachers and principals. In the framework of phenomenological research, the researcher “must have personal experience with and intense interest in the phenomenon under study” (Patton, 2002, p. 107). Within the phenomena, there are “essences of shared experience” that are understood through a common experience. Patton explains that the experiences of different people are bracketed, analyzed and compared to identify the essence of the phenomenon. He adds, “The assumption of essence, like the ethnographer’s assumption of culture exists and is important, becomes the defining characteristic of a purely phenomenological study” (106).

Racism and ethnicity were the defining characteristics for this study. They are often used as defining lenses in qualitative research (Patton, 1999, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Stanfield, 1999). Often limitations arise in research when focusing on racism and ethnicity. Skin color, race and cultural identity can erect barriers in the fieldwork for individuals in and outside of a particular ethnic group because although there are shared identities, there are also differences (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). Although I had shared identities with the majority of the participants, I did find a special connection with
African-American females. Some researchers have pointed out that the close
relationships women interviewers establish are relatively easier with other women in the
study (Oakley, 1981). I used these close relationships to my advantage as I conducted the
in-depth analysis of African-American females in the study. Prior to the case study, I
established personal and emotional bonds with the participants and their mothers. My
emotions and experiences may influence how I interpreted the voices of the participants
and how I made sense of the data. I dealt with this issue through bracketing. Bracketing
indicates that the researcher assumes the commonalities in human experiences, identifies
potential conflicts of interests and suspends his/her own beliefs to study the experiences
of the participants. (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002). Recognizing and defining my
intersecting identity roles, personal experiences in Hawaii, and my cultural history, I
endeavored to achieve credibility for this study.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

When I arrived in Hawaii I was on top of the world - above the rainbows that
filled the perfect sky. As I journeyed through this study, I found that society had placed
my culture somewhere under the rainbow. I searched for African-American history and
its proper place in the islands. Through the experiences of the African-Americans in this
study, I have managed to see positive potential for us here. We cannot allow society to
define who we are. We must hold true to our cultural identity and educate others about
who we are, where we came from and what we believe. Over the past few years, I have
gradually moved into the rainbow, and I believe that hearing the voices of the African-
American students in this study was cause for my gradual movement. I have decided that only I can define who I am; others may try, but the definition is in my cultural identities.

Who defines me?

My race, my gender, my ability, my ethnicity?


Who determines who I am?

The state I live in, demographics, economics, the government, the law, the census bureau, the man, my boss, my teachers, my colleagues, my family, my friends?

Who labels me?

Liberal, radical, extremist, loud, out-spoken, aggressive, strong-willed, determined, proud, ready to fight for what's right, ready to lead a revolution, scared, scorned, angry.

I am defined by the color of my skin, the texture of my hair, the tone in my voice. I am defined by my femininity and grace, my sexual preference and the way I walk into a room or invade someone's space.

I am defined by my history and past. Stereotypes that were created based on hate and ignorance but linger and linger and linger - day after day - as the years pass.

I am defined by my financial status, the job I hold, my education and where I live, what type of car I drive, how I eat, who my husband is, his rank in the military, where my children go to school, the degrees I hold and my grade point average.

Who defines me?

What do you see?
If you didn't know who I was, how would you define me?


Appendix A

Focus Group Interview Protocol

Introduction:
This focus group is designed as a facilitator guide to running focus groups prior to the African-American Military Students interview meetings. Each focus group should include 6-10 participants selected from the African-American student population whose parents have given written consent. Elementary settings are grades 4-6 only, intermediate 6-8, and high school 9-12. For each elementary and intermediate site, a minimum of two meetings will be held for one male group and one female group. The high school settings will have a minimum of four groups two male and two female. This script will be used for all focus groups.

Materials:
The following for each session:

- Flip Charts (with questions displayed on chart)
- Working markers for the flip charts
- Video Camera
- Tape recorder

The facilitator should also bring:

- Markers
- Sticky pads
- Notebook
- Name tags and sharpie pens for participants

Script and Facilitation Notes

Introductions and opening comments:
Facilitator introduces self. Mention the purpose of the study – to discuss African-American military children’s experiences in Hawaii public schools. Explain that it is my job to guide the conversation and get some useful information about what is on the student’s minds.

Set up and Purpose:
- Thank you for coming. Our discussion today will last about an hour.
- Before we begin, I would like you to answer a questionnaire.
- So that we can have an open and sincere conversation, there are a couple of ground rules I would like us to agree on:
CONFIDENTIALITY: We will be gathering information and it is important to keep the information that others may share confidential. If you do discuss the information, please do not name individual’s names.

1. There are no right or wrong answers.
2. Respect each other’s input.
3. If you agree or disagree, please respond – opinions are strongly welcome.
4. Try to let each person have a turn to speak without interruptions.

Introduction of participants:
(First name, grade and ethnicity) – To see how they identify themselves.

Questioning and Conversation:
Facilitator will lead the conversation, record main themes on flip chart, and encourage students to write responses on sticky pad if they want.

1. Think for a minute, and then tell me what it is like to be an African-American student living in Hawaii. (Probe for why they think things are as they describe)
2. In class, do you learn about other cultures? Do you discuss Black History Month? How do you feel about this? Tell me why.
3. How do you choose your friends? What ethnicities are they?
4. Who are the most popular kids in class (at school)? What makes them popular?
5. What is the most positive experience you have had since moving to Hawaii with regard to being AA? Why was this important to you?
6. What is the most negative experience you have had since moving to Hawaii with regard to being AA? How did you feel after this incident? (Probe for why they think this happened.)
7. Do you think the way you look has anything to do with the way others see or treat you? What about the way you wear your hair, the music you listen to.
8. Define racism
9. (You may not need this as the response, this question may have come out in #6) Have you ever experienced racism here in Hawaii? Tell me about it.
10. Is racism different here in Hawaii than on the mainland? If so why?
11. Why do you think AA’s experience racism here? (May not need, may have been answered already)

12. Have you changed in any ways since moving to Hawaii in the ways you feel about yourself or think about yourself?

13. What advice would you give to an AA student your age moving to Hawaii?
Appendix B

Before the Focus Group Interview
Student Questionnaire

Name: ________________________________

Date you arrived at your school: ________________________________

Where are you from? ________________________________

Military Branch? ________________________________

Race/Ethnicity: ______ Black ______ African-American ______ Both

Age: _______ Grade: _______ Gender: ______ Male ______ Female

Please check one of the following:

1. Have you experienced racism in school? _____ Yes _____ No
   Explain:
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

2. Have you been called any names in school? _____ Yes _____ No
   What names have you been called?
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   Who called you these names?
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

3. What is it like being a military dependent and moving around to different states and schools?
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

4. Finish this statement: Being an African-American military dependent in Hawaii means...
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
Appendix C

After the Focus Group Interview
Student Questionnaire

Name: ____________________________ Date: _______________

Military Branch: ___________________

Do you live on base and if so, which base? ___________________

How long have you lived in Hawaii? ________________

What does it mean to be an African-American?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Have you ever experienced racism in Hawaii? If so, how did it make you feel?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Do you learn about African-American history/culture in school?
_____ Yes  _____ No

If yes, please write down some of the things they are learning about:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Additional Comments about the interview session today:
If you would like to have an individual interview, please provide me with the following information:

Parent/Guardian: ________________________________

Phone: ________________________________

Email: ________________________________

Are you leaving the island soon? Please let me know so that I can contact you immediately. _____ YES _____ NO
Appendix D

Individual Interview Protocol for African-American Students

Topic: African-American (AA) Experiences in Hawaii Public Schools

Re: Interview Questions for African-American Military Students

Purpose: To get an in depth personal perspective of being African-American student a Hawaii Public School. To expand upon the negative and positive experiences. To discuss the effects of military transitions.

Personal:
1. Names, age, grade and school that you attend
2. How long have you lived in Hawaii?
3. What other places have you lived? Discuss the effects of military transitions.

African-American Experience in Hawaii for Students:
1. Do you know what it means to be African-American? Give me your definition.
2. What is your perception of a good school?
3. How do you feel about your teacher(s) and how do you think your teacher(s) feel about you?
4. How many of your current classmates are African-American?
5. Do you ever feel out of place in school? Why or Why not?
6. Who and what are your friends like?
7. What kinds of things do you do in school?
8. Do you learn about black people and other cultures of the world?
9. Have you experienced racism in school?
10. How do your teachers, principal and other students treat you and other military AA students?
11. Finish this statement: Being an African-American student in Hawaii means...

*This interview protocol was flexible and allowed students to discuss issues and concerns as they arose from the questions.
Appendix E

Individual Interview Protocol for African-American Principals

Topic: African-American (AA) Experiences in Hawaii Public Schools

Re: Interview Questions for AA Principals

Purpose: To get an in-depth personal and professional perspective of being an African-American principal in Hawaii public schools. To get an in-depth personal and professional perspective African-American military students’ regarding their race, gender and class.

Personal:
1. Full Name
2. Where are you from and how did you get to Hawaii?
3. How long have you been in Education and what made you decide to become a principal?

African-American Experience in Hawaii:
1. Do you feel that being an AA principal in Hawaii has an effect on your status in the position?
2. What are the biggest challenges of an AA principal in Hawaii?
3. What experiences have you encountered because of your ethnicity?
4. How do others perceive and respond to you? (students, teachers, parents)
5. What is your idea of a cultural experience, and how important is this in relation to the way you run your school?
6. What are you perceptions of AA military students?
7. Are the AA parents involved in their child’s learning?
8. How many AA teachers do you have on staff at this school?
9. Do you feel that the low number of AA teachers impacts the lives of the AA students and other minority students?

Personal Reflection:
1. If you could change 3 things about the Hawaii Department of Education what would they be and why?
2. Finish this statement: Being an African-American in Hawaii means...
Appendix F

Individual Interview Protocol for African-American Teachers

Topic: African-American (AA) Experiences in Hawaii Public Schools

Re: Interview Questions for African-American Teachers

Purpose: To get an in depth personal and professional perspective of being an African-American teacher in the Hawaii Public School system. To expand upon the negative and positive experiences of your career based on your ethnicity and the way you feel others react, perceive and respond to you as an African-American. To get an in-depth personal perspective of African-American military children in Hawaii.

Personal:
1. Full Name
2. How long have you lived in Hawaii?
3. Where did you attend college?
4. How long have you been in education and what made you decide to become a teacher?
5. What grade and/or subjects do you teach?

African-American Experience in Hawaii:
1. Do you feel that being an African-American teacher in Hawaii has an effect on your status in the position?
2. What are the biggest challenges of an AA teacher in Hawaii?
3. How do others respond to you? (students, teachers, parents, principal)
4. Do you teach African-American history in your classroom, why or why not?
5. How important is multiculturalism in your school?
6. How do you personally encourage cultural unity amongst your students?

The Students:
1. What are your personal perceptions of African American military children at your school?
2. How many African-American students do you have in your class?
3. What number of these students are military dependents?
4. Does the military status play a role in the way AA students are perceived at school?
5. What are your opinions about military transitions?

Personal Reflection:
1. Finish this statement: Being African-American Teacher in Hawaii means...
Appendix G

Individual Interview Protocol for African-American Military Parents

**Topic:** African-American (AA) Experiences in Hawaii Public Schools

**Re:** Interview Questions for African-American Military Family

**Purpose:** To get an in depth personal perspective of being African-American parents with children attending a Hawaii Public School. To expand upon the negative and positive experiences of your child’s life and your family’s lives based on race and military class and the way you feel others react, perceive and respond to you as an African-American. To discuss the effects of military transitions.

**Personal:**
1. Names of family members
2. Children’s ages, grades, and school attending
3. # of months or years in Hawaii
4. Rate and title of military member
5. Military branch and location
6. Number of years in the military
7. Number of months/years you have left in Hawaii
8. Spouse’s occupation
9. How long have your children attended Hawaii Public Schools (grades)?
10. What other places have you lived? Discuss the effects of military transitions.

**African-American Experience in Hawaii for Parents:**
1. Do you feel that being an AA in Hawaii plays a role in the way teachers, staff and principals respond to you?
2. What are the biggest challenges of an AA parent in Hawaii public schools?
3. Does the school your children attend celebrate and acknowledge African-American culture and celebrations?
4. What are your perceptions of racism in Hawaii?
5. As a parent, have you faced any problems with other parents in the school or community because of your ethnicity?
6. Do you feel that being AA and military has positive or negative factors on the way your family is viewed by teachers and others in the public school sector?
7. During Parent Teacher Conferences, describe the setting and the way you feel towards the teacher? Has their ever been a language barrier or communication barrier that caused confusion?
8. There are only 2 percent of AA teachers in the Hawaii Public School system and three AA principals, how do feel about this?
9. Overall, describe the ideal teacher for your child, and does the teacher’s ethnicity matter?
10. Finish this statement: Being an African-American in Hawaii means...
Appendix H

Letters of Permission to Parents, Students, and Principals

Dear Parent or Guardian:

My name is Kimetta Hairston, and I am currently a Ph.D. student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am writing to obtain formal consent from you to allow your son and/or daughter to participate in a focus group interview at (Name School). My primary focus and research goals are to study the experiences and perceptions of African-American military children in Hawaii public schools.

The purpose of this study is to conduct several focus group interviews in Hawaii public schools, which have large military student populations. The interview subjects will be African-American males and females, and the interview groups will be formed in single-sex groups, one for males and one for females.

I would like to conduct the interviews during school hours with the permission of the principal and teachers, but if there were a problem with scheduling, the interviews would need to be held after school. They should take no longer than an hour, and I will give ample notification of the dates. The name of students and participating schools will not be reported. Results from this study may be published or presented at conferences, but all participants will remain anonymous. If you want to discuss this with me before giving your consent, please call me at (808) 254-0199 and I will be happy to give you additional information. You may also contact Bill Dendle at (808) 956-5007 at the Human Services Board who can address any questions and concerns about the confidentiality.

Please fill in the bottom of the form and have your child return it to their homeroom teacher as soon as possible. Parents if you are interested in participating in a family or individual interview regarding your experiences in Hawaii, please fill in the information at the bottom of this letter and I will contact you. Once again, I look forward to working with you and your child.

Sincerely,

Kimetta R. Hairston, M.Ed.
Graduate Assistant, College of Education
University of Hawaii at Manoa

__________________________________________________________
My child, __________________________________________ has my permission to participate in the focus group interview study regarding the experiences and perceptions of African-American military children in Hawaii public schools with Kimetta Hairston at (Name School). He/She is in ________ grade.

__________________________________________________________
(Please PRINT your names) (Signatures)

I would also be interested in a family or individual interview regarding my experiences in Hawaii.
You can contact me at ________________________________

(Phone Number /Email)
Dear Student:

I'm inviting you to participate in an important project regarding the experiences and perceptions of African-American military children in Hawaii public schools. I am currently a Ph.D. student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa collecting this information for my dissertation.

Your views and opinions are needed to increase understanding about what it is like being an African-American military student in Hawaii.

Please sign below to participate in a Focus Group Interview. The dates will be given as soon as I obtain your parent’s permission. No names of students will be used and all information will be completely confidential. Thank you so much for your support.

_____ YES, I agree to participate.

Name: __________________________

Grade: __________________________

Homeroom Teacher: ________________

Homeroom #: _____________________
Dear Principal:

This letter is in reference to our previous conversation regarding the focus group interviews that I would like to conduct during February-April 2003 (Name School). I am writing to obtain formal consent from you and to give you additional information about my intentions. As you are aware, I am currently a Ph.D. student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. My primary focus and research goals are to study the experiences and perceptions of African-American military children in Hawaii public schools. During the Spring 2003 semester, I am taking a course titled, African-American Experiences in Hawaii. As part of the course, I will conduct focus interviews, gather data, and analyze the information that will become a part of my final dissertation. Since your school has a large military population, it will be a valuable site for this particular study.

I plan to conduct focus group interviews in eight Hawaii public schools: three elementary, two intermediate and three high schools, which have large military student populations. The interview subjects will be African-American, military dependents, from ages 8-18 years old. The interviews will be conducted in single-sex groups, one for males and one for females. I will record information regarding the students’ experiences in Hawaii public schools.

With your support and the participation of (Name School) in this study, the students will have the opportunity to share their views and opinions in an open-ended interview session and complete a brief evaluation of the interview process. Data gathered from the interviews will be available upon request.

I look forward to discussing the interview dates, and if you have questions or concerns, please contact me at (808) 254-0199. The name of the students and participating schools will not be reported. This information will remain confidential. If you have concerns regarding the safety of the students and the confidentiality of the information you may contact Bill Dendle with the Human Services Board at (808) 956-5007.

Once again, thank you and I will contact you soon with the focus groups interview dates.

Sincerely,

Kimetta R. Hairston, M.Ed.
Graduate Assistant, College of Education
University of Hawaii at Manoa
Dear Mr. and Mrs.:

My name is Kimetta Hairston, and I am currently a Ph.D. student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Over the past seven months, I have been conducting focus group interviews with African-American military students in Hawaii public schools. I have interviewed a 115 students, your daughter was one of those students that I interviewed in a session at (School Name). I have chosen three female students that I would like to follow for the next school year.

I am interested in (Name) for several reasons. She is a (state grade transition), which is a big transition, and during the focus group interview, her attitude was positive and she is intellectually expressive. She will be able to reflect on her experiences over the next year. I would like to see how this transition from might affect her experiences and perceptions as an African American female student in Hawaii.

The process includes:
1. 3-4 individual interviews over the 2003-2004 school year that can take place at school or in the home setting.
2. Two family interviews – one in August and the other at the end of the year.
3. A personal journal: She will be asked to keep a journal, I will assign 3-4 specific reflections, and the other reflections will be her own.
4. A brief autobiography.

My primary focus and research goals are to study the experiences and perceptions of African-American military children in Hawaii public schools. Results from this study may be published or presented at conferences, but all participants will remain anonymous. If you want to discuss this with me before giving your consent, please call me at (808) 254-0199 and I will be happy to give you additional information and address any questions or concerns you may have. You may also contact Bill Dendle at (808) 956-5007 at the Human Services Board who can also answer and address your questions and concerns about the confidentiality of the information.

Please consider and respond by filling out the attached permission form and returning it in the enclosed stamped envelope. I know that (Name) will be a valuable asset to my research.

Sincerely,

Kimetta R. Hairston, M.Ed.
Graduate Assistant, College of Education
University of Hawaii at Manoa
Appendix I

Letter to Parents After the Focus Group Interview Session

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Today, your child attended a focus group interview session at (School Name) regarding African-American military children’s experiences in Hawaii public schools. Please take the opportunity to discuss with your son or daughter the information and topics we discussed.

If you want to have a family interview, please let me know. All of the information that I gather from you and your child is very important to my dissertation study with regard to race, transiency and cultural diversity issues in Hawaii. All data that I collect will remain confidential.

Once again, thank you for allowing your child to participate in this study. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at 254-0199 or by email at kimetta@hawaii.edu.

Sincerely,

Kimetta R. Hairston, M.Ed.
Graduate Assistant and Instructor
University of Hawaii at Manoa
Dear Family:

First and foremost, thank you once again for agreeing to participate in my dissertation research study. The upcoming 2003-2004 school year will hopefully arouse many personal experiences, thoughts, and reflections for your daughter.

This is the agenda for the 2003-2004 Research Study:

- A family interview (August or September)
- A first-day of school interview (August)
- Two additional individual interviews with (participant) around the mid-point of the year and at the end of the year.
- I will attend extracurricular events and activities, please let me know when these will occur in advance so that I can plan to attend.
- I will visit (participant) at school and observe her in the school environment (classes, cafeteria, etc.)
- A closing family interview next spring.
- A two-hour reflection session with (participant) about the year
- (Participant) will need to keep a journal. Write down all positive and negative reflections regarding her experiences as an African-American female military student in a Hawaii public school. Please keep track of the journal, I will use it as a data source, and once I am done with it, it will be returned.
- Finally (participant) will be asked to write an autobiography during the December break.

Enclosed:

- A journal and pens
- Journal topics that I want (participant) to reflect upon. I am asking that she please discuss these topics, however, please do not limit herself to them. She can write whatever and whenever she wants in your journal about her experiences at school and in the community as an African American student.
- If she runs out of room in the journal, let me know and I will send her another one.
• Written permission, please sign and return in the enclosed envelope.

I am excited, and I am looking forward getting to know your family. Please do not hesitate to contact me at anytime to talk about issues and experiences that arise. I have enclosed my business card that includes contact numbers and my email address.

Your daughter is extraordinary and she is going to be an important asset to my research.

Sincerely,

Kimetta R. Hairston, M.Ed.
University of Hawaii at Manoa
Journal Topics
(Make sure that you date ALL journal entries!)

1. Being an African-American student in Hawaii means…
2. Look in the mirror, what do you see? Describe yourself.
3. What was your first day of school this year like?
4. Write about your friends.
5. Write about your teachers.
6. Write about your hobbies and interests.
7. Describe your school (the building, the people, your classes, etc.)

You are not limited to these reflections.

Please write about any experience that you have throughout the year.

Have FUN reflecting…
Permission to Participate in Case Study 2003-2004

My child, _______________ has my permission to participate in the 2003-2004 dissertation research study regarding the experiences and perceptions of African American military female students in Hawaii public schools with Kimetta R. Hairston.

Print Name

Print Name

Mother’s Signature

Father’s Signature

Date

Please provide: Home phone: ____________________________

Email Address: ____________________________

I agree to participate in the 2003-2004 research study.

Child’s Printed Name

Child’s Signature

Date
Appendix K

Case Study Individual Student Interview Protocol

1. What is your full name? Nickname?

2. Describe yourself and your cultural background.

3. Hobbies and special interests.

4. Can you remember your first year in Hawaii? Tell me what it was like?

5. How was the first day of school?

6. Tell me about your classes?

7. What are your teachers like?

8. What is your principal like?

9. What are your friends like?

10. Tell me about your experiences with racism in school in Hawaii?

11. What has life been like for you as an African American female in Hawaii? With other ethnic groups? Other genders?

12. What is it like being a military dependent? Transitions, the way you are perceived by others.

13. What do you like most about Hawaii?

14. What do you dislike most about Hawaii?

15. Soon you will be leaving Hawaii, how do you feel about this?

16. Do you think you will ever come back to Hawaii, why or why not?

17. What are your future plans?

18. (For Taylour) What is it liking living with albinism?
## Appendix L

### Participant Observation Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Social Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>March 8, 2004</td>
<td>September 6, 2003</td>
<td>December 15, 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 10, 2004</td>
<td>February 20, 2004</td>
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<td></td>
<td>April 2, 2004</td>
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<tr>
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<td>March 8, 2004</td>
<td>May 1, 2003</td>
<td>January 10, 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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