Title
The invisibility of multiracial students: an emerging majority by 2050

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3p3240kx

Author
Potter, Gina Acosta

Publication Date
2009

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation
The Invisibility of Multiracial Students:
          An Emerging Majority by 2050

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

by

Gina Acosta Potter

Committee in charge:

University of California, San Diego

    Professor Carolyn Huie Hofstetter, Chair

San Diego State University

    Professor Margaret Basom
    Professor Valerie Ooka Pang

2009
The Dissertation of Gina Acosta Potter is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

University of California, San Diego
San Diego State University
California State University, San Marcos
2009
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family who represent a multitude of culturally rich races and languages, having immigrated from six countries to have the privilege of calling America home. To my biracial husband, Paul, who is half Okinawan and half White of English descent, thank you for your endless love and support. I appreciate the steadfast fortitude you have extended to me during the doctoral program and the precious time you bequeathed to our young children. This work is also devoted to the joys of my life – my beautiful multiracial children, Kainoa and Tatiana Potter, who represent a harmonious blend of three races, Filipino, Okinawan, and White. As your mother, I love you dearly and am so proud of you. You represent the new and exciting face of America.

I want to thank my Filipina mother, Eleanor Acosta Teagle and White father of English and Irish descent, Thomas Edwin Teagle for having the courage to join in an interracial marriage in 1970, just three years after the Supreme Court struck down widespread anti-miscegenation state laws that required a separation of races in marriage. My parents not only shared the taboo of mixed race love at a time of racial tension in America, but they also raised three biracial, or in Filipino terms “mestiza” daughters, Jami, Tomi, and myself. How fortunate were my sisters and I to have two parents who overcame strict racial limitations and instilled within us the good fortune to be of not one but of two distinct and diverse races.
Mom, thank you for always being there for me and for the many sacrifices you have made in your life to ensure that I could go to college and achieve so many dreams. You are my strength and my inspiration. Dad, thank you for the hard work ethic you instilled in me. You embedded within me a relentless drive to always be my best. My parents are also both great educators in San Diego and I am obliged to them for instilling within me the resolve to know that every child can and should succeed. Jami and Tomi, you are my sisters and my best friends. Thank you for proudly living the life of a “mestiza” alongside me.

To my grandparents on both our Filipino and White sides of the family, you have been the steadfast foundation of our family. Grandma Ramona Magbanua Acosta Reinaldo, Grandpa Alejo Agabin Acosta, Grandpa Lucio Ranada Reinaldo, Grandma Evelyn Teagle Fousek, Grandpa Edwin Teagle, and Grandpa Alex Fousek were an integral part of the children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren within our family. They were heroic individuals who overcame incredible life feats such as serving in World War II, immigrating to America on a ship as a war bride, living in poverty, becoming successful athletes and businessmen, and surviving the Great Depression. They lived not in the present but in the future and embraced diversity throughout their life times.

To my extended family members representing the Areolas, both Thompson families, the many Teagles, and the Bakers (Randall, Candyse, Mersadie, and Amanda) – how blessed I am to have wonderful relatives.

The diverse and multifaceted aspects of my family have united to make me who I am today. My family is my strength, my courage, and my success.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION ........................................................................................................... iv

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ...................................................................................... xv

LIST OF FIGURES ................................................................................................... xviii

LIST OF TABLES ..................................................................................................... xix

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ......................................................................................... xxi

VITA ....................................................................................................................... xxiii

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION .............................................................. xxiv

CHAPTER ONE ....................................................................................................... 1

INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................................... 1

Purpose of Study .................................................................................................... 4

Statement of the Problem ..................................................................................... 6

Researcher Biases ................................................................................................. 7

Summary of Literature ......................................................................................... 10
Chapter Organization ........................................................................................................... 57

The Qualitative Researcher ............................................................................................... 57

Research Design and Case Study ...................................................................................... 60

Research Question and Sub Questions ............................................................................. 60

Data Collection Procedures .............................................................................................. 61
  Interviews ......................................................................................................................... 62
  Documents ........................................................................................................................ 64
  Data Recording .................................................................................................................. 65
  Transcripts .......................................................................................................................... 66

Participants ......................................................................................................................... 66

Data Analysis ...................................................................................................................... 67
  Participant Observation .................................................................................................... 72
  Validity ............................................................................................................................... 73

Ethical Considerations ....................................................................................................... 75

Closing ................................................................................................................................ 76

CHAPTER FOUR .................................................................................................................. 78

ANALYSIS OF DATA .......................................................................................................... 78

Overview of Chapter Organization ..................................................................................... 78
Group Interviews ............................................................................................................. 79

Organization of Data Analysis ............................................................................... 83

Federal Public Policy ............................................................................................... 88

United States Department of Education Policy ..................................................... 94

State Response to Federal Policy ........................................................................... 97

California Department of Education (CDE) .............................................................. 100

California Department of Education Data Collection Overview ......................... 100

California Department of Education Policies ......................................................... 101

CDE Research Themes and Sub-Themes ............................................................... 108

Federal Public Policy ............................................................................................... 111

Developing Guidelines for Policy Implementation ................................................. 111

Racial Classification ................................................................................................. 116

Multiracial School Enrollment Procedures ............................................................ 118

Decline to State & Third Party Identification ......................................................... 118

Data Methodologies ................................................................................................ 120

Multiracial Data Tabulation Struggles, Enrollment Data Entry into
Database, and Data Methodology and Staff Decisions ............................................. 122

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) ................................... 126
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction .................................................. 150

Accountability ................................................................................................ 150

Multiracial Student Needs .............................................................................. 152

Key Research Findings ................................................................................... 155

Key Research Finding #1 – A lack of alignment exists between state and federal education agency racial classification systems utilized for monitoring academic achievement. ................................................................. 156

Key Research Finding #2 – The NCDPI has actively employed a multiracial classification for just over ten years while the CDE allows mixed race students to identify themselves within a primary and secondary racial classification system. .................................................................................. 160

Key Research Finding #3 – School enrollment procedures for multiracial students varies between the CDE and the NCDPI. ......................................................... 161

Key Research Finding #4 – Controversy exists on both the federal and state levels regarding the distinction between race and ethnicity. ...................... 161

Key Research Finding #5 – Multiracial students do not collectively identify themselves in the same way and they may change racial identities based on the context and situation of the various environments within which they navigate. ................................................................................................. 164
Key Research Finding #6 – The USDE has operated under a waiver for just over a decade, which has allowed federal, state, and local education entities the opportunity to postpone complying with the OMB’s 1997 revisions to racial and ethnic classifications that allow multiracial individuals to identify as more than one race. .......................................................... 165

Key Research Finding #7 – In an effort to link past data with new data on racial groups, the USDE’s Final Guidance allows state education agencies to “bridge” the “two or more races” category into a single-race classification. ...................................................................................... 167

Key Research Finding #8 – The needs of multiracial students have yet to be identified or addressed on a national level and continue to be neglected by most state education agencies. ...................................................... 168

CHAPTER FIVE ............................................................................................. 170

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS ................................................................. 170

Introduction ..................................................................................................... 170

Chapter Organization ..................................................................................... 172

Summary of Study ............................................................................................ 172

Overview of the Problem ................................................................................ 174
Purpose Statement and Research Questions.......................................................... 175

Review of the Methodology ................................................................................. 176

Major Findings .................................................................................................... 179

Primary Research Question: How and to what extent do public policy decisions
regarding accountability affect the report of educational outcomes for
multiracial students? ......................................................................................... 179

Racial Formation as a Theoretical Framework ................................................. 179

Federal Public Policy ......................................................................................... 180

Research Sub Question 1. What subgroups are identified within the
accountability movement in two states that differ in their multiracial
category policies? ......................................................................................... 184

State Response to Federal Policy ................................................................. 184

Research Sub-Question 2. How is academic achievement data disaggregated
according to policies in two different state education agencies?............. 186

Academic Achievement ................................................................................. 186

Research Sub-Question 3. To what degree are multiracial students rendered
visible in the reporting of academic achievement data to identify their
educational progress and needs in two states with varying methods of
identifying multiracial students? .................................................................. 190

Multiracial Student Needs ............................................................................. 190
Caveats of the Study ................................................................. 192

Implications for Theory ............................................................ 194

Implications for Practice and Policy ......................................... 197

Recommendations for Future Research .................................... 199

Concluding Remarks ............................................................... 200

APPENDIX A - Request for Information Letter or Email ............ 204

APPENDIX B - Request for Information Questionnaire .............. 206

APPENDIX C - Participant Consent Form .................................. 207

APPENDIX D - Interview Protocol ............................................. 209

APPENDIX E - North Carolina Department of Education: Sample Subgroup Composite Scores .................................................. 212

REFERENCES .............................................................................. 213
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACT – American College Testing
AMEA – Association of MultiEthnic Americans
AP – Advanced Placement
API – Academic Performance Index
ASAM – Alternative Schools Accountability Model
AYP – Adequate Yearly Progress
BIDM – Biracial Identity Development Model
CACI – Campus Awareness and Compliance Initiative
CAHSEE – California High School Exit Examination
CALPADS – California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System
CALTIDES – California Longitudinal Teacher Integrated Data Educational System
CBEDS – California Basic Education Demographic System
CDE – California Department of Education
CELDT – California English Language Development Test
Cooperative System – National Cooperative Educational Statistics System
ESEA – Elementary and Secondary Education Act
FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
Final Guidance – Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education
Forum – National Forum on Educational Statistics

HIF – Hapa Issues Forum

IASA – Improving America’s Schools Act

IRB – Institutional Review Board

LEA – Local Education Agency

MCBOE – Montgomery County Board of Education

MSAN – Minority Student Achievement Network

NAACP – National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

NAEP – National Assessment of Educational Progress

NCDPI – North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

NCES – National Center for Educational Statistics

NCHS – National Center for Health Statistics

NCLB – No Child Left Behind Act

NHIS – National Health Interview Survey

NPEC – National Center for Educational Statistics

NSF – National Science Foundation

OCR – Office of Civil Rights

OMB – Office of Management and Budget

OMB Directive No. 15 – Office of Management and Budget’s Statistical Policy Directive Number 15

PI – Personal Identity

RGO – Reference Group Orientation
RIDMs – Racial Identity Development Models
SAT – Scholastic Aptitude Test
SEA – State Education Agency
STAR – Standardized Testing and Reporting
USDE – United States Department of Education
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Multiple Data Sources Utilized for Validity ........................................ 70
Figure 2. When Racial and Ethnic Student Data is Collected by Public Schools, 1995 .......................................................................................................................... 98
Figure 3. 2007-2008 California Department of Education Total K-12 Enrollment .................................................................................................................. 107
Figure 4. Major Research Themes ........................................................................ 183
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Root’s Five Identities for Mixed-Race People, 1998 ......................... 35
Table 2. Nine Bridging Methodologies .......................................................... 46
Table 3. Organizational Structure of Chapter Four ....................................... 79
Table 4. Research Documents ................................................................. 81
Table 5. Major Research Themes ............................................................. 84
Table 6. Report of Themes & Sub-Themes ................................................ 85
Table 7. Controversial Issues: Sub-Themes & Major Themes They Fall Within 88
Table 8. 1977 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Statistical Directive
   Number 15 Racial and Ethnic Categories and Racial Definitions ............ 90
Table 9. 1997 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Statistical Policy
   Directive Number 15 Revisions to 1977 Guidelines ................................ 92
Table 10. 1995 Percentage of Public Schools Indicating Whether Suggested
   Revisions to OMB Policy Directive No. 15 for Classifying Race and
   Ethnicity are a Significant Issue for Students at their School ................ 99
Table 11. California Department of Education Research Themes and Sub-
   Themes .................................................................................................. 110
Table 12. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Research Themes
   and Sub-Themes .................................................................................. 135
Table 13. 2007 United States Department of Education Racial & Ethnicity
   Classification Guidance for Students and Staff .................................... 143
Table 14. 2007-2008 North Carolina Department of Public Instruction End-of-Grade General Test Multiple-Choice Test Results Statewide Percent of Students At or Level III in Both Reading and Mathematics, Grades 3-8, for All Ethnicities. .......................................................... 152

Table 15. Key Research Findings by Themes & Sub-Themes .................... 155

Table 16. A Comparison of Racial and Ethnic Classification Structures........ 157

Table 17. Racial and Ethnic Classification Structures in California Department of Education & North Carolina Department of Public Instruction............. 160
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a biracial child growing up in America and now humbly serving as an educational administrator, traveling the dissertation journey and conducting a research study on the topic of multiracial students has been a life dream. I am grateful to many influential teachers and professors in my life who bestowed upon me the gift of education. They gave me the joy of learning and the wisdom to know that life is about passing the knowledge one receives on to generations of young minds to come. I am thankful to educators within the University of California at Berkeley Child Care System, Oakland Unified School District, Santa Monica-Malibu School District, South Bay Union School District, Chula Vista Elementary School District, and Lemon Grove School District for giving me the opportunity to be a classroom instructional assistant, a preschool teacher, an elementary school teacher, a principal, and an assistant superintendent.

To my dissertation chair, Dr. Carolyn Huie Hofstetter, you took me beneath your wings and I will forever be indebted to you for your calm and encouraging guidance. Thank you for your constant encouragement, unfettered patience and guiding wisdom. To my committee members, Dr. Margaret Basom and Dr. Valerie Ooka Pang, you are incredible women whom I will always admire for your innovation and vision. I am most grateful to the many great educational leaders who have led the way, mentored me throughout my career, and allowed me to work alongside them.
To my close friends who stand by my side through life’s joys and sorrows - Patricia, Valerie, Nancy, Tracy, Olga, Himanshu, and Heather, your lifelong friendship means the world to me. And to Mary Ellen, who has always been there for me through childhood, adulthood, and motherhood – thank you! A tribute goes out to my doctoral cohort for holding the rim! To my doctoral study buddy Cyd, thank you for taking this journey with me…we made it!

Finally, to the remarkable educational administrators who took the time and courage to participate in this research study from the California Department of Education and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction – I extend to you my sincere appreciation for sharing your wisdom and expertise so that I may understand the complexity surrounding education’s past, present, and future.
VITA

1993  Bachelor of Arts, Rhetoric, University of California, Berkeley
1995  Master of Education, University of California, Los Angeles
1995  California Clear Multiple Subject Credential with Cross Cultural Language Acquisition Development, University of California, Los Angeles
1995  Teacher, Santa Monica-Malibu School District, Santa Monica
1998  Teacher, South Bay Union School District, San Diego
2000  Associate Principal, Chula Vista Elementary School District, San Diego
2001  Preliminary Administrative Services Credential, San Diego State University, San Diego
2002  Principal, Lemon Grove School District, San Diego
2003  Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential, San Diego State University, San Diego
2006  Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, Lemon Grove School District, San Diego
2009  Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership
       University of California, San Diego
       San Diego State University
       California State University, San Marcos

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Fields:  Rhetoric

          Education

          Educational Leadership
          Professor Carolyn Huie Hofstetter
          Professor Margaret Basom
          Professor Valerie Ooka Pang
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Invisibility of Multiracial Students: An Emerging Majority by 2050

by

Gina Acosta Potter

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California, San Diego, 2009
San Diego State University, 2009
California State University, San Marcos, 2009

Professor Carolyn Huie Hofstetter, Chair

By the nature of their existence, multiracial people call to question deeply held notions of race and racial classification held tightly by Americans. To acknowledge a person as multiracial, or a blending of more than one race, defies the conventional social construct that delineates clear, discernible, and discrete races. Even as multiracial students become increasingly visible in our nation’s schools, multiracial identity is seldom recognized as a critical topic of diversity within the educational arena. By 2050, the multiracial population will surface as a majority group of people whose presence will require our nation to redefine our current constructs of race, racial identification, and racial classification (Anderson, 2002; Winters & DeBose, 2003). This qualitative research study seeks to
address the primary research question: *How and to what extent do public policy decisions regarding academic accountability affect educational outcomes for multiracial students in two states that differ in their multiracial categorization policies?*

The purpose of this study is to illuminate racial subgroups identified within accountability systems, determine the degree to which multiracial students are rendered visible in the academic accountability movement, and examine the needs of multiracial students. The research design is a comparative case study of two state education agencies and the public policies they employ when monitoring the academic achievement of multiracial students.

The major findings of this study reveal: 1) a misalignment between federal and state accountability systems for racial classification; 2) a variance in how two state education agencies racially classify mixed race students; 3) a non-standardized approach to school enrollment categorization of multiracial students; 4) controversy regarding the meaning of race and ethnicity; 5) various approaches taken by multiracial students when self-identifying; 6) data methodology challenges; and 7) a more than ten year lapse in time before the federal Department of Education moved towards complying with the White House Office of Management and Budget regulations allowing multiracial individuals to identify as more than one race.

The implications of this research indicate a significant need for the United States’ educational system to face the challenge of recognizing and responding
to the histories, experiences, and identities of multiracial students within our schools.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

With more than 100,000 multiracial births annually in the United States, researchers acknowledge the importance of fostering the positive development and meeting the educational needs of these individuals (Downing, Nichols, & Webster, 2005; Schwartz, 1998b). Despite this increasing number of multiracial people, little has been done to increase the amount of research and information made available to human service professionals and educators working with multiracial families (Steward, Giordano, Goldsworthy, Stallworth, & Stevens, 1998; Wehrly, Kenney, K. R., & Kenney, M. E., 1999). According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the percentage of interracial married couples rose from 4.5 percent or 2.4 million in the early 1990's to 5.4 percent or 3.0 million by 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

This growing wave of multiracial unions is producing a whole generation of mixed race children. The 2000 Census was considered groundbreaking for the multiracial civil rights movement in that it allowed people to mark more than one race. The 2000 Census enumerated 6.8 million people, or 2.4% of the total population in the United States who identify themselves as multiracial (K. M. Williams, 2006; Winters & DeBose, 2003). This qualitative case study explores the degree to which public policy decisions, focused on academic accountability, affect educational outcomes for multiracial students.
By interviewing educational leaders in two different states, namely California and North Carolina, this research study seeks to compare and contrast the varying degrees to which multiracial students are rendered visible. This research will triangulate data from interviews with state educational administrators, document analyses comparing the components of two state accountability systems, and review of archival records tracing changes in racial categories for the U.S. Census and Office of Management and Budget (OMB). In addition, analyses of the current subgroups utilized to disaggregate student achievement data within California and North Carolina will be completed, determining the extent to which a multiracial subgroup is utilized in each geographic location. Furthermore, the research will draw on expectations set by the accountability movement, as defined by the federal enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). NCLB, investigates and regulates the manner in which academic achievement data are gathered to determine the progress and needs of students by specific subgroup categories.

As we seek to meet the academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs of multiracial students, it is important to consider how we label them in a predominantly monoracial society. Multiracial identity development is a complex process, only recently studied and defined as researchers work to establish an appropriate racial identity model for multiracial people (Spencer, 1999). Having a mixed ethnic heritage may be problematic for multiracial children’s development, depending on the social context and cultural environment within which they live (Chiong, 1998; Frazier, 2002; Winters & DeBose, 2003). Too often multiracial
children experience uncertainty and confusion about how they should label themselves. In fact, many multiracial individuals consider themselves oppressed due to labels that inaccurately portray their racial background (Alsultany, 2004; K. M. Williams, 2006; Schwartz, 1998a).

Viewed within the broader social context, data collection practices in the United States perpetuate monoracial categories that render multiracial people invisible (Steel & Valentine, 1995). As one example, the U.S. Census reveals our country’s history of racial categorization using the long standing practice known as the “one drop rule,” originally classifying any individual with any percent, however small, of African American ancestry as African American. This rule was later applied to Japanese American people during WWII and has since encouraged biracial people to deny one aspect of their racial heritage. The “one drop rule” serves to maintain a status quo wherein the dominant White culture is preserved and continues to reap the benefits of socioeconomic power and privilege as the dominant majority (Breland, Steward, Neil, Minami, Chan, Owens, 1999).

The lack of rigorous and broad research on multiracial people, coupled with the institutional resistance to allowing formal identification with more than one racial group, leads to a diminished sense of self as well as institutional bias, prejudices and discrimination against multiracial people (Chiong, 1998; Morrison & Bordere, 2001). The accumulated effects of these circumstances can be devastating for biracial children within school settings. Put simply, educational systems, and the students they serve, may benefit from the development of tools
to identify multiracial students, assess their academic, social, and emotional needs, and thus be better able to ensure their success in school.

**Purpose of Study**

Considerable controversy has surfaced over the vastly increasing number of multiracial people in the United States (Funderburg, 1994; Winters & DeBose, 2003). Myths and stereotypes regarding interracial marriages and multiracial people foster discriminatory views towards this newly emerging population (Downing et al., 2005; Wardle, 1989; Winters & DeBose, 2003). In working to understand the needs of multiracial students, we would be wise to confront these misconceptions, beginning with fundamental notions of race.

Children of mixed race and ethnic heritages have unique advantages and specific challenges. Mixed race youth, who are socialized as multiracial, often have an enhanced sense of self and identity, greater inter-group tolerance, and an appreciation of minority group cultures (K. M. Williams, 2006; Schwartz, 1998a). On the other hand, children who are expected to choose between their ethnicities may struggle to develop a strong sense of self, because of personal feelings about their identity choices, their relationships with family, and pressures to choose one peer group over another. Further, the racism endured by people of color may be accentuated by the prejudice some people have against mixing races through marriage and procreation (Downing et al., 2005; Schwartz, 1998a; Spencer, 1999). Indeed, the very presence of multiracial people blurs the
physical categories upon which White status and power depend (Daniel, 1996; Harris, 2002).

It is particularly challenging for students who have dual heritage to develop their racial identity within schools that perpetuate single race categories (Chiong, 1998; Herman, 2002; Renn, 2000a). As of 1998, over two million self-identified biracial students were being taught in public school classrooms (Morrison & Bordere, 2001). Despite significant and increasing numbers of multiracial students in school, little is known about their racial identity development, and their academic, social, and emotional needs. However, we do know that ethnic and racial identity begins to develop during the preschool years and continues into adolescence (Herman, 2002; Morrison & Bordere, 2001; Nakazawa, 2003; Wright, 1998). When multiracial children fail to achieve a firm sense of identity, they often have trouble associating with a particular ethnic group, and, in fact, discover they are in yet another minority group in society (Spencer, 1999; Winters & DeBose, 2003).

This research study seeks to determine how and to what extent public policy decisions regarding academic accountability affect the reporting of educational outcomes for multiracial students. The specific aims of this research study will be to:

- **Illuminate which subgroups are identified within the accountability movement in two states that differ in their multiracial category policies.**
- **Address the disaggregation of student achievement data according to policies in two different state education systems.**
• Determine the degree to which multiracial students are rendered visible in the reporting of academic achievement results so as to identify their progress and needs

Research on multiracial people is only just beginning to surface as a viable and needed area of study (Chiong, 1998; Sarup, 1986). As the multiracial population of students in our schools continues to grow, it is important that we reexamine our societal definitions and categorizations of race and how these affect a new multiracial group of students.

Statement of the Problem

For multiracial children, their first introduction to the denial of their multiple heritages occurs before they enter the classroom. The majority of school enrollment forms across the country force parents of an interracial child to choose the identity that would best describe their child’s racial heritage (Chiong, 1998; Cooper-Plaszewski, 2001; K. M. Williams, 2006). The prevailing curriculum model for multicultural education implemented in schools does not support the history, identity and development of multiracial students. The present way in which our society functions requires that multiracial people assimilate into isolated racial categories which force them to deny a part of their heritage (C. B. Williams, 1999; Cooper-Plaszewski, 2001; Wardle, 2000).

Although the multiracial student population is rapidly growing in schools, fewer than a dozen states recognize a multiracial subgroup for school registration procedures, demographic data collection and analysis of standardized testing
data. For example, the State Department of Education in North Carolina recognizes a multiracial subgroup, reflecting a total population of 21,156 multiracial students for academic year 2006-2007 (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI], 2007). In comparison, the State Department of Education in California merges the categories of “multiple or no response” in their statewide enrollment by ethnicity report, making it is difficult to determine how many students in California are multiracial (California Department of Education [CDE], 2004-2005). The 2004-2005 statewide enrollment report for California shows 109,221 students who fall into the category of multiple or no response. Under the present racial classification system there is no way of knowing how many multiracial students attend California schools. Consequently, to be present but not be acknowledged by your true racial and cultural background leads to discrimination from all races, leaving multiracial children feeling like outsiders (K. M. Williams, 2006; Sullivan, 1998; Winters & DeBose, 2003).

**Researcher Biases**

In qualitative studies the researcher is an integral part of the data collection process, particularly in observation and interview work. Participant observation is an explicit technique used in fieldwork whereby the researcher attends to the cultural context of the behavior they are involved in or observing (Wolcott, 1997). In participant observation the researcher looks for a common set of expectations and explanations that provides an interpretation about what is occurring. Spradley (1980) differentiates the degrees of participant observation
by the level of involvement the participant observer has with the people and activities under investigation. In my role as a participant observer, I fall into the highest level of involvement on Spradley’s spectrum, due to my personal background as a biracial educational administrator, wife of a biracial chiropractor who is half Japanese and half White, and mother of multiracial children who are just entering the public school system in California (1980). Said another way, I am a complete participant because I am studying a bounded system or group of people of which I am a member. “Qualitative researchers try to be conscious of the perspective they bring to a study,” particularly when the researcher’s judgment and influence on those being observed can influence the data collected (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000, p. 99).

In all likelihood my researcher biases begin with my background as a biracial educational administrator whose personal experiences have shaped my current perspective on multiracial students in schools. I am the third generation of educators in my family to work within the public school system of California in the San Diego County region. My mother is a Filipina elementary school teacher and college professor while my father recently retired after serving as an educational administrator in the public education adult school arena. They have each served as educators in California for over thirty years. My parents were high school sweethearts and among the first mixed race couples to emerge in the San Diego public school system in the late 1960s. Growing up as a multiracial child from the early 1970s to the late 1980s was a unique experience as I was one of the very few multiracial students present in California K-12 schools.
During these two decades, society was in the midst of accepting mixed race relationships. The recent repeal of numerous state laws preventing multiracial unions rendered these relationships legally acceptable (*Loving v. Virginia*, 1967). I was born of interracial parentage in 1971, only four years after the Supreme Court ruling in *Loving v. Virginia*, which prohibited anti-miscegenation laws (Chiong, 1998; Gallagher, 2006; *Loving*, 1967).

When viewed from the eyes of a multiracial child attending predominantly monoracial schools during the last few decades of the 20th Century, school life seemed qualitatively different for my sisters and I. We were often the only multiracial children present in the schools we attended. All school registration papers required that our parents identify our racial background within a single race category until the 1990s, when we were able to mark “Other”.

Since 1989, my professional experiences as a classroom instructional aide, preschool teacher, elementary teacher, school principal, and assistant superintendent afforded me the opportunity to observe the gradual increase of multiracial students in classrooms. Although we have entered into a new century, the arena of education remains antiquated with regards to its acknowledgement of the multiracial student. This is illustrated by school registration practices that still fail to include a multiracial category, curriculum that does not acknowledge the existence of a multiracial population, and the lack of professional development for teachers regarding the needs of multiracial students. The multiracial identities of students in our schools are lost as we attempt to advance a “color-blind” context (Ferber, 2006; Spencer, 1999).
In an effort to mitigate the effects of researcher bias, this study will focus on the educational experiences of multiracial students at a level of analysis outside my direct work environment. The proposed research addresses state level educational policy as it applies to multiracial students in California and North Carolina, comparing California, which currently does not retain a multiracial category when collecting student achievement data, with North Carolina, which utilizes a multiracial group when compiling academic achievement data.

Summary of Literature

Research on biracial and multiracial people remains sparse, as it is a new area of study. Studies on educational issues relevant to this particular student population is even harder to find. Further research needs to be done on racial identity development, multiracial student achievement, and professional development for educators who work with students. All these areas of research can then be combined to develop a new multicultural education that includes a multiracial perspective, serving the needs of all students, rather than just those made visible by statistics.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census data reveals the majority of biracial families reside in urban areas of the North, Midwest and West Coast where they tend to experience less racial prejudice and a greater tolerance for diversity in family structures (Reid & Henry, 2000). Data from the 2000 Census also shows that the highest numbers of multiracial people reside in Hawaii (21.4%), Alaska (5.4%), California (4.8%), Oklahoma (4.5%), and Nevada (3.8%) (Farley, 2002).
Preparations are underway to launch the next U.S. Census in 2010, which should reveal shifts that have occurred state to state or from urban to suburban and/or rural communities.

This study focuses on a comparative analysis between the states of California and North Carolina. It should be noted that North Carolina is 1.2% to 1.4% multiracial compared to California, which is 4.8% multiracial (Farley, 2002; Winters & DeBose, 2003). This difference is of interest since one might hypothesize that a state with a large multiracial citizenry would be more likely to utilize a multiracial category when collecting student achievement data. On the contrary, California does not employ a multiracial category within its education system, whereas North Carolina does. Exploration of the policy communities within these two states, including the rationale for their respective choices, may inform future policy decisions within other states.

The context within which multiracial people live is intrinsically linked to a history of societal perceptions regarding a mixed race population. Even as we enter the Twenty-First Century, the United States continues to maintain a rigid system of racial categorization (Frazier, 2002; Wardle & Cruz-Janzen, 2004). Based loosely on selected phenotypic traits (observable physical characteristics), racial demarcation divides people into two categories, White and non-White. Nevertheless, with the emergence of a significant population of multiracial people in the United States, color lines have begun to blur and the accuracy of rigid single race categories have been called into question (Chiong, 1998; Downing et al., 2005).
Fifty years ago, the birth of a multiracial child was a social taboo (Downing et al., 2005). From the 19th Century into the 1950s, most U.S. states enforced anti-miscegenation laws to prohibit interracial marriage. A significant shift occurred in 1967, when the United States Supreme Court unanimously ruled in *Loving v. Virginia* that anti-miscegenation laws are unconstitutional (*Loving*, 1967). Today, a baby boom of multiracial children appears to be changing Americans’ perception of their multiracial citizenry. From President Barack Obama, to Tiger Woods, Greg Louganis, Halle Berry, Langston Hughes and W.E.B. Du Bois, these multiracial icons in society provide positive images of interracial people in the public’s eye. They represent a significant shift from 1928, when sociologist Robert Park advanced the “marginal man” theory, maintaining that racially mixed individuals experience marginalization, as a result of not having a racial reference group with whom to associate (Park, 1928). The term marginalization refers to the overt or covert trends within societies whereby those perceived as lacking desirable traits, or as deviating from the group norms, tend to be excluded by wider society and ostracized as undesirables. The “marginal man” theory, as further developed by Stonequist (1937), defines biracial people as caught between two cultures, marginalized and troubled, as they struggle to develop a clear identity (Brunsma, 2006; Spencer, 1999).

Harris (2002) chronicled the various accepted perspectives that, over time, have attempted to explain biracial individuals. Historically, biracial individuals have been analyzed from both biological and socio-cultural perspectives. Originally the biological perspective characterized biracial people as mentally,
physically, and morally weak, due to their genetic inferiority. According to this analysis, biracial individuals thus faced undefeatable social, emotional, and psychological problems. Further, the socio-cultural perspective stated that individuals from interracial unions were social and cultural misfits, incapable of fitting in or gaining acceptance in any racial group. In the mid 1990s, Kerwin and Ponterotto (1995) speculated that biracial individuals have been negatively affected by stereotyping. Among these stereotypes is the notion that biracial individuals should identify with the parent of color, as society will ultimately view them from this perspective. This forced choice can result in psychological harm when an individual is asked to deny one side of his or her heritage.

Research on biracial students has surfaced in school counseling literature. Scholars in the field acknowledge the increase in biracial students and report disproportionate numbers of biracial youth exhibiting difficult behaviors that require special attention within the school setting (Benedetto & Olisky, 2001). In 1990, Poston presented the first model of biracial identity development (Benedetto & Olisky, 2001; Poston, 1990). Poston’s *Biracial Development Model* suggests that biracial individuals develop through five stages: (a) personal identity, (b) choice of group categorization, (c) enmeshment/denial, (d) appreciation, and (e) integration. With mastery of each stage, Poston (1990) proposed that biracial individuals can develop a healthy racial identity. In fact, Park’s earlier work notes that the absence of attachment to one racial category might be viewed as positive, as biracial individuals gain knowledge of two cultures, develop cognitive flexibility, and build bilingual competence. Multiracial
students benefit from opportunities to develop their racial identity. However, most local school district student enrollment and state accountability systems do not have mechanisms to foster identity development, as they do not allow for a multiracial classification.

**Accountability Movement: Multiracial Students Hidden**

The standards and accountability movement of the 1990s was initiated to provide equal education opportunities to all students, regardless of race, while at the same time increasing state funding and constitutional authority for public education (McClure, 2005). This movement was grounded in the historical struggle to eradicate the separate and unequal schooling of Black children in conjunction with reforming the school finance structure. Race and poverty persist as indicators of inherent inequities in the U.S. Education system (Citizens’ Commission on Civil Rights, 1998). Half a century has passed since the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) that “Segregation of white and Negro children in the public schools of a State solely on the basis of race denies to Negro children the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment.” Yet, the U.S. continues to struggle to achieve an equal education for all students.

Historically, the gap in educational achievement falls disproportionately on students of color (Berlack, 2001; Haycock, 2001; Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). Given comparable parents’ income and wealth, African American, Native American, Hispanic, and English language learners lag
behind White students (Berlack, 2001; Delpit, 1995). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reported a narrowing of the achievement gap between the 1970s and late 1980s in reading scores between Black and White students. This narrowing is likely due to declining poverty rates, increased preschool attendance, desegregated schooling, increased parent achievement levels, and investments in compensatory education (McClure, 2005). After 1988 the closing of the achievement gap reversed and the gap in reading scores between Black and White students widened. Recent NAEP results indicate that by twelfth grade, on average, Black students are four years behind White and Asian students, with Hispanic students doing almost as poorly (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003).

In 1994, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1964, via the enactment of the Improving America’s Schools Act (IASA), mandated states to develop high quality assessments aligned with state learning standards in reading and mathematics, and to monitor student and school performance. In 2001, Congress enacted the “No Child Left Behind Act” (NCLB) to ensure all children have equal access to rigorous curriculum and high-quality instruction and are provided with the opportunity to achieve at high levels of performance according to state academic standards. The legislation requires states to establish standards-based academic assessments linked to measurable accountability systems that disaggregate data according to specific racial subgroups. The various provisions of the NCLB seek to close the achievement gap between high and low achieving students. Federal policy plays a major role
in the standards-based and accountability reform movements and, through the NCLB, establishes a target date of 2013-2014 by which all students must score proficient in mathematics and English language arts (Goertz, 2003).

The NCLB requires that all states test students in grades 3 – 8 and report results disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and other demographic characteristics such as low socioeconomic status and English language learners (Renn, 2004; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). Each subgroup of students must show measurable growth on an annual basis. Although the NCLB underscores the unprecedented urgency for our nation’s educational system to provide an equal education to all students, despite their race, the law does not require states to disaggregate student achievement data for a multiracial subgroup. Therefore, as a nation we do not have achievement data on multiracial students that would indicate their mastery of the academic standards.

This dilemma speaks to the purpose of my dissertation study in that U.S. demographics are changing, due to the rapid emergence of a multiracial population. All but a few state departments of education, including Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, North Carolina, and Ohio maintain monoracial categories with regards to student data collection practices. This research study explores vehicles for rendering the multiracial subgroup visible within our schools so that their academic progress can be monitored and their learning needs more fully understood.
**Clarification of Terms**

The emergence of a significant multiracial population in the last fifty years has led to the development of new racial terms that describe mixed race people. For clarification, the following are definitions for terms used frequently throughout this study.

- *Academic Achievement Data* refers to the Education Goals set forth in 1990 by President Bush and the Nation’s Governors that focused on raising expectations for student achievement. Each state has developed academic standards defining what they want students to know and be able to do. States are increasingly aligning their standardized tests with curricular standards that measure the degree to which students are mastering grade level standards.

- The *Accountability Movement* emerged in the 1990s due to disturbing inadequacies in the educational process. Current legislation such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires each state to develop and implement an accountability system to monitor the academic progress of all schools. Each school receives an *Adequate Yearly Progress* (AYP) score that indicates if they are meeting nationwide expectations for academic growth ("No Child Left Behind Act of 2001," 2001).

- The *Accountability System* is central to the success of the NCLB: states need to set high standards for improving academic achievement in order to improve the quality of education for all students. Each state establishes a definition of AYP to use each year to determine the achievement of each
school district and school. A single statewide accountability system is applied to all public schools and Local Education Areas (LEAs). All public school students are included in the state accountability system. A State’s definition of AYP is based on expectations for student achievement growth that is continuous and substantial, such that all students are proficient in reading and math no later than 2013-2014 (“No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,” 2001).

- **Biracial** refers to a person whose parents are of two different socially designated racial groups.

- **Disaggregation of Data** is the process states use to analyze student achievement data according to specific subgroups utilizing categories such as race and ethnicity, gender, disability, and socioeconomically disadvantaged status.

- **Hypodescent** indicates a social system that maintains the monoracial identification of individuals by assigning a multiracial person to the racial group in their heritage that has the least social status.

- **Marginal** refers to the overt or covert trends within societies whereby those perceived as lacking desirable traits or deviating from the group norms tend to be excluded by wider society and ostracized as undesirables. The “marginal man” theory emerged from Robert Park, who described a marginal person as one who does not belong and is caught between two cultures and two societies. The theory was further described by Louis Wirth, who spoke of minority groups as a group of people who, because of
their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from society and subject to differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination (McGettigan, 2005; O'Hearn, 1998; Powell, 2005; Reid & Henry, 2000; Root, 1996).

- *Mestiza(o)* is a term of Spanish origin. It refers to people of Latino and European ancestry. Due to shared Spanish ancestry, this word is also used by biracial Filipinos.

- *Miscegenation* refers to race mixing in intimate dating and sexual relationships. *Anti-miscegenation* is a term used to mean opposition to intermarriage or race mixing. In 1967 the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the last anti-miscegenation laws in the case of *Loving v. Virginia* (*Loving*, 1967).

- *Mixed* is a discursive term used by individuals to describe themselves racially when they are of two or more racial heritages.

- *Monoracial* indicates people who identify themselves as a single race. This also refers to a system of racial classification that only recognizes one racial designation per individual.

- *Multiracial* refers to people who are of two or more racial heritages. It is the most inclusive term to refer to people of all racial mixes. This term includes biracial people.

- *Phenotypic traits* are observable physical characteristics of individuals that divide people into two categories, White and non-White.
• **Racial Classification** is a socially constructed paradigm that categorizes populations or groups of people by different sets of characteristics, and beliefs about common ancestry. The most widely used human racial categories are based on visible traits (especially skin color, facial features and hair texture), and self-identification. Conceptions of race, as well as specific ways of grouping races, vary by culture and are often controversial for scientific as well as social and political reasons.

• **Subgroups** are various groupings of students that states utilize to disaggregate standardized academic assessment data. States utilize subgroups that are defined by race and ethnicity, gender, disability status, migrant status, English proficiency, and status as economically disadvantaged.

*Limitations of the Study*

This study is limited to a comparison of educational policies on data collection procedures of multiracial students in two states, California and North Carolina. Data collected in two states may not generalize to other states. Furthermore, the lack of a comprehensive statewide approach to gathering academic achievement data on multiracial students in California will limit the overall ability to assess the level of school success among this population. In North Carolina, the multiracial subgroup utilized for monitoring academic progress has only been in place since 1995, therefore limiting the data that is available for analysis.
This study is limited to interviews with educational leaders in each state department of education in California and North Carolina. Therefore, the data collected are limited by the knowledge and experience of those individuals. Finally, this research may be limited by my potential bias as a multiracial individual, educator, and mother of multiracial children. Due to my own mixed race background, I have personal experiences that have shaped my perceptions of the multiracial experience and may play a role in how I interpret the data.

Organization of Study

As noted, Chapter One provides an introduction to the study, its significance, a summary of literature, clarification of terms, and limitations of the research. Chapter Two presents an overview of relevant literature that provides historical context that leads to the focus on examining multiracial categories. Chapter Three portrays the research methodology by detailing the qualitative nature of this comparative case study, introducing the research question and sub-questions, and describing the data collection procedures. This is followed by Chapter Four, which imparts an analysis of data and eight key research findings. Finally, Chapter Five summarizes these key findings in relation to the research questions, aligns the findings with the previous research literature, and provides an overview of potential implications of the study.
Chapter Two

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter Organization

Chapter Two represents a historical review of the literature regarding multiracial people in the United States, along with the academic accountability for multiracial students in education. This chapter begins by highlighting the demographic trend of a vast increase in number of multiracial people within the United States. Next, a chronology of mixed race people in the United States since the 17th Century is then provided. A theoretical framework of racial identity development is described along with a depiction of the evolution of racial classifications. Chapter Two concludes with a portrayal of the multiracial student in an era of educational accountability.

Multiracial: A Growing Demographic Trend in America

The emergence of a significant number of racially mixed individuals is transforming the definition and meaning of race in the United States. Race, as we understand it, exists in a constant state of flux due to demographic shifts that blur racial landmarks. Immigration and intermarriage trends represent the most prominent causes in this regard. Over the past three decades, an increasing number of immigrants have come to the United States from areas other than Europe. Between 1965 and 1990, approximately 18 million people immigrated to
the United States from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia (K. M. Williams, 2003). By 2000, 10.4% of the U.S. population was foreign born and 76.5% of this population came from Latin America, the Caribbean, or Asia (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001b). A variety of implications can be drawn from this immigration data, but most relevant for the purpose of this research is that increasing numbers of Americans do not perceive fixed monoracial categories as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Evidence supporting this premise comes from the Census Bureau itself, which reported that in 1980 more than 7 million people marked “other” on the census race question, close to 10 million also marked “other” in 1990, and by 2000 over 15 million selected “some other race” (Bianchi, Lichtenberg, Wachbroit, & Wasserman 1997; Chiong, 1998; K. M. Williams, 2003).

Immigration, forced or voluntary, serves as a major factor in shaping population growth and ethnic composition. In 1790, the first United States census classified the U.S. population into slaves and free persons (Edmonston, Lee, & Passel, 2002; U.S. Census Office, 1793). Subsequent census counts utilized race to track the growth and size of different racial populations. Currently, census data reflect a substantial shift in the national origins of immigrants to the U.S. Over the past four decades, eighty percent of immigrants to the United States name Asia or Latin America as their continent of origin (Edmonston et al., 2002; Massey, 1995). Once dominated by people of European and African descent, the United States’ population has become increasingly diverse. In fact, the 2005 census reported a minority population of 98 million, representing one-
third of the total population of 296.4 million (U.S. Department of State, 2006). Furthermore, projections indicate that by the middle of the 21st Century, more than half of the nation will be of non-European descent (Korgen, 1999).

Presently, a baby boom of multiracial children has resulted from a rapid increase in interracial relationships (Downing et al., 2005; Edmonston et al., 2002; Korgen, 1999). In part, the high number of mixed unions in the U.S. is a result of the dramatic shift in the demographic composition of our population. The latter can be characterized as the U.S. transforming from primarily White and Black to a melting pot of ethnic diversity. In addition, researchers attribute these increases to the 1967 Supreme Court decision outlawing of state anti-miscegenation laws. This legal ruling contributed to increased interaction among the races at school and in the workplace, and an increased acceptance of interracial marriage by Americans (Gallagher, 2006; Kouri, 2003; Loving, 1967).

Since 1989, more than 1 million first generation biracial children have been born, averaging approximately 100,000 biracial babies born in the U.S. each year (Morning, 2002; Wardle, 2000). The 2000 census enumerated 6.8 million people, or 2.4% of the total U.S. population who marked more than one race (Grieco & Cassidy, 2001; Morning, 2002). Demographic projections indicate that by 2050 more than 75 million Americans will identify as multiracial (Edmonston et al., 2002; Korgen, 1999; Morning, 2002). Over the next four decades, the population of multiracial people in the U.S. will constitute a majority group. As a result, this research asks how public policy decisions regarding the
academic accountability of multiracial student achievement results in state education agencies.

*Multiracial America Since the 17th Century*

Fixed monoracial classifications are called into question by the presence of multiracial Americans who began to emerge soon after the earliest Native American-African-English contact in what became North America (Forbes, 1993; Spencer, 1999). Mixed race people are far from a recent phenomenon in the United States as they have populated North America now for nearly four centuries (Morning, 2002; Root, 1996). In 1619, Black indentured servants accompanied Spanish explorers to Virginia where they mingled and married freely with Native American women (Talty, 2003). The beginning of the 17th Century marks the first historical record of Whites mixing with other races in early America. Daniel Elfrye, an English captain of the London Company, is the individual most known for initiating the black-white mulatto experience in America by bringing the first shipload of Africans into Virginia. On May 10, 1632, Elfrye received a letter of reprimand from his employer for “too freely entertaining” a mulatto woman onboard (Brown, 1897, p. 436). This British euphemism camouflages the first recorded instance of a sexual encounter between blacks and whites in colonial America. From this point on, the historical context of Africans being forcibly brought to early America transitions from what started as indentured servitude to inhumane, compulsory slavery.
During the 17th and 18th centuries, under extreme duress, Africans were transported to all of England’s North American colonies because their free labor was seen as an essential part of the tobacco economy (Becker, 1999). Running parallel to the advent of the tobacco industry were the colonial wars against the Pequots, the Tuscaroras, the Yamasees, and numerous other Indian nations, which led to the enslavement and relocation of tens of thousands of Native Americans (Becker, 1999). During this time period, the number of Native American slaves in geographic areas such as the Carolinas equaled half of the African slave population. African and Native Americans shared the common experience of enslavement. They worked together in the fields, lived together in communal housing quarters, shared recipes, and ultimately developed relationships. Among the cited variables prompting intermarriage of Africans and Native Americans were the disproportion of African male slaves to females (3 to 1) and the devastation of Native American males by disease, enslavement, and prolonged wars with the colonists.

Native American societies were primarily matrilineal, therefore African American males who married Native American women often became members of the wife’s clan and citizens of the respective nation (Minges, 2001). As these interracial relationships grew, the lines of racial distinction began to overlap. The number of red-black people or racially mixed African American and Native American people grew, resulting in many people who were known as slaves, free people of color, Africans, or Indians to be the offspring of integrating cultures. In locations such as Southeastern Virginia, The Low Country of the Carolinas, and
Silver Bluff, South Carolina, communities of Afro-Indians began to surface. The 1740 slave code in South Carolina begins to reveal the complex nature of these interracial unions: “...all Negroes and Indians, mulattos or mustezoes who are now, or shall hereafter be in this province, and all their issue and offspring...shall be and they are hereby declared to be, and remain hereafter absolute slaves” (Minges, 2001, p. 455). This 18th Century racial slave code ruling is one of the earliest legal documents that defaults multiracial people into a single race category.

In 1881, the United States Supreme Court declared under section 4189 of Public Law 106 that “if any white person and any negro, or the descendant of any negro to the third generation, inclusive, though one ancestor of each generation was a white person, intermarry or live in adultery or fornication with each other, each of them must, on conviction, be imprisoned in the penitentiary or sentenced to hard labor for the county for not less than two nor more than seven years” (Pace v. State of Alabama, 1883). Under this ruling, the Supreme Court of Alabama indicted plaintiff Tony Pace, a negro man, and Mary J. Cox, a white woman for living together in a state of adultery, and sentenced each to two years imprisonment in the state penitentiary (Pace, 1883).

The United States’ history of categorizing multiracial people into monoracial classifications continued through to the Twentieth Century and was clearly manifested in the phrase the “one drop rule” wherein a Black person in the United States is defined as a person with any known African black ancestry, no matter how little or how distant (Davis, 2006). Chestnutt’s (1900) novel The
House Behind the Cedars highlights a mulatto character who uses the term “the new Negro” to describe himself and others like him. More recently, Forbes coined the term “Neo-Americans” to characterize people of mixed races that combine African, European, and American Indian ancestry (1993). Although history records attempts to utilize more positive terms to describe multiracial people such as “the new Negro” or “Neo-Americans,” society continues to hold tight the notion of fixed monoracial classifications, despite their inaccuracy. So deeply ingrained in the American psyche is the one drop rule that, regardless of whether a person has a predominantly white ancestry or even looks white, he or she is defined as a person of color and denied one side of his or her heritage (Breland et al., 1999; Cooper-Plaszewski, 2001; Davis, 2006).

Racial Identity Development: a Theoretical Framework

In 1928, Robert E. Park, former President of the American Sociological Association and a philosophy professor at Harvard, coined the term *marginal man* to describe a man who lives a life in two distinct racial groups, thus representing a cultural hybrid. Park asserted that the assimilation and amalgamation of people is a result of mass migration that fosters mobility or the independent movement of individuals. Furthermore, the marginal man does not quite have a place to call home because he lives between two cultures and races and cannot fully blend into either one. In his later work, Park (1937, p. 306) wrote “The marginal man…is one whom fate has condemned to live in two societies and in two, not merely different but antagonistic cultures…his mind is
the crucible in which two different and refractory cultures may be said to melt and, either wholly or in part, fuse.”

In addition, American sociologist Everett Stonequist noted, “The marginal person is poised in the psychological uncertainty between two (or more) social worlds; reflecting in his soul the discords and harmonies, repulsions and attractions of these worlds…within which membership is implicitly if not explicitly based upon birth or ancestry…and where exclusion removes the individual from a system of group relations (Stonequist, 1937, p. 8).

Both Park and Stonequist proposed a theory of marginality for multiracial individuals. However, researchers emerging in the late 1990s diverged from this theory of marginality and began to focus on more positive aspects of multiraciality.

According to Breland et al. (1999), biracial individuals possess situational identities, based on factors such as knowledge of and exposure to their ethnic heritage; their relationships with their parents; interactions with racially diverse people; self-esteem and physical symptomatology. Employing a multiple regression analysis, these researchers found a positive and significant relationship between self-esteem and racial identity. They also identify a limited body of literature on biracial individuals, rarely grounded in empirical research, concluding that the scholarship to date does more to produce bias-generating myths than accurate understanding. In general, the existing scholarship on biracial individuals alludes to a subgroup that is problematic by nature due to their dual racial identities. This group is seen as a “marginal” people who are alienated by both racial groups from which they were born (McGettigan, 2005; O’Hearn, 1998; Powell, 2005; Reid & Henry, 2000).
Racial identity development models for multiracial individuals serves as the theoretical framework for this research. In this section of Chapter Two I use the terms biracial and multiracial interchangeably. There is not general agreement in the multiracial literature on racial identity development as to the terminology or conventions of racial designators. For the purpose of clarifying the racial identity development theoretical framework, the word biracial refers to individuals whose parents are from two distinct federally designated racial categories and multiracial indicates individuals from two or more racial categories (Renn, 2003).

The 2000 Census marks the first time in U.S. history that multiracial people were able to identify themselves (Jones & Smith, 2001). This shift signifies a poignant step towards recognizing the civil rights and social realities of multiracial people. The United States’ history embodies a long and arduous past full of racism and racial discrimination, and multiracial people have been impacted by this history. Multiracial people have been impacted by this history through the insidious use of the “one-drop-rule”, and laws outlawing interracial marriages, among other things (Baysden, So-Lloyd, Miville, & Constantine, 2005; Root, 1992). The 2000 U.S. Census inaugurated a critical moment in which multiracial people achieved governmental legitimacy with respect to their rich and complex heritages. Nearly 7 million people checked more than one racial category in the 2000 U.S. Census, representing 2.4% of the U.S. population (Downing et al., 2005; Farley, 2002).
Given the historical context described above, it is not surprising that there has been a lack of research on multiracial people. It is only within the past two decades that most theory and research has been conducted on the distinctive experiences of multiracial people. Racial identity development is defined as pride in an individual’s racial and cultural identity (Sue, 1981). It is one of the most important issues in counseling and cross-cultural psychology due to its impact on the mental health of ethnic minorities (Morten & Atkinson, 1983; Parham & Helms, 1985). Racial identity development helps shape a person’s attitudes about themselves and others around them. In addition, it dispels the cultural conformity myth that states that all individuals from a particular minority group are the same (Atkinson, Poston, Furlong, & Mercado, 1989; Poston, 1990).

Although variables of age and specific ethnicity prompt different outcomes, racial and ethnic group differences have a significant bearing on childrens’ social development (Schwartz, 1998a). A child’s background, and the different historical, social, and environmental factors that go into that background, determines a child’s development. It is important to help multiracial children acquire a positive self-concept, since having a mixed racial background may be more complex than having a monoracial background (Herring, 1992; Wardle & Cruz-Janzen, 2004). Children who have a mixed racial heritage need to understand what it means to be multiracial, and they need to acquire coping skills to deal with racism and discrimination (Root, 1996; Wardle, 1987). Families and schools must make it a priority to provide a supportive community that affirms
multiracialism as the U.S. continues to have trouble achieving fully integrated and peaceful racially mixed communities (Miller & Rotheram-Borus, 1994).

The concept of identity development emerged since Erikson (1963) noted that the major charge of adolescence was establishing an independent identity. During this time of growth the four primary goals for an adolescent’s development are: 1) to establish a personal identity; 2) to gain independence; 3) to relate to members of the same and other sex; and 4) to choose a career (Erikson, 1963; Poston, 1990). Research and psychological theory have focused on non-minority individuals and culture, but identity development, specifically racial identity development, is a critical issue for multiracial individuals. In fact, the lack of identity development is a central component of two disorders: Borderline Personality Disorder and Identity Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 1987). Researchers have proposed several racial identity development models, such as Stonequist’s (1937) model of “marginality”, Morten and Atkinson’s (1983) Minority Identity Development Model, and Cross’ (1971) model of identity development for Afro-Americans, which focuses on the deficit models of multiracial people.

These models include several limitations when applied to multiracial individuals. First, the latter two inherently imply that an individual would select one group’s culture over another. Second, these models propose that individuals might reject their minority identity and then assimilate into the dominant culture. Third, the utilization of several group identities is not possible within these models. Finally, the models require some acceptance of multiracial individuals
into the minority culture. The overarching flaw of these racial identity
development models is the common characteristic of an inherent system of
marginality applied toward multiracial individuals.

This research suggests the utilization of three progressive models of racial
identity specific to multiracial individuals. First, Poston’s (1990) Biracial Identity
Development Model (BIDM) focuses on the unique aspects of biracial individuals
and dismisses deficit models of biracial identity development. Within this model,
Poston refers to Cross’ (1987) delineation between personal identity (PI) and
reference group orientation (RGO). PI includes constructs such as self-esteem,
self-worth, and interpersonal competence. By comparison, RGO consists of
paradigms such as racial identity, racial esteem, and racial ideology. Parham
and Helms (1985) identified certain racial identity attitudes (RGOs) are linked
with specific indicators of mental health (PIs) at varying levels of identity
development. For example, “pre-encounter” individuals exhibit low self-esteem,
low feelings of competence, and feelings of inferiority and inadequacy. In
contrast, encounter and internalization groups show attitudes of high self-esteem,
feelings of competence, and low anxiety.

BIDM purports a five-stage model of biracial identity development and
suggests that all biracial individuals will experience some conflict during the
identity development process. The first stage of Poston’s model, personal
identity, typically occurs in childhood, when biracial individuals are unaware of
their mixed race lineage. The second stage, choice of group categorization,
includes a number of societal and parental influences that prompt multiracial
individuals to choose one racial group identity. The third stage of BIDM, *enmeshment/denial* is characterized by individuals feeling guilty and disloyal about choosing one racial group over the other. During the fourth stage, *appreciation*, biracial individuals may remain pledged to one racial group, but they tend to explore the previously ignored racial group as their level of awareness rises. Finally, the fifth stage of BIDM, *integration*, marks the point wherein biracial individuals may still identify with one racial group but value the integration of their multiple racial identities (Poston, 1990).

Furthermore, BIDM introduces several important assumptions: 1) if outside prejudice and values are internalized, biracial individuals might have identity problems; 2) a number of variables influence an individual’s identity choice (i.e. family and friends); 3) biracial people may feel alienated at the choice phase and might make a choice despite their readiness to determine a racial identity; 4) feelings of guilt may surface at the choice phase when an individual chooses one identity over another; 5) integration is linked with positive indicators of mental health; and 6) the most tenuous time of adjustment and identity confusion is during the choice phase and the denial phase (Chang, 1974; Poston, 1990; Sebring, 1985). BIDM is a complex and important process in the life of a multiracial individual. While most multiracial individuals move through the developmental stages of BIDM successfully and become well-adjusted people, there are individuals who are not as successful at negotiating societal and familial hurdles related to race (Gibbs, 1987). The second racial identity model by
Root (1998) delineates five distinct identity choices of multiracial individuals as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Root’s Five Identities for Mixed-Race People, 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity Choice</th>
<th>Definition of Identity Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Accept the Identity Society Assigns</td>
<td>The “one-drop,” or hypodescent rule governs this identity. This was the only viable option until the last three decades. To have identified differently would have resulted in retribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Choose a Single Identity</td>
<td>The choice of a single racial identity, often has the same result as a choice based on hypodescent. This may reflect the way one was raised; it may be a political statement; or it may reflect the assessment of the social and psychological repercussions of a mixed-race identity. More often than not though it reflects the convergence of the latter possibilities with a phenomenological experience with a single identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Choose a Mixed Identity</td>
<td>For the first time in history a mixed-race identity appears to be a possible choice. There now exists a visible population of multiracial people amongst all racial groups. Also, many popular media celebrities are acknowledging their mixed heritage and have become public role models. Many multiracial people are now embraced and accepted by both sides of their family. A mixed race identity is often mistaken to mean a lack of identification with the social and political realities of race.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 1. Continued

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Choose a New Race Identity</strong></td>
<td>This identity choice comes in assertions of a mixed identity. Here some choose multiracial while others announce they are simply mixed, without further delineation. This strategy avoids fractionations (i.e. half Japanese, half White, or multiplications).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Choose a White Identity</strong></td>
<td>Root found two divergent explanations for white identity in a person of mixed heritage. Several well-adjusted persons who made this choice reflected on their isolation from both ethnic family members and racially identified communities. In this case, there was no contempt for their heritage, but rather a lack of emotional attachment to it. Without an ethnic identification, their default identification was white, implying a lifestyle reflected by the family and community surrounding them on a daily basis. The second reason was family dysfunction. If the parent of color had been mean, mentally ill, absent, irresponsible, drug or alcohol addicted, some participants in Root’s study coded his or her behavior racially. White identity for some is assumed as they attempt to sever ties from this part of them or from the non-White parent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** (Morning, 2002; Root, 1990, 1998)

One of the influential factors identified earlier that may impact how mixed race individuals identify themselves is that of generational differences. The generations of society that have been systemically opposed to interracial unions
and mixed race individuals are beginning to encounter a new generation of 18 to 29 year olds that feel positively about a multiracial future in the United States (Kasindorf & Nasser, 2001).

In summary, racial self-identification of mixed heritage persons is dependent upon one’s life experiences within a historical context (Morning, 2002). Factors such as, but not limited to, regional history of race, home values, language in the home, personality, social interactions, and gender serve as influential characteristics that support a multiracial individual’s decision in determining their own racial identity. This dynamic supports the need for a multifaceted construct of racial identity choices for multiracial individuals.

The third racial identity model this research draws upon is referred to as the situational identity model, initially proposed by psychologist, Maria P.P. Root (Renn, 2003; Root, 1996). This racial identity model utilizes a nonlinear model for biracial identity. In fact, the situational identity model implies a chameleon effect is inherent within multiracial individuals wherein they have the ability to change identities based on the setting, location, and circumstances at hand. Root’s theory of identity formation does not depend on an orderly progression through developmental stages. Instead, it relies on an individual’s ability to be at ease with self-definition within, across, and between categories.

Situational ethnicity maintains that particular contexts determine which of a person’s identities are appropriate at certain points in time (Breland et al., 1999; Cohen & Kennedy, 2000; Renn, 2000a; Root, 1996). People of color and
Biracial individuals must engage in situational ethnicity and possess dual identities in order to survive and prosper in a White-dominated society where White privilege exists (Delpit, 1995; Kozol, 1991; Tatum, 1997). Multiracial people experience the psychological, social, and cultural dynamics of changing colors or identities depending on the contextual, racial environments within which they live. The art of changing from one color to the next serves as a dominant survival mechanism that the majority of multiracial individuals inherently possess, as they take on the cultural characteristics of the racial group with whom they are interacting in order to function and adapt to the different racial worlds within which they live.

Racial Classification

The meaning of race is defined and contested throughout society, in both collective and personal practice. In the process, racial categories themselves are formed, transformed, destroyed, and re-formed…racial formation is the process by which social, economic and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings. Crucial to this formulation is the treatment of race as a central axis of social relations that cannot be subsumed under or reduced to some broader category or conception. (Omi & Winant, 1994, p.61-62)

Racial formation is a theoretical framework created by Omi and Winant (1994) to describe the process by which racial categories are formed. They contend that classifications of race are fashioned by social, economic, and political factors of the time. Furthermore, racial categorizations transform over time and are adjusted to mirror current conceptions of race. Throughout most of the history of the United States the term “race” usually referred to the
differentiation between two exclusive categories, Black and White. Up until the late 1960s, blended race unions were taboo, and in most states, illegal. In 1630, Virginia recorded the first legal action taken against race mixing. In this legal case Hugh Davis was to be soundly whipped for abusing himself and dishonoring God by “defiling his body in lying with a Negro” (Downing et al., 2005, p.37). Furthermore, historical records in 1640 document Robert Sweet serving penance in church as dictated by English law, “for getting a negro (sic) woman with child” (Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia, 1640). By 1754, seven other colonies followed suit in setting legal precedents prohibiting intermarriage. This divisive historical context set the stage for modern taboos against interracial relationships and the interracial children that resulted. It was not until 1967, a pivotal year in civil rights history, when the U.S. Supreme Court issued its ruling in the case of Loving v. Virginia, ending the anti-miscegenation laws in the United States (Loving, 1967).

This country’s long-standing statistical collection practices regarding race, as compiled by the U.S. Census, further indicate fixed monoracial classifications. During the revolutionary and antebellum eras Americans made counting people by race a state practice. Revolutionary leaders designed this system as a way of counting slaves and free populations so that tax obligations could be allocated at the federal level. In 1783, Congress addressed alternative mechanisms for the development of a national system of taxation. In March of 1783 members of Congress “approved a motion to change the assessment system from one based upon land to one based upon population, with a state’s slave population counted
at a ratio of three-fifths of its free population (Anderson, 2002, p.270).” The first census was taken in 1790 under Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson. Later, the federal Constitution was amended allowing racial counting to expand to determine political representation among the states. Shortly after 1820, Congress repealed the practice of counting by race in an attempt to prevent the political crisis over slavery and the Civil War.

Racial classifications and the meanings attached to them must be understood within the context of conflicts states were having over the issue of slavery. In 1902, Congress made the Census Bureau a permanent institution. Today, the census is taken every ten years. The primary purpose of the census is to collect general statistical information from individuals and establishments. In 1977, the OMB issued Statistical Policy Directive Number 15, “Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting” (U.S. Office of Management and Budget [OMB], 1977). These standards established the following racial categories: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black, White, and Some Other Race.

In 1997, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) revised their guidelines regarding racial and ethnic data (Renn, 2004). In lieu of accepting a multiracial category as was originally suggested in public and congressional hearings, the OMB adopted the Interagency Committee’s recommendation to allow respondents to select one or more races. The first time in U.S. history that individuals had the choice to self-identify in more than one of five racial categories (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American,
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White) was reflected in the 2000 census. The new guidelines allowed respondents to indicate more than one race and mandated this change in all federal data collection and reporting by January 1, 2003. Although it is now 2008, several years after the deadline for implementation federal, state, and local educational institutions have not been required by the National Center for Education Statistics to make this change. By fall of 2002, 62 percent of higher education institutions had not yet implemented the OMB’s 1997 revisions or expanded their racial categories.

The OMB decision on the 2000 Census marks a change in data collection procedures that moves away from limiting racial classification to monoracial categories that required respondents to “check one box only.” This is the beginning of a needed change, but it is not sufficient. Systemic change needs to take effect in other official governmental data collection processes. For a growing number of multiracial individuals, the “one box only” is both inappropriate and inaccurate (Zack, 1995). Although the inclusion of an option to indicate more than one racial category appears to be a simple change in data collection, beneath this rests a political upheaval on institutional and national levels. To fully implement this change would entail systemic adjustments in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), state legislatures, higher education coordinating boards and school systems, as well as revisions in institutional policy and legal compliance.

The purpose of this research study is to determine the degree and extent to which public policies both identify multiracial students and monitor their
achievement in U.S. schools. Given that the educational arena has yet to fully comply with the OMB regulations mandating the option for multiracial individuals to identify themselves in more than one category, it remains difficult to identify and track the academic progress of multiracial students. In fact, one of the most difficult school-related activities for multiracial children and their parents is completing official school forms, which require students to formally select a single dominant racial category for their official identity. These racial and ethnic categories have been determined by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, an educational reform movement intended to achieve high academic success for all students and close persisting achievement gaps. With such a seemingly deep commitment to America’s youth, it is surprising that the NCLB Act endorses an exclusionary model of racial and ethnic diversity in that students’ enrollment in school must identify with “one” of the following categories: White (Not Hispanic); Black (Not Hispanic); Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; American Indian or Alaska Native; and, Hispanic (McGettigan, 2005).

The field of education needs to understand that recording racial and ethnic descent within all aspects of our school systems must be done with sensitivity. For many multiracial children, the “other” category is not acceptable because it perpetuates the notion that they “don’t fit in” or “belong” (O’Hearn, 1998). In addition, although federal government forms now allow people to officially identify with up to six different racial groups, the 2000 Census reveals that the “mark more than one box” system is flawed. In calculating race data, multiracial self-
reporting often defaults back into a single race category that exaggerates the demographics of an entire population.

To address the implementation of OMB regulations, the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC), National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and the National Science Foundation (NSF) partnered to create a Policy Panel on Racial/Ethnic data collection. In 1999, the Policy Panel issued recommendations for data collection and data reporting based on the contingencies that it would take two years to create and adopt software and two years to become consistent in collecting and maintaining racial/ethnic data across institutions, with a projection of four years for institutions to fully complete the transition (Renn, 2004). Those deadlines have long passed. Postsecondary education institutions are generally aware of the classification changes. However, they are awaiting official and definitive guidance from the OMB and NCES prior to implementing new data collection practices.

The USDE “Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data on Race and Ethnicity to the U.S. Department of Education” delineated, “states, educational institutions, and other recipients may propose to ‘bridge’ the ‘two or more races’ category into single-race categories or the new single-race categories into the previous single-race categories (U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2007).” For the purpose of this study the term “bridging” refers to “the process of making race data collected using the 1997 standards comparable to data collected using the previous 1977 standards to allow time trend analyses using those data (U.S. Department of Education
Given that the 1997 standards for collecting race and ethnicity data allow for five race categories and provide respondents the opportunity to select multiple races, the USDE acknowledges that it may be necessary for education agencies to utilize two sets of data for a finite period of time known as a “bridge period.” In order to support the study of historical trends in data collection between the 1977 and 1997 standards, educational institutions will collect new data using the 1997 guidelines, and may consider employing a “bridge estimate” or prediction of how respondents may have identified themselves under the 1977 principles. To be clear, education agencies may approximate how newly identified multiracial students would have been classified under the 1977 monoracial classification structure.

The National Center for Health Statistics’ (NCHS) has designed methods for bridging the 2000 Census’ data by placing multiple-race people into single-race categories by using demographic and contextual covariates of each person, allocation probabilities, and regression models (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003). The choice of NCHS to develop a model that takes mixed race U.S. Census data and merges it into single-race categories is a clear indication that governmental agencies throughout the country do not have a uniform manner in which to utilize multiracial data.

Embedded within the “Forum Guide to Implementing New Federal Race and Ethnicity Categories” is an appendix that provides a report presenting thirteen data-bridging methodologies for state educational entities to consider when undergoing the process of selecting and implementing a bridging technique.
The OMB researched nine of the bridging methodologies; one was created by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS); and three are considered alternative methods. If states determine to utilize a bridging methodology, then they must delineate a single bridging technique based on characteristics such as local populations and data processing capabilities. For the purpose of NCLB compliance, all districts statewide should utilize the selected methodology. The nine bridging methodologies are briefly described in Table 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deterministic, Probabilistic, or All Inclusive</th>
<th>Whole or Fractional Assignment, or All Inclusive</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smallest Group</td>
<td>Deterministic</td>
<td>“This rule assigns multiple-race responses that include White and another racial group to the other group.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest Group other than White</td>
<td>Largest Group</td>
<td>“This rule allocates responses that include White and another racial group to the other group.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Largest Group</td>
<td>“This rule assigns responses including two or more racial groups to the group with the highest single race count. In this OMB method, any individual with a multirace combination including White is allocated to the White category.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plurality</td>
<td>“In this method, all responses in a multiple-race category are assigned to the race group with the highest proportion of primary race responses on the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), with ‘primary race’ being the one race with which respondents most identify or that their community most commonly recognizes them as.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Equal Fractions

This method assigns each of a respondent’s multiple responses in equal fractions to each racial group identified. In effect, each multirace respondent is fractionally assigned to multiple race categories in equal parts. These fractions must sum to one.”
Table 2. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NHIS Fractions</td>
<td>“This alternative also assigns multiple race responses in fractions to each racial group identified based on fractions drawn from the results of the NHIS. These fractions must sum to one.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probabilistic Equal Selection</td>
<td>“This method assigns each of the multiple responses in equal fractions back to only one of the previous racial categories identified. The fractions specify the probabilities used to select a particular category (in this case they are equal selection probabilities).”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHIS Fractions</td>
<td>“This alternative assigns multiple race responses to single race categories based on the proportions of multirace respondents’ choices of primary race on the NHIS. In practice, a percentage of White/Black respondents are assigned to White based on the NHIS results, and the remaining percentage to Black.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Inclusive</td>
<td>“In this alternative, each of a multirace respondent’s race responses are counted as one full response, with the respondents being assigned to every racial category they select.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (USDE, 2008)

In addition to these techniques for bridging, states may also consider the NHIS Regression method, which takes into account primary race data and a
number of geographic and demographic variables available on the NHIS or Census 2000. This approach has proven to result in more accurate estimates of the preferences of the multiracial population in question. Finally, an alternative to bridging which has been previously mentioned in this study is called “primary race/ethnicity.” This process involves collecting additional data from students and staff on their primary race or ethnicity. This method avoids the need for a bridging methodology and allows for states to develop trend analyses by utilizing the primary race data.

Thus, although the U.S. Census, along with a few other governmental agencies, has implemented data models that allow for multiracial individuals to accurately identify their racial background, the lack of uniformity across the nation causes a default of this information back into fixed monoracial classifications. In addition, the wide variety of bridging methodologies that may be employed during the transition period may further complicate the process. Regardless, properly identifying multiracial individuals can be characterized as a new and revolutionary concept for our country.

The Multiracial Student in an Era of Educational Accountability

Public education was highly regarded in our nation until the Reagan Administration called for accountability in the 1980s. Until this time, few people questioned the legitimacy of education or critiqued the quality of education. For the most part, state governments delegated most of their authority over public education to local school districts without expectations (National Conference of
The business world, media, and politicians of the Twenty-First Century generally agree that public education is in a state of crisis. State governments have fully asserted their authority over public schools by passing a wide array of new policies, proposals, and restrictions on educational expenditures, and an unyielding set of rules, regulations, and criteria to be fulfilled.

In 1983 the National Commission on Excellence in Education exposed alarming shortfalls in the American educational system in a report titled, “A Nation at Risk”. First, it was noted that the curriculum had been diluted and diffused, thus straying from college and vocational preparatory standards. Second, the Commission found that high expectations of student outcomes were not apparent due to deficiencies in the amount of homework, grades rising while student achievement declined, advanced courses in mathematic and science not being required for all students, high school diploma requirements not including a foreign language, and textbooks that are not challenging or available due to declining instructional material budgets. Third, American students spend much less time on school work than students in other nations. Time spent in the classroom and on homework is often used ineffectively and schools are not developing students’ study skills. Finally, the study revealed that academically-able students were not attracted to the profession of teaching and substantive improvement needs to occur in teaching preparatory programs.

In the last few decades policy makers and educational leaders across the United States have been implementing accountability and assessment measures
in response to a rising concern about student academic achievement. The movement towards accountability for student performance that surfaced in the 1990s is being interpreted in different ways by states. Although educational policies differ, each state faces a common set of challenges when creating operative and equitable accountability systems. Nationwide, all states have moved toward establishing educational initiatives that address high standards for student achievement for all students. Although high standards have been established, states continue to struggle to achieve an equal education for all students, as is evident in persistent achievement gaps, particularly for certain racial and socio-economically disadvantaged students. The most recent movement towards accountability can be seen in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) that sets a nationwide expectation for all students to be proficient in English language arts and mathematics by 2014 according to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets.

Ironically, NCLB does not address multiracial students specifically due to the fact that standardized student achievement data from multiracial students is most commonly defaulted into a single race category. Thus, it is not currently possible in the United States to determine how multiracial students are achieving academically. There are however, fewer than ten states who currently employ the use of a “multiracial subgroup” when collecting statewide standardized achievement data.
Academic Achievement of Multiracial Students

Little research exists on the social, emotional and academic development of multiracial students (Renn, 2000a; Steward et al., 1998; Wardle & Cruz-Janzen, 2004). The historical factors limiting the breadth of research on multiracial students include America’s struggle to determine how to classify a person of mixed race, the inability of schools to accurately account for multiracial students, and society’s past and present views on the multiracial population. Although a narrow strain of research currently exists on multiracial student achievement in schools, this section focuses on two research studies which elicit specific academic data of multiracial students: a civil action hearing in 1998, and a demographic survey conducted at the University of California, at Berkeley (Ferguson, 2002; Godby v. Montgomery County Board of Education, 1998; Herman, 2002; Powell, 2005).

First, Herman (2002) conducted a study of academic achievement among mixed race adolescents at Northwestern University. The study included a sample of 1,492 multiracial high school students and their academic achievement patterns. The results confirmed previous findings regarding the racial hierarchy of academic achievement among monoracial youth. The research conclusions indicate that part-Black and part-Latino youth do poorly academically, while part-White and part-Asian students achieve the most (Herman, 2002). These data indicate an achievement gap exists in some biracial students while others appear to flourish academically. Interestingly, this study elicits a parallel finding, showing that the achievement gaps that exist in monoracial subgroups mirror those of
certain racial combinations of mixed race youth. Furthermore, the study found biracial youth achieve more in school when they have peers who are invested in the educational system, and that biracial students achieve more when they fear the consequence of failing in school. Herman concluded that significant research needs to be conducted on the multiracial subgroup of students so that we can best support their developmental and academic needs.

Second, in 1999, fifteen middle and upper-middle income districts in North Carolina, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, California, and Virginia formed the Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN). The Network sought to address racial and ethnic achievement disparities in places where schools were reputedly excellent (Ferguson, 2002). During the 2000–2001 school year, they conducted the “Ed-Excel Assessment of Secondary School Student Culture” survey, seeking to learn specific factors impacting student achievement among racially disaggregated groups of students. The sample of students in grades 7-11 included 7,120 Blacks, 17,562 Whites, 2,491 Hispanics, and 4,507 mixed-race students. This is one of the few research studies available that includes mixed-race students as an ethnic category, this highlighting that we are only in the beginning stages of researching the topic of educational achievement in multiracial students.

The results of the MSAN study indicate that 41% of mixed-race students with a GPA of D+ or below felt their teachers did not grade them fairly, while 38% agreed their friends don’t ask for help when needed. Additionally, 41% of mixed-race students shared that they only understand about half or less of the material
they read in school (Ferguson, 2002). The study highlights the need for teachers in schools to develop more positive relationships with multiracial students in their classrooms, and indicates that close to half of the multiracial students did not understand the standards and academic content of their classes. The study provides compelling evidence that the needs of multiracial students are currently not being met in schools.

Third, the civil action hearing of Godby vs. Montgomery County Board of Education (MCBOE) in 1998 exemplifies the present dilemma faced by biracial students in our public schools. In this case, a mixed race ninth grade student at Cloverdale Jr. High School was asked to identify with one race for the purposes of the homecoming queen elections at her school. The queens and their courts were selected according to their race and students were asked to nominate “White” students and “Black” students separately. The United States District Court in Alabama found that “MCBOE may not divide their students, or classify their students, on the basis of race without a compelling, narrowly drawn, reason” (Godby, 1998). Perhaps what is most striking about this case is that it exemplifies the persistent role race and racial segregation continues to play within public schools today.

Finally, a disproportionately large percentage of multiracial university students today perceive U.C. Berkeley to be a safe haven for diversity because a 2004 U.C. Undergraduate Experience Survey reflects that 22.9% of the respondents identified themselves as multiracial and multiethnic (Powell, 2005). In this same study Powell (2005) noted that across the University of California
system 25.8% of the respondents identified themselves as multiracial or multiethnic. This growing number of mixed young people is launching a quest for a multiracial identity category to be recognized and has formed a political action group titled “One Box Isn’t Enough,” which calls for a multiracial civil rights movement (MAVIN Foundation Campus Awareness and Compliance Initiative [MAVIN], 2005). One Box Isn’t Enough is an effort of the MAVIN Foundation’s Campus Awareness & Compliance Initiative (CACI), with the Level Playing Field Institute, and in partnership with the Association of MultiEthnic Americans (AMEA) and Hapa Issues Forum (HIF). This coalition aims to encourage the U.S. Department of Education to implement federal guidelines that allow individuals to “mark one or more” races on forms that ask for race and ethnicity.

This movement calls for the U.S. Department of Education to comply with the racial and ethnic category guidelines instituted by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 1997. Not only did the OMB require all federal agencies to comply with allowing one or more races to be marked on forms, but the January 2003 deadline for compliance has passed with little to no response in public education systems. With the passage of almost ten years now, the United States Department of Education (USDE) only recently released guidelines for educational institutions to follow regarding the compliance of OMB requirements. The USDE racial and ethnic guidelines must be adhered to by state and local education agencies by fall 2010. While over 2.5 million mixed race students will soon be able to identify as more than one race on the forms, that data is not yet required to be used to their benefit (K. M. Williams, 2006; MAVIN, 2005; Skerry,
To be clear, although a category for “two or more races” will soon be implemented nationwide throughout the educational system, there are no expectations to utilize this new mixed race classification for purposes of academic accountability.

Put simply, research on multiracial individuals is in its infancy. Therefore, narrowing studies to multiracial students and their academic achievement is difficult in a time when little is known about the multiracial population. Research on the topic of multiracial students lends itself to the exploration of racial identity models for multiracial people, and redefining racial classifications and data collection models to include a multiracial subgroup.

Drawing on the previous research literature to date, the guiding research question for this study is: How and to what extent do public policy decisions regarding accountability affect the reporting of educational outcomes for multiracial students? The following sub questions then emerge: a) What subgroups are identified by the accountability movement in two states that differ in their multiracial category policies? b) How is academic achievement data disaggregated according to policies in two different state education agencies? c) To what degree are multiracial students rendered visible in the reporting of academic achievement data, and what efforts are made to ascertain their educational progress and needs in two states with varying methods of identifying multiracial students?
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

*Chapter Organization*

Chapter Three focuses on the research questions at hand and the research design used to address these questions. The beginning of this chapter describes the qualitative nature of this research and portrays the relevance of a comparative case study approach. An account of the data collection procedures details the utilization of research techniques such as interviews, documents, data recording, and data analysis. This chapter concludes with a report of the validity factors surrounding this research along with a sketch of the code of ethics embraced within this research.

*The Qualitative Researcher*

Qualitative research allows the evaluator to study specific issues in-depth. Evaluation in qualitative studies lends itself to systemic data-based inquiry that results in efforts to increase human effectiveness. “Human beings are engaged in all kinds of efforts to make the world a better place” (Patton, 1990). Therefore, the purpose of qualitative research is to inform the populace, enhance decision-making, and utilize the learning from studies to address human and societal issues.

This study utilized an exploratory case study approach. Yin (2003) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary
phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.” This case study is a comprehensive research strategy that serves as an investigation of contextual conditions significant to the topic of study. For the last three decades, qualitative case studies on topics such as students, innovations, reform, teachers, and policies have been prevalent throughout the field of education (Merriam, 1998). The most distinctive characteristic of this case study rests in restricting the object of study, the case to a single entity or unit such as a class, a community, or a specific policy. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe the case as a phenomenon occurring within a bounded context. The unit of analysis within this research is the multiracial student.

Although case study research is sparse in the area of multiracial people, there is evidence that qualitative studies have been conducted on this topic (C. B. Williams, 1999). Journalist Lise Funderburg’s (1994) text, *Black, White, Other: Biracial Americans Talk About Race and Identity,* is an example of a qualitative study on the topic of biracial individuals living in the United States. As a journalist, she interviewed 46 biracial Americans on the topics of family and love, work and religion, and the mythology surrounding the “tragic mulatto.” Funderburg’s case study explored the turmoil that comes from being caught between two worlds and living a life on both sides of the color line.

Another case study was conducted by a team of three researchers from Arcadia University who compared two biracial college freshmen, both of whom identified as Black. One refused to be exclusively Black while the other wished
he were (Gillem, Cohn, & Throne, 2001). The latter qualitative case study explored the progression of racial identity development in Black individuals compared to racial identity development in biracial people. The study sought to generalize Black and ethnic identity theories and apply them to the identity development of biracial individuals. It found that monoracial identity models do not take into account the complex forces that impact biracial people as they seek their identity in a monoracially-defined world (Gillem et al., 2001).

The primary focus of qualitative research studies on multiracial people in the last decade has been on racial identity development and racial categorization of mixed race people (Bianchi et al., 1997; Chiong, 1998; Kato, 2000; Korgen, 1999; Milan & Keiley, 2000). Milan and Keiley (2000) compared biracial and White adolescents and found biracial youth self-reported issues regarding delinquency, school problems, and self-esteem problems. Korgen (1999) and Kato (2000) explored racial identity development models and the possibility of a new theory of racial identity development focused on multiracial people who face the realities of embracing two cultures. Some research has surfaced based on the racial categorization of multiracial people. For example, Chiong (1998) reviewed school and federal documents and interviewed teachers, administrators, and other school personnel. He proposed that multiracial children have needs that are not being met in our schools because they are categorized on the basis of only one race on school forms, and postulated that a new multiracial category would help multiracial children overcome current negative perceptions and change the nature of the multiracial experience.
Research Design and Case Study

The first step of this research study was to compare two distinct state practices in data collection of multiracial students in schools. A comparative analysis was conducted on California, which does not have a multiracial category for data collection for student achievement, and North Carolina, which does have a multiracial category for purposes of academic accountability. Standardized academic achievement scores of the multiracial subgroup in North Carolina were used to determine if these students were meeting academic proficiency levels in accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act and adequate yearly progress targets.

Research Question and Sub Questions

The primary research question addressed within my dissertation is: How and to what extent do public policy decisions regarding accountability affect the reporting of educational outcomes for multiracial students? The following sub questions then emerge: a) What subgroups are identified by the accountability movement in two states that differ in their multiracial category policies? b) How is academic achievement data disaggregated according to policies in two different state education agencies? c) To what degree are multiracial students rendered visible in the reporting of academic achievement data, and what efforts are made to ascertain their educational progress and needs in two states with varying methods of identifying multiracial students?
Data Collection Procedures

The case study protocol outlined within this study was crafted specifically to assess how accountability-based public policy decisions in two different states affect the reporting of educational outcomes for multiracial students. This research lent itself to a qualitative case study resting primarily on scaffolded interviews, student assessment data, the collection and analysis of documentation, and archival records.

Maintaining a chain of evidence within a research case study is critical in terms of establishing reliability of information. One should be able to follow the chain of evidence both forward and backward in order to connect the research question to the conclusions drawn. The chain of evidence within this study includes the following components: Case Study Report; Case Study Database; Citations to Specific Evidentiary Sources in the Case Study Database; Case Study Protocol; and Case Study Questions (Yin, 2003).

What follows are descriptions detailing the pattern of logic for each of the components. The case study report indicates that this research focused on the rapidly expanding subgroup of multiracial students in schools. The case study database highlights four areas of data sources collected: documentation, archival records, interviews, and student assessment data. Citations to specific evidentiary sources in the case study are included, such as U.S. Census documents and interview data. The case study protocol included gaining access to the field, having sufficient resources, providing a schedule of interviews, developing proper consent forms, and dealing with unanticipated events. Finally,
a five-tiered progression of case study questions were designed to analyze the
research from both micro and macro levels.

*Interviews*. The qualitative research interview allowed interviewees to
express their views and opinions, in their own words, which were not available
through surveys, document analysis, or observation (Ortiz, 2003, p. 36). The
primary source of data collection within this research was the semi-structured
interview, which elicits descriptions of the real world of the interviewee to
interpret the meaning of specific phenomena. The semi-structured interview
allowed for flexibly worded questions, a mix of structured and more open-ended
questions, and provided an opportunity for the researcher to respond to the
situation at hand (Merriam, 1998).

The study encompassed a total of two group semi-structured interviews
conducted with public policy officials in two different state departments of
education, in California and North Carolina. In addition, one phone interview was
conducted with an educational administrator in North Carolina so as to verify and
expand data gathered during the NCDPI group interview. The group interviews
sought to answer the primary research question of this study: *How and to what
extent do public policy decisions regarding accountability affect the reporting of
educational outcomes for multiracial students?* Public policy officials selected to
participate in the interviews had knowledge of data collection procedures in their
respective state regarding racial classification and student achievement data.
Group interview participants were identified based on a review of the
organization structure of each department of education, along with emails, and
phone calls made by the researcher to the departments of education in California and North Carolina. The purpose of the email and phone call contacts was to identify specific employees in each state department of education who held the greatest degree of expertise regarding state public policy decisions impacting how academic achievement data are collected and analyzed on multiracial students.

Once specific staff members within the departments of education were identified, they were then contacted via both an email and phone call that introduced the researcher, research topic, and research questions. Each interviewee was provided with a Participant Consent Form (Appendix C) that outlined the purpose, procedures, risks and benefits, confidentiality clause, voluntary nature of the study, contacts and questions, and a statement of consent for the study.

The participants were interviewed either in-person or by phone at a time and location that was non-threatening, comfortable, and convenient for them. The interview environment allowed for privacy and minimal distractions. The interviews took approximately two hours and were conducted between October and December of 2008. As the primary researcher, I traveled to the state departments of education in both California and North Carolina to conduct face-to-face interviews with public policy officials. Both group interviews were conducted face-to-face. However, one supplementary interview was performed by phone due to constraints of time and proximity.
The interviewees were provided with the interview questions prior to the interview. I developed a list of interview questions relevant to the research questions (Interview Protocol – Appendix C). In addition, this research employed a wide variety of types of interview questions as described by Kvale (1996) such as: introducing questions, follow-up questions, probing questions, specifying questions, direct questions, indirect questions, structuring questions, and interpreting questions. An interview protocol was developed to support the researcher in the flow and progression of the interview process and the scaffolding of interview questions (Interview Protocol – Appendix C) (Ortiz, 2003).

Documents. Documentary information was relevant to this comparative case study. The documentation took on many forms and enabled the researcher to obtain the language and words of participants (Creswell, 2003). This form of data collection provided an unobtrusive source of information that the researcher could review repeatedly at a time that was most convenient (Yin, 2003). Documents can be a type of data that is thoughtful, in that participants have often given attention to their creation. They also can be characterized as a form of written evidence that can be used in triangulating data drawn from other sources. For the purpose of this study the following documents were reviewed in both California and North Carolina:

- Documents identifying the racial classifications utilized within each state department of education from the past and present
- Educational public policies determining the racial classifications utilized from the past and present in each state
• Racial classifications delineated within the collection of state-wide formal standardized student achievement assessments from the past and present
• Disaggregated student achievement data by racial classifications in each state
• Documents indicating the department of education's compliance with the United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) 1997 guideline regarding the collection of racial and ethnic data allowing respondents to select one or more races within five racial categories (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White).

Documentation within this study was utilized to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources, particularly the interviews (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). They were helpful in verifying correct titles and names of public policies and legal regulations. The documents also allowed the researcher to draw inferences, which led to new questions for the interviewees. These inferences were used as clues for further investigation. A systematic search for relevant documents pertaining to the research topic of multiracial students was undertaken within this study.

Data Recording. Each participant was provided with a consent form to participate in the research study, and to request permission to tape record the interview. Tape recording the interview allowed the researcher to concentrate on the topic and the dynamics of each group interview. In addition, field notes were
taken both during and after the interviews. The field notes primarily included the researcher’s written notes of each of the interviews. These notes included the researcher’s observations of real-life activities that occurred during the group interviews and attempted to capture the whole picture. Therefore, the field notes recorded environmental settings and physical gestures that could not be noted using just the audio recording of the interviews.

*Transcripts.* Upon the conclusion of each interview, the researcher personally transcribed the audio-recorded data. A transcription is defined as a written abstraction of an oral structure. Once the transcriptions were complete, they were emailed to each of the group interview participants and the one phone interview candidate for their review and verification of accuracy. Transcribing the interviews provided the researcher an opportunity to reflect on the information and emerging themes from each of the interviews. The transcriptions also provided an opportunity to better understand what each interviewee was sharing about the research topic.

*Participants*

Individuals who participated in this research met two basic criteria: a) they were employed by the state department of education in either California or North Carolina; and b) they had knowledge of the accountability movement within education and were able to describe their state’s past and current practices in collecting and recording multiracial student identity and achievement data. The research that exists on multiracial individuals is limited in part due to the lack of a
nationwide standard that is uniformly used regarding racial classifications for multiracial individuals. Therefore, educational administrators in state departments of education were sought for this study to ascertain past and current practices regarding the racial categorization and data collection for multiracial students.

Each interviewee was provided with a Participant Consent Form (Appendix C) that details the purpose of the study and procedures of the study. Furthermore, the consent form contained a confidentiality clause for the interviewees along with the right for the participant to have the freedom to withdraw their consent to participate at any time. There were no known risks or discomforts associated with this research study. Finally, the Participant Consent Form afforded the potential interviewee the opportunity to provide the researcher with written acceptance verifying they were voluntarily choosing to participate in the study and have their interview audio taped. Transcribed interviews were returned to the participants to check for accuracy.

Data Analysis

Upon completion of the data collection process, a disciplined process in bringing order to the information was undertaken (Patton, 1990). The culminating steps of this qualitative research were analysis, interpretation, and presentation of the findings. The challenge was to organize and make sense of large amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, narrow and identify patterns, and construct a framework of meaning from the data (Patton, 1990).
Data reduction is the process of selecting and simplifying the data drawn from written field notes and transcriptions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Here, the researcher needed to make decisions regarding how to code the categories, group, and organize them so as to elicit conclusions that could be drawn and verified. For example, the data from the qualitative interviews in this study were analyzed using a series of codes that unveiled themes and sub-themes regarding the topic of multiracial students and their needs within our schools.

Within this qualitative research, the researcher was charged with fairly representing the data and sharing what the findings disclosed. Therefore, this qualitative analysis required the researcher to monitor and report her own analytical procedures as completely and truthfully as possible (Patton, 1990). As part of the analytical process, the researcher displayed the data in meaningful ways with the use of matrices, graphs, and charts illustrating the patterns and findings drawn from the information. All three of these forms of data display were utilized within this research study.

Conclusion drawing and verification can be characterized as the process of developing an initial idea about patterns and explanations from the findings, verifying them consistently by checking the data, and forming a matrix (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This process established the validity of the data and allowed triangulation and verification of the findings. The data gathered and transcribed for this study were entered into the qualitative analysis software, HyperRESEARCH 2.7. This software data program enabled the researcher to code and retrieve, build theories, and conduct analyses of data. One of the
primary analytical tools utilized within HyperRESEARCH for this study was the Code Frequency Report, which provided a venue for the data to be analyzed by total code frequency, as well as maximize each code’s distribution among the two comparative state cases embodied in the study. The Code Frequency Report feature allowed for a systematic and mathematical methodology in data reduction and major theme and sub-theme identification within this study. HyperRESEARCH provided a software tool that allowed data from the group interviews to be coded by the researcher.

The validity of data was also established through a process of data triangulation wherein multiple sources of information drawn from archival records, group interviews, documentation, and student assessment data were cross-referenced to ensure patterns of reliability. The various data sources utilized for this study for the purpose of validating the findings are shown in Figure 1.
Three stages of data analysis were followed in this qualitative study: data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). Together each stage formed an interactive, cyclical process. Therefore, the coding of data or the data reduction step drew new ideas regarding input within the data display. As the data display was completed, preliminary conclusions were drawn that led to the expansion of the data display. This pattern exemplified the continuous, iterative nature of qualitative data analysis.

An integral part of the data analysis process in this research study included the application of racial identity development models (RIDMs), specific to multiracial individuals as the theoretical framework and lens through which the
data was studied. This theoretical framework maintained the premise that multiracial people acquire their individual identities through a series of developmental stages, intrinsically linked to understanding what it means to have a mixed racial heritage. Thus, families and schools must recognize multiracialism as a valuable component of the America's diverse population. RIDMs run counter to earlier deficit model theories defaulting multiracial individuals into a category of marginality. One of the first development stages of RIDMs for multiracial individuals is first recognizing they embody a mixed racial heritage. The second stage involves multiracial people determining how they will categorize or identify themselves. It is during this specific developmental stage of racial identity that a multiracial individual must seek to understand the societal choices at hand with regards to racial classification.

Here lies the crux of this research study, which sought to determine how and to what extent public policy decisions regarding accountability affect educational outcomes for multiracial students. This study compared and contrasted two different state departments of education practices with regards to the racial classification of multiracial students. The research aimed to illuminate which subgroups are identified by the academic accountability systems in both California and North Carolina, and determine the rationale for these policy decisions. Furthermore, this study sought to determine the degree to which multiracial students are rendered visible in the reporting of academic achievement results so as to identify their progress and needs.
In conclusion, the data analysis component of this research study included both inductive and deductive forms of logical analysis. The inductive reasoning component asserted a series of minor premises to support the conclusion. Here, the researcher collected the data and then undertook a disciplined process to organizing the data. Patterns and themes were identified so as to code the categories, group them into an organized state, and construct a framework of meaning from the data.

In addition, deductive reasoning begins with a general theory and then transitions to more specific hypotheses. Within this study the deductive analysis utilized racial identity development models as a theoretical framework and then drew on data collection of primarily interviews, documents, and archival information to make observations and test hypotheses. Thus, by employing both an inductive and deductive approach to the data analysis process, the purpose of this research was to validate and generalize the conclusions drawn from the study.

*Participant Observation.* Participant observation is a unique mode of observation in which the researcher is an active observer. This model allowed for the researcher to assume a variety of roles within a case study situation and to actually participate in the events being studied (Yin, 2003). Most poignant in my role as a participant observer is that I am a multiracial individual who was educated in the American public school system and am presently a mother of two multiracial children who are also in public school.
Participant observation provided unique opportunities for collecting case study data. The most distinguishing characteristic was my ability as a multiracial researcher to gain access to events and groups that may be inaccessible to traditional (White) scientific investigation. Furthermore, as a participant observer I had the opportunity to interpret reality from the viewpoint of an insider rather than from the outside (Yin, 2003). The foremost impediment to my role as a participant observer was related to potential biases. Due to possible moments of impartiality as a researcher, the use of participant observation was quite limited within this research study.

Validity. The validity and reliability of qualitative data depend on the methodological skill and integrity of the researcher (Patton, 1990). Thus, this research study engaged systematic and rigorous observation and interviewing techniques to generate useful and credible qualitative findings. The advantage of quantitative research is that it’s possible to measure a large number of reactions from participants, thus producing a broad, generalizable set of findings. By contrast, qualitative methods produce a wealth of detailed data about a small number of people. This qualitative characteristic is embedded within this research study in that it focused exclusively on two group interviews, with participants who represented the Department of Education in California and North Carolina’s Department of Public Instruction. Therefore, the validity in this qualitative methods comparative study rested upon the skill, competence, and rigor of the researcher doing the fieldwork and the veracity of the participants.
There are a few factors that may affect the validity of this qualitative research study. First, I am a biracial administrator within the field of education who served as the primary researcher in this study on the academic accountability and classification of multiracial students. Bogden and Biklen (1982) indicate that interviewers must be more reflective in thinking about how to manage interviews if their identity has a special correlation to their subjects. Therefore, as a biracial administrator and researcher, I need to create an atmosphere of trust during each interview so the participants would feel comfortable providing honest and complete responses during the interview.

The second validity factor is that I am married to a biracial individual and am a mother of multiracial children who are in the initial stages of attending the elementary public school system in California. Thus, it was important that I carefully monitor my emotions and prejudices during the data collection process. By carefully crafting the interview questions prior to the interviews, I was be able to separate my personal life from the information shared by participants in order to elicit valid and reliable data.

The final validity factor was that my selection of participants was narrow. There were a total of nine interview participants in this research study. Each state department of education allowed for one group interview composed of four state educational leaders. One of the state education agencies also provided access to a single phone interview with an individual participant so as to substantiate findings or questions that surfaced from the group interview. Each participant was selected due to their expertise and knowledge of demographic
and academic data collection practices in their respective states. The data collected from the interviews was specific and focused, thus allowing for rich descriptions and information to be drawn from each participant.

**Ethical Considerations**

The American Psychological Association’s preamble eloquently purports the following ethical principles that hold true for researchers today:

Psychologists respect the dignity and worth of the individual and strive for the preservation and protection of fundamental human rights. They are committed to increasing knowledge of human behavior and of people’s understanding of themselves and others and to the utilization of such knowledge for the promotion of human welfare (American Psychological Association 1981, p. 633).

This same code of ethics is reiterated by Stake, (1994, p. 244) who noted, “Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict.” With this said, firm ethical precautions were undertaken throughout the study to ensure that participants did not have any negative personal consequences as a result of the research. Interviews entail both benefits and risks to the interviewees. Respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary. They could refuse to answer any question. They could choose to stop the interview at any time. And, they could withdraw from the study (Ortiz, 2003, p. 44).

Prior to their involvement in the study, participants were given a Participant Consent Form (Appendix C) to sign, which informed them of the purpose of the study, the rights of the participants, and an assurance of confidentiality by using pseudonyms or generalized titles. The consent form also
provided an assurance to participants that at any time they had the choice to withdraw from the study and they could request that their interview be removed from the study and returned to them. In addition, confidentiality and anonymity was maintained throughout the research study. Research data was stored in a locked storage cabinet in my home and a password for computer access to my dissertation information was used.

**Closing**

The purpose of this comparative qualitative research study was to determine how and to what extent public policy decisions regarding accountability affects the report of educational outcomes for multiracial students. By utilizing an exploratory case study approach this research investigated the contextual conditions that were significant to the data collection practices of multiracial students, specifically racial classification structures and academic data collection protocols. This comparative analysis drew upon data gathered from two states that differ in their classification structures of multiracial students. The case study protocol within this research assessed how accountability-based public policy decisions in two different states affect the reporting of educational outcomes for multiracial students. The data collected for this study focused on scaffolded semi-structured interviews, student assessment data, the gathering and analysis of documentation, and archival records.

The rapidly growing number of multiracial students emerging in America’s public school classrooms is such that researchers have predicted that by 2050
they will be recognized as a significant majority (Winters & DeBose, 2003). To
date, the fact that little to no knowledge of the multiracial population exists
significantly impairs the ability of educational institutions to identify the academic
strengths and needs of multiracial students. This lack of knowledge of multiracial
individuals begins our society’s inability to properly classify mixed race
individuals. To be present but not be acknowledged by your true racial and
cultural background leads to discrimination from all races, leaving multiracial
children feeling like outsiders everywhere (Sullivan, 1998).
CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Overview of Chapter Organization

This chapter is divided into eight major components that allow for the major research findings to unfold across research themes and through a state-by-state comparative analysis. It begins with a brief synopsis of the two group interviews held with representatives from the CDE and the NCDPI. This is followed by a description of the organization of data analysis that highlights the major research themes and sub-themes of this study. A narrative describing racial classification structures required by federal public policies is provided. The chapter moves on to describe the research findings specific to the CDE, and then those specific to the NCDPI. In closing, an overall summary of the chapter followed by a description of key research findings is imparted. The chapter is organized in the manner shown in Table 3.
### Table 3. Organizational Structure of Chapter Four.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER 4 SECTION TITLE</th>
<th>SECTION SUBTITLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Group Interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Organization of Data Analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Overview of Chapter Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Federal Public Policy</td>
<td>United States Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Response to Federal Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) California Department of Education</td>
<td>Data Collection Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>California Department of Education Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) North Carolina Department of Public Instruction</td>
<td>Data Collection Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Summary of Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Key Research Findings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group Interviews**

Interview data were collected from high-level state educational administrators within California’s Department of Education and North Carolina’s Department of Public Instruction. Each of these state education departments
allowed me to conduct a group interview with four administrators who hold high-level administrative positions. The purpose of engaging educational administrators in group interviews was to explore the degree to which public policy decisions, focused on accountability, affect educational outcomes for multiracial students. California was identified for this study because it currently has the largest total number of multiracial individuals of any state in the country, reflecting over 1.6 million mixed race persons, and yet its Department of Education does not currently utilize a multiracial category for the purpose of academic accountability (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001c). By comparison, North Carolina was chosen because it is one of fewer than ten states in the nation that has been employing a multiracial classification for almost a decade, despite its relatively small percentage of multiracial students.

Both state departments of education group interviews were conducted at year-end of 2008. In October of 2008, a research group interview was held with individuals representing four components within the California Department of Education: 1) Accountability and Improvement; 2) Data Management; 3) Policy and Evaluation; and 4) Standards and Assessment. A second, similar group interview was conducted in November of 2008 with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Prominent educational administrators represented the following segments within North Carolina’s Department of Public Instruction: 1) Academic Services and Instructional Support; 2) Accountability; 3) K-12 Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology; and 4) Policy and Strategic Planning. The goal of each group interview was to determine the degree to
which multiracial students are rendered visible within each state education system and to determine how public policies affect the educational outcomes of these students.

While a large amount of data was secured through the research interviews and transcriptions, an equal amount of data was drawn from documentation. The volume of documentation collected during this research study and referred to is significant. Therefore, Table 4 was created so as to explicitly indicate which data sources are documents. Chapter Four makes reference to the 21 documents listed in Table 4.

Table 4. Research Documents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Title, and Year</th>
<th>Document Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revisions to the Standards for Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity, 1997</td>
<td>United States White House, Office of Management and Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Register Notice, October 30, 1997</td>
<td>United States White House, Office of Management and Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4. Continued</td>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Survey on Racial and Ethnic Classifications, 1995</td>
<td>The National Center for Education Statistics and The Office of Civil Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial and Ethnic Classifications Used in Public Schools, 1998</td>
<td>U.S. White House, Office of Management and Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Enrollment by Ethnicity, 2008</td>
<td>California Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Census, 2000</td>
<td>U.S. Census Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System, 2009-2010</td>
<td>California Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Longitudinal Teacher Integrated Data Education System, 2009-2010</td>
<td>California Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement by U.S. House Representative, Tom Petri, 1997</td>
<td>Presented before The Subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology of the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Health Interview Survey, 2007</td>
<td>North Carolina Department of Public Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The North Carolina State Testing Results (Preliminary), 2007-2008</td>
<td>North Carolina Department of Public Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trends in Subgroup Performance, Reading Composite, Grades 3-8, 2008</td>
<td>North Carolina Department of Public Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-of-Grade General Test Multiple-Choice Test Results Statewide Percent of Students At or Level III in Both Reading and Mathematics, Grades 3-8, for All Ethnicities, 2007-2008</td>
<td>North Carolina Department of Public Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Department of Education Racial &amp; Ethnicity Classification Guidance for Students and Staff, 2007</td>
<td>North Carolina Department of Public Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter by California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O’Connell Regarding the Implementation of CALPADS</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Two or More Races Population: 2000, 2001</td>
<td>California Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting Rights Act, Public Law 94-311, 1976</td>
<td>U.S. Census Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Department Requires Changes in Race, Ethnicity Reporting by Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, 2007</td>
<td>U.S. Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Department of Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organization of Data Analysis

The organizational structure of data analysis within this comparative case study reflects an intricate yet methodical web drawn from data collected primarily from state department of education group interviews and primary source documents. Supplementary data included information drawn from relevant documents such as federal policy and participant observation field notes. A data reduction and analysis process the research findings of this study revealed 21 sub-themes. Then, utilizing the theoretical framework for racial identity development, public policies based on racial classification, and academic accountability, the sub-themes were collapsed into the 6 main themes shown in Table 5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>TOTAL FREQUENCY</th>
<th>MAXIMUM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Racial Classification</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Public Policy</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Methodologies</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controversial Issues</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial Student Needs</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The six major themes identified in Table 5 reflect the most prevalent data constructs abstracted from the qualitative analysis of coded transcriptions and document sources. The column titled “maximum” refers to the total number of times the research theme emerged. The themes have been placed in order of total frequency from highest to lowest: Racial Classification surfaced as the most frequent theme drawn from the data, followed by Impact of Federal Public Policy,
Data Methodologies, Academic Achievement, Controversial Issues, and Multiracial Student Needs.

Table 6 reflects the overarching organizational structure of the data analysis components embedded within this chapter. Thus, the following segments of the descriptive characteristics of respondents section has been divided into the six major themes: 1) Racial Classification; 2) Federal Public Policy; 3) Data Methodologies; 4) Academic Achievement; 5) Controversial Issues; and 6) Multiracial Student Needs. Although the research theme *Racial Classification* emerged with the most prevalent frequency results this research will first delve into the theme titled, *Federal Public Policy* as this will provide a foundation of knowledge required.

Table 6. Report of Themes & Sub-Themes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES &amp; SUB-THEMES</th>
<th>TOTAL FREQUENCY</th>
<th>MAXIMUM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THEME I</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Classification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial School Enrollment</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptivity to Change</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race vs. Ethnicity</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Influence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline to State</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Party Identification</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Identification</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME II</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Public Policy</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Response to Federal Policy</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive State Actions</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vague Guidelines for Policy Implementation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme III</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Methodologies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Accuracy Multiracial Data Tabulation</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggles Data Methodology and Staff Decisions</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment Data Entry into Database</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data System Limitations Bridging Methodologies</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Issues</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme IV</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability State vs. Federal Student Achievement Data</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme VI</th>
<th>28</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controversial Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race vs. Ethnicity</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Influence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline to State</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Party Identification</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Identification</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme V</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial Student Needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial Student Needs Unknown</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Identity Crisis</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline Issue</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL THEMES	TOTAL SUB-THEMES
6	21

In addition, the theme and sub-themes of *Controversial Issues* will be embedded within the other five major research themes. Of the 21 sub-themes that surfaced, nine of them are *Controversial Issues*. Table 7 shows a list of the sub-themes denoted as *Controversial Issues* along with the primary research theme they fall within.
Table 7. Controversial Issues: Sub-Themes & Major Themes They Fall Within

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Classification</th>
<th>Federal Public Policy</th>
<th>Data Methodologies</th>
<th>Academic Achievement</th>
<th>Multiracial Student Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race vs. Ethnicity</td>
<td>Funding Issues</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Racial Identity Crisis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Influence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Need for Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline to State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Party Identification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Identification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Federal Public Policy**

The narrative of racial classification structures utilized by federal organizations within the United States begins with a review of essential public policy documents collected regarding racial classification. For more than 20 years federal agencies have been required to comply with standards established by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regarding racial classification and ethnicity structures. The OMB’s Statistical Policy Directive No. 15 (OMB Directive No. 15) provides a common language for data on race and ethnicity for the population groups so as to promote uniformity and comparability of data. The design of these data standards was a result of new responsibilities to enforce civil rights laws by monitoring equal access in housing, education, employment, and other areas, for populations experiencing historical discrimination and
differential treatment due to their race or ethnicity. The federal government and federal agencies utilize these standards for, but not limited to, the decennial census, household surveys, administrative forms (i.e. school registration), and in medical and other research. The OMB intends for the categories to represent a social-political construct developed for collecting data on the race and ethnicity of broad population groups in the United States. The classifications are not anthropologically or scientifically based.

In 1977, the original OMB Directive No. 15 recognized four discrete racial categories: 1) American Indian or Alaskan Native; 2) Asian or Pacific Islander; 3) Black; and 4) White (Bare, Knight, Knight, Meek, & Frase, 1998). In addition, the OMB broke ethnicity down into Hispanic Origin and Not Hispanic Origin. Thus, OMB’s Statistical Policy Directive No.15 allowed five combined race and ethnicity categories: 1) American Indian or Alaskan Native; 2) Asian or Pacific Islander; 3) Black, not of Hispanic origin; 4) Hispanic; and 5) White, not of Hispanic origin (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 1996). Employing the latter standards, federal agencies have been able to aggregate analogous data on major population clusters delineated along racial and ethnic categories. Table 8 highlights a list of the five racial and ethnic categories distinguished within OMB’s Directive No. 15 in 1977 along with the racial classification definitions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial &amp; Ethnic Categories</th>
<th>Racial Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>A person having origins in any of the original people of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands, and Samoa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, not of Hispanic origin</td>
<td>A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, not of Hispanic origin</td>
<td>A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NCES, 1996

The racial and ethnic composition of the United States has changed, causing questions regarding whether or not the five original 1977 OMB categories reflect the diversity of the present populace. Primarily since the 1990 Census, growing criticism of the standards has surfaced from those who do not believe that the minimum categories established in OMB Directive No. 15 accurately represent the increasing diversity of the nation’s population as a result of a surge in immigration and interracial marriages (Bianchi et al., 1997). As a result of the criticism, in 1993 Congress held hearings on the matter, and in July 1993, the OMB engaged in a comprehensive review of the 1977 categories for
data on race and ethnicity. Thus, the OMB in partnership with the Interagency Committee for the Review of the Racial and Ethnic Standards, established by the OMB in March 1994, undertook a multi-year study of the racial and ethnic classification system in place. Due to the findings of the comprehensive review, the OMB released Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity in 1997 and provided guidelines for these revisions in 2000 (U.S. Office of Management and Budget [OMB], 1997). It is important to note Congress once again held hearings on this topic in 1997 in an effort to make any necessary changes for the 1998 dress rehearsal of the 2000 Census.

In Federal Register Notice, dated October 30, 1997, the OMB announced its decision to amend OMB Directive No. 15, Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting based on recommendations from studies conducted by the Interagency Committee (OMB, 1997). The two primary modifications included: 1) separating the “Asian or Pacific Islander” category into the two classifications of “Asian” and “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander;” and 2) changing the term “Hispanic” to “Hispanic or Latino.” Thus, the revised standards required five minimum categories for data on race:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial &amp; Ethnic Categories</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Asian</td>
<td>A person having origins in any of the original people of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Black or African American</td>
<td>A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa. Terms such as “Haitian” or “Negro” can be used in addition to “Black or African American.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. White</td>
<td>A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two Categories for Data on Ethnicity:

1. Hispanic or Latino
2. Not Hispanic or Latino

Hispanic or Latino
A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The term, “Spanish origin,” can be used in addition to “Hispanic or Latino.”

Source: (OMB, 1997)

In 1997 the Interagency Committee also recommended that, when self-identification is utilized, individuals who wish to identify their mixed heritage
should be able to “mark more than one” of the racial categories delineated in OMB Directive No. 15, but there should not be a multiracial category. The latter suggestion was favorably embraced by organizations such as the American Medical Association, the National Education Association, the National Council of La Raza, the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics, as well as all responsive federal agencies. Feedback regarding marking more than one category from associations such as NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and the Equal Employment Advisory Council showed receptivity to the option of “marking more than one” race however shared reservations about data tabulation methodologies (OMB, 1997).

A few remarks, specifically from state agencies and legislatures, opposed any multiple race reporting because of potential fiscal increases to collect the information and implementation problems. Several statements on the matter of multiple race self-identification options proposed that there be no collection of data on race and a few comments suggested categories titled “human” or “American.” In the end, the OMB’s 1997 Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity provided the following guidelines concerning reporting more than one race:

- **When self-identification is used, a method for reporting more than one race should be adopted.**
- **The method for respondents to report more than one race should take the form of multiple responses to a single question and not a “multiracial” category.**
- **When a list of races is provided to respondents, the list should not contain a “multiracial” category.**
• Based on research conducted so far, two recommended forms for the instruction accompanying the multiple response question are “Mark one or more…” and “Select one or more…."

• If the criteria for data quality and confidentiality are met, provision should be made to report, at a minimum, the number of individuals identifying with more than one race. Data producers are encouraged to provide greater detail about the distribution of multiple responses.

• The new standards will be used in the decennial census, and other data producers should conform as soon as possible, but not later than January 1, 2003.

Source: (OMB, 1997)

United States Department of Education Policy

Next, the focus of this study will narrow to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and its most current regulations for racial and ethnic classification systems. The National Cooperative Education Statistics System (Cooperative System) was established to work with states to produce and maintain uniform and comparable educational data useful for policymaking at the federal, state, and local levels. To support this goal, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the USDE, established the National Forum on Education Statistics to improve the collection, reporting, and use of elementary and secondary statistics. A subsidiary of the Cooperative System is the National Forum on Education Statistics (Forum) which presented Managing an Identity Crisis: Forum Guide to Implementing New Federal Race and Ethnicity Categories, in 2008). The primary goal of the Forum is to enhance the quality of education data gathered for use by policymakers and program decision makers in part by standardizing the way data systems record students’ race and ethnicity.
The aforementioned Forum Guide was developed in 2008 to assist state and local education agencies in their implementation of the new federal race and ethnicity categories in an effort to minimize redundant efforts within and across states, improve data comparability, and reduce the burden of reporting. As of 1997, federal agencies have been working toward implementing the OMB Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity. The latter amended guidelines for Race and Ethnicity classifications replace the original standards that had been in place since 1977. The new standards delineate between race and ethnicity and include two ethnic categories. As mentioned earlier, there are now five racial categories, and respondents may choose more than one race. The new standards are:

*Ethnicity*
- Hispanic or Latino
- Not Hispanic or Latino

*Race*
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

In August 2006, for the first time the USDE released proposed plans for amending the way state education agencies (SEA) (states) and local education agencies (LEA) (school districts) are expected to maintain, collect, and report data on race and ethnicity, given requirements of the 1997 OMB revised guidelines for race and ethnicity data collection. Note the nine year lapse in time that occurred prior to the USDE aligning their racial and ethnic classification
Standards to the 1997 OMB criteria. The OMB does allow for agencies to request a variance if they cannot comply with the standards.

Upon consideration of vast comments and feedback, the USDE published *Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education (Final Guidance)* in October 2007. The *Final Guidance* served as the foundation for future reporting of racial and ethnic data to all programs within the USDE, and was effective as of December 3, 2007.

In spite of the race combinations of individuals, each individual must be counted in exactly one of the following race and ethnicity combinations when being reported to the U.S. Department of Education or other federal agencies:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or more races
- Hispanic of any race

The list above reflects the first time in history the federal department of education will incorporate a category titled, “Two or more races” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001c). The Forum recommendations requires all state departments of education and school districts to report aggregated data (not individual student records) to the USDE using the new classification structure by fall of 2010 for the 2010-2011 school year.
State Response to Federal Policy

Changes in the nation’s racial and ethnic composition present unique challenges to public schools, which collect and aggregate race and ethnicity data for federal programs and other reporting functions. Therefore, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the USDE, sponsored two surveys, one at the school level in 1995 and the other at the state level in 1997 (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 1998). These surveys focused on the racial and ethnic classifications used to collect and report data on students in public elementary and secondary schools.

The findings of the 1995 school survey revealed that 55% of the nation’s public schools collect information about race and ethnicity only when a student initially registers at any school in the district (NCES, 1998). In addition, 17% of the nation’s schools at the time of the survey indicated they collect racial and ethnic data at initial registration and when students change schools within the district. Annual collection of student racial and ethnic information is collected by 25% of the schools. The pie graph in Figure 2 shows when information about race and ethnicity of students is usually obtained by public schools according to the 1995 survey results.
Furthermore, findings from the 1995 national survey regarding school racial and ethnic classification procedures revealed that schools utilize a variety of methods for collecting and reporting data on the race and ethnicity of their students. Of the schools responding, 73% indicated that parents or guardians were provided the opportunity to report the race and ethnicity of their children; 22% utilized teacher or administrator observation to assign students to racial and ethnic categories; and 5% reported that racial and ethnic data was not collected at the school but rather at the district office (NCES, 1998).

The OMB received eight suggested revisions during the public comment process of their review of Directive No. 15. Within the survey of schools,
participants were asked to indicate the extent to which each of the eight revisions would apply to students in their schools. Table 10 shows the responses of schools regarding the impact of each of the eight possible racial and ethnic classification revisions.

Table 10. 1995 Percentage of Public Schools Indicating Whether Suggested Revisions to OMB Policy Directive No. 15 for Classifying Race and Ethnicity are a Significant Issue for Students at their School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUGGESTED REVISION</th>
<th>Not an Issue/Minor Issue</th>
<th>A Significant Issue</th>
<th>Already Included or Soon to be Implemented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adding a general “multiracial” category</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing individuals to write in a racial or an ethnic designation</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding an “other” category</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing the name of the “black” category to “African American”</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing the name of the “American Indian or Alaskan Native” category to “Native American”</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding specific combinations of the current categories</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including Native Hawaiian as a separate category or as part of a “Native American” category</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding additional racial or ethnic designations</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In analyzing the data in the chart above it appears as though in 1995, over a decade ago, the most significant issue national public schools reported was the addition of a general “multiracial” category. In fact, the study shows that at this time six percent of the public schools had either already included or were about to implement a “multiracial” category. Therefore, if you add the last two columns in Table 10 titled “A Significant Issue” and “Already Included or Soon to be Implemented”, it can be stated that in 1995, 18% of the nation’s public schools acknowledged that a “multiracial” category would benefit the students they served. It may also have been prudent at the time of this public school survey on racial and ethnic classification to conduct the same survey with public school parents and students. This would have shown whether or not public school staff, parents and their students had similar views on the racial and ethnic categories in use at the time.

California Department of Education (CDE)

*California Department of Education Data Collection Overview*

At this point the study will look at the theme of racial classification through the lens of California’s State Department of Education (CDE). The CDE group interview was conducted on October 23, 2008 with four influential educational
administrators representing the following four divisions: 1) Accountability and Improvement; 2) Data Management; 3) Policy and Evaluation; and 4) Standards and Assessment. The primary purpose of the group interview was to determine how and to what extent public policy decisions regarding accountability affect the report of educational outcomes for multiracial students. Thus, the purpose in having four distinct divisions of the CDE represented at the group state interview was to ensure broad representation of key segments so as to diversify and verify specific elements under review within this study. It is important to note that the University of California at San Diego, San Diego State University, and California State University at San Marcos approved a Participant Consent Form for this study that ensured participants that their involvement in the study would remain anonymous. Thus, actual names of participants are not disclosed within this study.

*California Department of Education Policies*

*Racial Classification.* The most significant research theme that emerged from the coding and frequency reports of this study was the theme of racial classification. This was evidenced in data from both the CDE and North Carolina’s Department of Public Instruction (NCPI). The Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) of the University of California at San Diego, San Diego State University, and California State University San Marcos approved the Interview Protocol for this research study, which included a total of twelve interview questions. The interview questions and answers that provided the most in-depth
information regarding each state education or public instruction department’s racial and ethnic classification system were the following:

- **Question 1**: Please describe the demographics of the K-12 student population in your state.

- **Question 2**: What racial classification system does your state’s K-12 public education structure currently utilize and why?

- **Question 3**: What government agencies and public policies does your state department of education follow for racial classifications?

- **Question 7**: Does your state department of education utilize a multiracial category for K-12 students? If so, why? If not, what were the reasons to choose an alternative method of classifying multiracial students?

- **Question 8**: Employing the current racial classification system in your state department of education, how would a multiracial student be categorized for the purposes of activities such as school registration, California Basic Education Demographic System (CBEDS), and the monitoring of academic achievement?

- **Question 12**: Is there any information or recommendations you’d like to add that may be beneficial to this research study?

During the group interview the representatives from the CDE described their state department of education’s recent history of racial classification with the following statement:

So, in 1977 OMB had racial classification categories and all of the states were following the 1977 standards. In 1997, OMB issued Directive No.15 which established new reporting requirements. However at the federal level, the U.S. Department of Education essentially operated under a waiver and did not provide the states with any kind of guidance as to how they should implement those requirements. Absent of any guidance, what our state did was invented the primary, secondary categories as a way to try to still count a student within a discrete subgroup race ethnicity while at the same time allowing for multiple race designations in using the secondary.
Therefore, in 1997 when the OMB released the revised standards for Policy Directive No. 15, the CDE applied for a waiver due to the lack of guidance from the OMB regarding the implementation of the new revisions. In addition, the lack of guidance also prompted the CDE to invent their own racial classification structure for students of mixed race. Within this structure, the CDE established a vehicle for multiracial students to mark more than one race, but asked the students to delineate their primary and secondary races. This structure allows the CDE to provide multiple race designations for students of mixed race, while concurrently allowing a means to aggregate data into a single race designation, as identified by the students’ primary race choice.

For data tabulation purposes the employment of a racial classification structure that requires multiracial students to select a primary and secondary race is understandable. However, this structure poses racial identification challenges to multiracial students who identify themselves distinctly as embodying a mixed race heritage (USDE, 2008). Taking multiple race identification data and subsequently merging it into a monoracial category is in effect negating the perceived right of those multiracial students and their families to accurately identify themselves as more than one race.

When asked what racial classification system is utilized within the CDE, an educational administrator shared the following information:

We have the five major racial categories from the 1977 standards. We also did split out the Asian and Pacific Islander so we were consistent with the 1997 standards. We also have to comply with Government Code 8310.5 that lists a number of detail sub categories within the Asian Pacific
Islander groups so we include those in our categories. That gives us more detail.

Subsequent to the statement above, the representatives from the CDE were asked to specifically name the racial and ethnic classifications that they employ and they responded:

That would be American Indian or Native Alaskan, that’s the first one. The second one is Asian. The third one is Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. The fourth one is Filipino…now that one is a break out that the feds do not require. It’s something that the state put out because they are a higher group [or larger population]. Hispanic or Latino. Black or African American, not Hispanic. And White, not Hispanic…are those major categories.

Thus, viewing the information in the form of a list, the CDE employs the following racial and ethnic classifications:

- American Indian or Native Alaskan
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Filipino
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American, not Hispanic
- White, not Hispanic

During the group interview process the representatives from the CDE were then asked whether or not they utilize a multiracial category for K-12 students or not. Respondents provided the following three statements regarding the CDE’s categorization of multiracial K-12 students:

To my knowledge there is not a category for biracial, or triracial, or multiracial students. Rather, the data are collected in what is your primary ethnicity and then there is a secondary category that a student may check one or more races that they seem to self identify themselves with.

…we follow the 1997 OMB Directive to the extent of the categories but we haven’t implemented the multi-race aggregation that is part of that. So in
terms of the collections we use the categories but the distinctions of primary and secondary is something that we have overlaid on that and is not part of the federal guidelines.

Well, we do...based on looking at what’s on DataQuest, we do have this multiracial category. I will qualify that by saying that it’s multiple or no response so there may be some null responses in that number as well. It’s probably inflated. Three percent would be inflated in terms of multiple.

The data above indicates that the CDE currently does not employ a specific multiracial category. The CDE does allow students of mixed race backgrounds to identify with more than one race. The caveat here is that multiracial students in California must delineate primary and secondary race categories.

Although the USDE does not require state education agencies to implement the 2007 Final Guidance on race and ethnicity until 2010-2011, the CDE has made it clear that they will begin putting the regulations in place one year in advance, by the 2009-2010 school year. This will be executed through the CDE’s conversion to the CALPADS and CALTIDES longitudinal database systems.

With regards to utilizing primary and secondary race classifications, it is unclear how these terms are defined and subsequently utilized by parents and students of mixed heritage. If a K-12 student in California is biracial, a 50% and 50% blend of two distinct races, then how do they delineate between their primary and secondary race, unless they strongly identify with one race more than the other? To further elaborate, if a K-12 student in California is three equally distinct races such as Japanese, Filipino, and White how do they
distinguish a primary and secondary race, unless they strongly identify with one particular race over the other two? Requiring a multiracial student to delineate a primary race may be problematic depending on how the students identify themselves racially.

In addition, when aggregating information into DataQuest, the information database utilized by the CDE for reports on Academic Performance Index (API), Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM), California Healthy Kids Survey, Course Enrollments, Dropouts, English Language Development Test Results (CELDT), English Learners, Enrollment, Expulsions, Graduates, High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), High School Exams SAT/ACT/AP), Projected Teacher Hires, Physical Fitness Results, Staffing, Special Education, STAR, Technology Use and Proficiency, and Title III Accountability, this database provides for K-12 multiracial students to be categorized in a classification titled, “multiple or no response” for the purpose of enrollment. The accuracy of the data shown in DataQuest for K-12 students in the “multiple or no response” category is unknown given that the CDE aggregates K-12 multiracial students in a single primary race category.

In addition, K-12 students who do not have a response to the question about racial classification are added into the category titled, “multiple or no response.” This combination of two distinct groups of students into one category of “multiple or no response,” one that is multiracial and the other serving as those choosing to not respond to the race question, does not enable the CDE to answer the group interview question, How many multiracial K-12 students are in
public schools in California? For the 2007-2008 school year, DataQuest shows California public schools as having a total K-12 enrollment of 6,275,469 students (California Department of Education [CDE], 2008a). Of this total state student enrollment figure, DataQuest reports in Figure 4, with data extracted from the CDE website, that in 2007-2008 there were a total of 191,325 students or 3.05% of the total student population designated in the “multiple or no response” category.

Figure 3. 2007-2008 California Department of Education Total K-12 Enrollment
Source: (CDE, 2008)

The DataQuest graph shown in Figure 3 indicates California public schools have a relatively small percentage of students in the “multiple or no response category”. As a cross reference, the 2000 Census reported California
as having the third highest population of individuals reporting in the “More Than One Race” category, with almost five percent of the state identifying in this category (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001c). In fact, the only two states with a higher population of individuals reporting “More Than One Race” were Alaska and Hawaii, where more than 20% of the population selected two or more races (Morning, 2002). Furthermore, demographers report a growing trend of multiracial populations was already evident back in 2001 in Arizona, California, Hawaii, south Florida, New Mexico, New York City, and Texas (Kasindorf & Nasser, 2001). Thus, there is evidence pointing to a probable misalignment between multiracial K-12 student population figures according to the CDE and U.S. Census data. In closing, variables indicate that the CDE currently does not have a data management system that would accurately account for the total number of K-12 multiracial students. Fortunately, they are moving in this direction in the 2009-2010 school year with the implementation of CALPADS and CALTIDES.

CDE Research Themes and Sub-Themes

The findings within this study indicate that the CDE is coming across all six major research themes. However, the evidence from the data reveals that the CDE is primarily encountering the first three major research themes: Racial Classification, Federal Public Policy, and Data Methodologies. The data drawn largely from interviews, documents, and archival records shows high frequency levels for these three research themes in the CDE. Frequency refers to the
number of occurrences per repeating theme or sub-theme. Table 11 shows the sub-themes relevant to the CDE and its current policies specific to multiracial students.

By comparison, data from the NCDPI bring to light the following research themes of which two are different from those in the CDE: Racial Classification, Data Methodologies, and Multiracial Student Needs. Therefore, the findings disclosed in this study indicate that the two states have addressed the reporting of multiracial students in different manners.
Table 11. California Department of Education Research Themes and Sub-Themes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Themes</th>
<th>Research Sub-Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme I: Racial Classification</strong></td>
<td><em>Parent Influence</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiracial School Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Decline to State</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Third Party Identification</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme II: Federal Public Policy</strong></td>
<td>Vague Guidelines for Policy Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme III: Data Methodologies</strong></td>
<td>Data Accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data System Limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funding Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiracial Data Tabulation Struggles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enrollment Data Entry into Database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Methodology and Staff Decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Note: Italicized sub-themes surfaced as controversial issues within the study.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings related to Theme IV: Academic Achievement and Theme V: Multiracial Student Needs will be reviewed in the summary of the California Department of Education section and the overall chapter summary.

Finally, note that the themes and their sub-themes will not appear in sequential order within this section of the chapter as it is easier for the reader to understand the order of events when themes are arranged by content.
Federal Public Policy

Developing Guidelines for Policy Implementation. One of the sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis component of this research study was that of Developing Guidelines for Policy Implementation. Four distinct scenarios emerged within this sub-theme that indicate that federal government agencies have failed to provide cohesive direction to state education agencies with regards to required amendments for race and ethnic data collection practices. First, in 1997 when the OMB released revised guidelines to Directive No. 15 for racial and ethnic classification, the USDE did not revise their protocols or provide state departments of education with clear directives regarding changes. This is a clear example of two different sectors of federal government operating under their own distinct procedures for racial and ethnic categorization rather than working in concert with one another.

As noted earlier in this chapter, it was not until 2006 that the USDE released proposed plans for modifying the way state education agencies and local education agencies are expected to maintain, collect, and report data on race and ethnicity so as to align practices with the OMB’s 1997 directives. Directions on how to implement the USDE 2006 guidelines were not provided until 2008 when the Forum Guide was developed by the NCES. This lapse in time for change to occur within the educational arena is indicative of the following statement made by Seattle educator, Francis Wardle who maintains the Center
for the Study of Biracial Children: “The academic community and the political community are way behind the reality (Viadero, 2009).”

Second, although the USDE has established a requirement for SEAs and LEAs to comply with the new standards for reporting racial and ethnic data by fall 2010, these same guidelines are not required for the purpose of academic accountability. Therefore, representatives from the CDE accurately commented:

However, when it comes to accountability, the guidelines or the regulations say that states, for purposes of AYP under No Child Left Behind, are not subject to those specific aggregations that we can work through the AYP workbook to propose changes or stay with what they've been doing.

This means that throughout the nation the educational arena may be utilizing two very different approaches to collecting data on mixed race students. For the purpose of collecting data, students of mixed race may be counted in a category known as “two or more races.” When monitoring student achievement, students identified within the “two or more race” classification may be merged into a monoracial cluster according to the USDE guidelines. Of course, the concern here is how does an SEA or LEA determine in which monoracial category to place a mixed race student for the purpose of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) compliance?

Third, both the CDE and the NCDPI noted confusion regarding why the new USDE guidelines for race and ethnicity do not allow a student of Hispanic ethnicity to be identified as a student of two or more races. When the CDE was asked to explain the reason behind this practice, one administrator responded:
“You would have to ask OMB the reasons why Hispanic trumps everything else.”

Analysis of the OMB documents unveiled the following annotations within the Federal Register notice dated October 30, 1997, located under the title, “Topics for Further Research” (OMB, 1997).

Multiple Responses to the Hispanic Origin Question.—The Interagency Committee recommended that respondents to Federal data collections should be permitted to report more than one race. During the most recent public comment process, a few comments suggested that the concept of “marking more than one box” should be extended to the Hispanic origin question. Respondents are now asked to indicate if they are “of Hispanic origin” or “not of Hispanic origin.” Allowing individuals to select more than one response to the ethnicity question would provide the opportunity to indicate ethnic heritage that is both Hispanic and non-Hispanic.

…On the one hand, it can be argued that allowing individuals to mark both categories in the Hispanic origin question would parallel the instruction “to mark (or select) one or more” racial categories. Individuals would not have to choose between their parents’ ethnic heritages, and movement toward an increasingly diverse society would be recognized.

On the other hand, because the matter of multiple responses to the Hispanic ethnicity question was not raised in the early phases of the public comment process, no explicit provisions were made for testing this approach in the research conducted to inform the review of Directive No. 15. While a considerable amount of research was focused on how to improve the response rate to the Hispanic origin question, it is unclear whether and to what extent explicitly permitting multiple responses to the Hispanic origin question would affect non-response to the race question or hamper obtaining more detailed data on Hispanic population groups.

Information on the possible impact of any changes on the quality of the data has been an essential element of the review. While the effects of changes in the Hispanic origin question are unknown, they could conceivably be substantial. Thus, OMB has decided not to include a provision in the standards that would explicitly permit respondents to select both “Hispanic origin” and “Not of Hispanic Origin” options. OMB believes that this is an item for future research. In the meantime, the ancestry question on the decennial census long form does provide respondents who consider themselves part Hispanic to write in additional heritages (OMB, 1997).
Although the USDE is clearly complying with the OMB’s decision above to not allow students of Hispanic ethnicity to mark more than one racial category, the findings of this study indicate they have not clearly articulated the OMB’s reasoning behind this decision to SEAs. Therefore, SEAs do not understand the decision for one group of ethnic students to not have the same racial classification privileges as the others. The OMB Federal Register notes above indicate that this is a topic for future research and that the concern was not raised when the first phase of studies were conducted during their comprehensive review process of the original 1977 racial and ethnic standards. This study found that both the CDE and the NCDPI have serious reservations about this particular decision and how this guideline will be effectively executed in public education venues.

The final scenario within this sub-theme of Vague Guidelines for Policy Implementation involves sample school registration forms being made available to SEAs and LEAs. During the group interview with representatives from the CDE, the question was asked, “In terms of school registration forms, does the state provide any guideline regarding the content of the registration form?” A CDE administrator responded:

Not that I’m aware of. However, I will say that in implementing the new categories we have gone out and checked the internet for some samples of what is out there and primarily because of what we were doing was marking up that section of the form that would be related to implementing the new guidelines. We hesitate to dictate exactly how it looks and would prefer that the districts use their discretion. They have to follow… obviously they have to do the two part question and they have to make sure that those categories are there, but the state would hesitate to dictate
explicitly how it should look and such and we have local control and we need to avoid mandate costs and such.

The *Forum Guide to Implementing New Federal Race and Ethnicity Categories* (USDE, 2008) provides an individual data collection format that includes the following two-part question that is mandatory, with the ethnicity part asked first.

*Ethnicity* (Choose one):
- Hispanic/Latino
- Not Hispanic/Latino

*Race* (Choose one or more, regardless of Ethnicity):
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- White

Further direction is provided by the USDE to indicate that regardless of the race combinations of individuals, each individual must be counted in exactly one of the seven following race and ethnicity categories when reporting to the USDE or other federal agencies:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or more races
- Hispanic of any race

The guidance in the directives above from the USDE is lucid. Thus, each SEA and subsequently individual LEAs, must create their own school registration forms using the USDE guidelines. Given the varying degrees of how individuals
interpret the same information, the accuracy of data gathered on multiracial
students at the state and local levels of education may also vary greatly due to a
lack of clear direction on the format of the student registration form.

In conclusion, *Vague Guidelines for Policy Implementation* obstructs our
country’s educational entities ability to comply with the 1997 OMB Directive No. 15
and the 2006 USDE Guidelines for race and ethnic data classification structures.
Absent clear directives to all segments of the many K-12 academic institutions
throughout the country, widespread organizational change will be challenging.

**Racial Classification**

*Parent Influence.* Interestingly, parents of multiracial students are not
consistently informed of the district’s procedures regarding the placement of
multiracial student data. For example, if a parent of a multiracial child in
California marks on the school registration paperwork that their child is more than
one race and then further delineates a primary and secondary race, they may not
be informed by the school staff that their child’s information will be denoted under
the primary race. The following hypothetical situation was posed during the
group interview with the representatives from the CDE:

So if a parent registers their child - they walk up into the front office of a
school or elementary school. Let’s say their fifth grade student is going to
take the STAR, and they see primary and they see secondary. How do
they know that their child’s information will be placed in the primary race
category because they put African American as their child’s primary race,
that their child’s test scores will default into the African American
subgroup?
The CDE interview participants responded to the hypothetical scenario above with the following two responses:

That’s a very good question and it doesn’t necessarily mean that they will [know] when they register. What would determine that is when it is actually filled in on the answer documents. If the parent is not filling in the answer documents… let’s say it’s going to be the student or if it’s pre-identified from the LEA. I think besides the communication that’s available here I don’t know what’s in the accountability pieces or primarily where that information would lie to determine which is which. We provide that information to the field when they ask it, but as far as a parent knowing that, I’m not sure that we’ve provided a vehicle for that to happen.

Probably not. And I think the most important thing is what [CDE1] said. It depends on how the district translates the registration information into their data center and that feeds our data center systems. There are a lot of publications that we produce that describe what we use in terms of a data field when we do our accountability report.

The findings of this study reveal that there is currently no regulation at the state or federal level that requires schools to inform parents of mixed race students or the students themselves that the school has aggregated their primary and secondary race designations into the single primary race category. In the case of a multiracial student attending a school in California, their information and test scores will be placed in the primary race category designated on their registration papers with or without the parent or their child knowing this. The lack of parent or student knowledge regarding federal, state, and local practices of collapsing multiracial identification into a single racial category is a topic for future study.
Multiracial School Enrollment Procedures. The CDE participants shared the following information when asked about school registration procedures related to the racial classification of multiracial students:

I think I mentioned we follow the 1997 OMB Directive to the extent of the categories, but we haven’t implemented the multi-race aggregation that is part of that. So in terms of the collections we use the categories, but the distinctions of primary and secondary is something that we have overlaid on that and is not part of the federal guidelines.

Thus, in California an equally mixed race student, such as a half Japanese and half White student, may find it problematic to answer the primary and secondary race questions.

Decline to State & Third Party Identification. At this point in time the federal government is struggling with respondents who “decline to state” when asked to identify their racial background in accordance with the racial and ethnic classification structure provided. The 2007 USDE directives within the Final Guidance on race and ethnicity classification require educational institutions to report ethnic and racial data. However, individuals are not mandated to self-identify their race and ethnicity. In the event that respondents do not provide information about their race and ethnicity, educational agencies must ensure that these respondents didn’t miss the questions on the form or not understand what was being asked. If individuals knowingly choose to not disclose data regarding their race or ethnic background then educational agencies are directed by the USDE to utilize third party observer identification to determine the respondent’s ethnicity and race. Third party identification is problematic particularly given that a person may physically appear one race or ethnicity, such as a White Cuban
who a third party may denote as White, but this same individual may identify as Hispanic.

The CDE is grappling with this controversial issue evolving around individuals who decline to state their ethnic and racial background and the subsequent federal requirement to utilize third party observer identification. One CDE administrator commented:

…self-identification is critical and to the extent that the student does not self-identify, then their primary identification [is determined by third party identification]. In other words “decline to state” is not something the feds want to occur. They really do want to have a classification.

Notes within the Federal Register concur with this statement from the representative of the CDE and indicate the USDE’s position that third party identification should:

…assist in discouraging refusals to self-identify because respondents are informed that if they fail to provide the racial and ethnic information someone from the school district will provide it on their behalf (USDE, 2007).

The USDE recognizes that while obtaining data by observer identification is not as accurate as self-identification, and may even be contrary to those wishing to not comply with ethnic or racial identification procedures, it is better than not having any information.

As a caveat, the USDE concurs that self-identification by students at the elementary and secondary school levels may not coincide with what their parents or guardians may have chosen. Therefore, the USDE’s Final Guidance indicates that at the elementary and secondary school levels racial and ethnic identification should be made primarily by parents or guardians.
In California, there are certain segments of the population with high levels of data showing “decline to state” regarding the race and ethnicity questions. Herein lies one example of California’s struggle with this issue as described by a CDE interview participant:

One of the things that we’re struggling with in California is the “decline to state” and third party identification. When we started looking at some of the numbers...some of the CSIS data that we have. We were finding certain [cities]...had a very high percentage of no response. So the state is struggling with how do you reconcile with the Feds asserting that you need to tell the districts that if the person declines to state that they have to do third party identification. How does somebody determine by looking at another individual what his or her race is? That is a real hot spot and a struggle. It will be interesting to see how it plays out in California and in other states given that we have such a high percentage of students that are...and we have such a diverse community here in California. I would say that’s really a place to look is what are the practices that districts have when a parent declines to state. Do they leave it null? ...what guidelines do they have in place to address if there is no response and they want to have a response? Providing education and training...how do they make sure it’s objective? That’s a real trouble spot.

The questions woven throughout the statement above such as, “How does somebody determine by looking at another individual what their race is?” are inherently difficult queries that state and local educational agencies will be grappling with shortly. This seemingly simple, yet complex question also projects future unrest regarding the newly established USDE guidelines for third party identification.

Data Methodologies

Data Accuracy, Data System Limitations, and Funding Issues. The sub-theme of data accuracy came out as the most frequent issue within the major theme of data methodologies. The primary concern with data accuracy has to do
with the fact that SEAs and LEAs have not been required to utilize a classification for more than one race. Therefore, the majority of state departments of education are not able to answer the interview question within this study: *How many K-12 multiracial students currently attend schools in your state and what are their educational needs?* For example, when conducting the group interview with the representatives from the CDE, one educational administrator responded:

> We really don’t have a clear picture. Again, due to the fact that that data is probably not as accurate as we’d like it to be because they are not mandated fields. So again, the data that we’ve been collecting for state testing programs date back to the early 2000’s is primarily driven by the primary ethnicity field or the refused to state field. So we simply don’t know.

The words, “we simply don’t know” are both honest and well-said in that educational entities throughout the country have not been required to allow for multiple race data reporting until recently by the federal department of education. In essence, the USDE has been operating under a federal waiver that freed them from having to comply with the 1997 OMB revised guidelines for race and ethnicity reporting.

For a number of reasons, the CDE is in the midst of implementing a new student and teacher statewide database by the coming school year, 2009-2010, known as CALPADS (California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System) and CALTIDES (California Longitudinal Teacher Integrated Data Education System). In an effort to fully comply with federal accountability requirements delineated within the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, California must be able to monitor individual student enrollment history and achievement over
time. The new CALPADS and CALTIDES will enable California to meet federal requirements delineated in Senate Bill 1453, which mandates: 1) the assignment of a statewide student identifier (SSID); and 2) establishes a longitudinal database that includes statewide assessment data, enrollment data, teacher assignment data, and other elements of NCLB (California Department of Education [CDE], 2008a).

In 2006, Senate Bill 1614 was enacted establishing CALTIDES to monitor Highly Qualified Teacher requirements in accordance with NCLB. The projected one time cost of CALPADS is estimated at $24.2 million with on-going costs reaching just over $7 million per year (CDE, 2008a). The initial estimated cost of CALTIDES is approximately $11.8 million with on-going costs reaching over $1.7 million annually (CDE, 2008a). After taking a look at these budget figures for California, it is clear that the comment from the NCDPI statistician during the data gathering component of this study is accurate in that the cost to update an information system is “millions of dollars.”

*Multiracial Data Tabulation Struggles, Enrollment Data Entry into Database, and Data Methodology and Staff Decisions.* In a statement made by U.S. House Representative Tom Petri in 1997 before the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology of the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, the following comments were shared with regards to the sub-theme of *multiracial data tabulation struggles:*

Last April I testified before this committee on behalf of my bill H.R. 830 to add a multiracial category to the census and other federal forms, which
ask respondents to categorize themselves by race. In the course of that testimony I briefly mentioned some concerns with how the data would be tabulated if, instead of a multiracial category we were to allow people to check more than one of the existing categories. As you know, the Office of Management and Budget recently issued its preliminary recommendations that indeed call for a "check all that apply" system.

I want to reemphasize that there should be at least one compilation of data from the race issue on the census in which the total is not greater than 100% and therefore, in which multiracial individuals are included as a separate group. The numbers can be tabulated in several different ways, of course, and if the Bureau wants to publish information about how many people checked off a certain category, including multiracials who checked off that one and another, I have no particular objection. If that is done with each of the categories, those who checked off more than one category may be okay. For other purposes however, it is necessary, in order for policymakers to get a clear picture of the situation, that the individual categories do not add to more than 100% of the total. Thus we need one compilation in which multiracial individuals who have checked more than one box are counted in their own category and only in that category (Petri, 1997).

More than ten years have passed since U.S. House Representative Petri articulated his concern with regards to data tabulation methods for multiracial individuals on a national level, yet states continue to grapple with this issue. Absent a multiracial federal category, state departments of education continue to encounter a wide variety of data tabulation challenges.

First, state departments of education across the country have developed a broad range of racial and ethnic classification structures that may or may not coincide with the federal department of education guidelines and the OMB’s 1997 Directive No. 15. The methodological approach the CDE utilizes by incorporating a primary and secondary race question on its student registration documents is in line with a primary race alternative bridging procedure which has been employed by the National Health Interview Survey (National Center for Health Statistics,
This process involves the additional question on race and ethnicity, which asks multiracial respondents to select one race with which they most identify or how their community most commonly recognizes them. For the purpose of trend analysis, states can utilize the primary race method, and avoid the need to fully implement a bridging methodology. The key dilemma with this approach is the issue of respondents choosing not to respond to the question.

The second data tabulation struggle also surfaces as its own sub-theme, *Enrollment Data Entry into Database*. Here, state departments of education encounter difficulty with how student registration data are entered into local education area databases. One educational leader from the CDE explained:

> It depends on how the district translates the registration information into their data center and that feeds our data center systems. There are a lot of publications that we produce that describe what we use in terms of a data field when we do our accountability report.

The comment above illustrates the need for uniform regulations for districts to impart to their employees who input student registration information into their computer student information systems. However, even with uniform regulations, district employees may interpret the instructions of how to input student racial demographic information in a number of ways. Also, as an educational official from the NCDPI commented, “...I only say that by way of letting you know how important it is that we understand the fallibility it is as we are entering all of these data.” The latter is indicative of a factor that must be applied to natural human error that can occur when collecting and inputting data.
The third complication can be described as a lack of alignment between the new USDE guidelines for racial and ethnic classifications that must be implemented by fall 2010 and the racial categories utilized by NCLB for the purpose of monitoring academic achievement. A representative from the CDE clarified:

However, when it comes to accountability, the guidelines or the regulations say that states for purposes of AYP under No Child Left Behind are not subject to those specific aggregations - that we can work through the AYP workbook to propose changes or stay with what they’ve been doing.

Therefore, even with the newly released racial classification guidelines published by the USDE, which allow students to be categorized as two or more races, there remains a lack of federal accountability for this group of students to reach academic benchmarks as delineated within NCLB and their adequate yearly progress targets. This means that on a national level we will soon know how many multiracial students are in our public schools but we will not be able to determine if they are achieving academically.

Put simply, the three multiracial data tabulation struggles highlighted above, along with the problems surrounding the sub-theme of enrollment data entry into the database, will require more in-depth study and review by both the OMB and the USDE as our nation moves toward implementing a multiracial category within racial classification structures.
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)

NCDPI Data Collection Overview

Racial Classification. The group interview conducted in Raleigh, North Carolina with four educational administrators occurred on November 14, 2008. During this group interview four prominent educational leaders participated in the study and represented the following divisions within North Carolina’s Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI): 1) Academic Services and Instructional Support; 2) Accountability; 3) K-12 Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology; and 4) Policy and Strategic Planning. All of the interview participants from NCDPI held a broad range of valuable experience as educational leaders within their state and were able to bring to this study a rich set of data regarding the topic of multiracial students.

During the group interview it was recommended that the data division within the NCDPI be contacted for specific information related to multiracial students in North Carolina. Thus, a secondary source of critical information included in this section of the study is data collected from a statistician within the data division of the NCDPI.

When asked what racial and ethnic classification structure they are currently utilizing, the NCDPI group interview participants responded by stating, “…we are following the federal guidelines.” In addition, a respondent shared, “We use the five race classifications and the Multi-Racial category.” The NCDPI defines the term “multiracial” as students who are of two or more racial heritages.
While this state department of public instruction has made informal observations that the majority of their multiracial students are part Black and part White, the multiracial category utilized includes all racial combinations. Educational forms in the NCDPI allow for a multiracial category but do not require further disclosure regarding what specific races students embody if they are multiracial. Thus, it is difficult to determine the various racial combinations of multiracial students who are currently enrolled in North Carolina public schools.

One participant provided as a source document the preliminary edition of The North Carolina State Testing Results 2007-2008 report, which shows that students in grades 3-8 for the purpose of academic achievement are racially and ethnically categorized within the following six classifications:

- American Indian
- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic
- Multi-Racial
- White

Source: (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI], 2008a)

In conjunction with the latter report, one participant presented a statewide academic achievement graph titled, “Trends in Subgroup Performance, Reading Composite, Grades 3-8” which also utilized the same six racial and ethnic categories as listed above (North Carolina Department of Education [NCDPI], 2008b). This chart revealed academic achievement data for racial and ethnic subgroups in the area of reading from 2003 to 2008. This trend data included academic reading progress of multiracial students in North Carolina’s public
schools. Thus, it was clear that the NCDPI had been utilizing a multiracial category for some time.

To verify this assumption the data division was contacted and asked when the NCDPI employed the multiracial category for the first time and how many multiracial students were in their public schools. The response from the NCDPI data department was:

1996-1997 was the first multiracial file. ...[this showed we had approximately] 4,500 plus multiracial students. In 2007-2008, the [multiracial] file jumped ten fold to 49,504. ... [The percentage of multiracial students increased from] .04% to 3.4% from 1996-1997 to 2007-2008.

Today, fewer than ten state education departments throughout the United States currently utilize a multiracial classification. Therefore, it is unique that the NCDPI uses a multiracial category, but also that their data department was able to identify multiracial students as being in their K-12 schools. Furthermore, the NCDPI was able to answer this question for every year starting with 1996-1997 and continuing up to 2007-2008, for a total of 11 consecutive school years. As one NCDPI educational administrator accurately stated, “We are ahead of the curb in going to the multiracial because I know years ago when the Feds would ask us to report data [they did not have a place for our multiracial data].”

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Policies

The next sub-theme titled, Progressive State Actions will disclose the findings of this study that are specifically related to the NCDPI. This section will show how the NCDPI currently classifies multiracial students within their public
education system and how their racial classification system interacts or conflicts with federal public policies.

Federal Public Policy

*Progressive State Actions.* The information drawn from the data collection phase of this study points to the sub-theme titled *progressive state actions.* Both the CDE and the NCDPI have evidence that they are ahead of the curb in their thinking on various multiracial student issues.

In looking specifically at the NCDPI, the advanced strides they have taken to employ a multiracial classification since 1996 are unique given that fewer than ten states throughout the nation currently utilize this category. The NCDPI is rare in that it has put in place the tools necessary to count the number of multiracial students in their state’s public education system, dating back to 1996. Furthermore, the NCDPI is exceptional in that it has been monitoring the academic progress of this group of students for several years. The NCDPI educational administrators are some of the first in the country to have conversations and analyze multiracial student assessment data as is seen in some of their statements below:

Again, I think with that report [Preliminary: The North Carolina State Testing Results 2007-2008] that I gave you that you’ll see that those students... they are not scoring necessarily as high as Whites or Asians but they are scoring better than Hispanic and Native American Indian.

Here’s the break out. It’s just a graph that will show you quickly, and the other folks as well, how they are performing on our most recent data. We reset our standard cut scores for reading and this is just the reading performance. But you will see that our White student category was scoring about 67.9%, almost 70% proficiency. Now this graph is a
composite of three through eighth grades. And you’ll see multiracial coming in at about 57.1%. But that will give you some indication about how they perform as compared to the other subgroups.

The primary research question of this study asks: *How and to what extent do public policy decisions regarding accountability affect educational outcomes for multiracial students?* The NCDPI prioritized adding a multiracial category and subsequently this state public policy decision enables them to have the tools needed to monitor and assess the education achievement of multiracial students throughout their state. The academic achievement scores of their third through eighth grade multiracial students shared in the statements above and in the primary source document found in Appendix E indicate that this group of students had the third highest reading scores for all subgroups in 2008.

The NCDPI understands that the new 2007 USDE guidelines for race and ethnic classification provide a venue for respondents to delineate two or more races. However when reporting to the federal department of education for purposes of NCLB, the NCDPI only reports primary monoracial subgroup categories per requirements of the USDE. In an effort to maintain their current ability to monitor multiracial student achievement the representatives from the NCDPI shared:

Now, I guess what we haven’t discussed is what we’re going to do with the statistics that we can still get. There’s federal reporting. And [NCDE1] can certainly tell you how we’ve done this. There are sometimes two sets of books. We have stuff we report to the feds and maybe some choices we want to make about statistics that we want to keep for our reasons.
There’s nothing that would prevent us from collecting data for those who potentially marked Hispanic - what else did they code? What might that be telling us? We would, I’m sure, be looking at that.

Again, evidence points to the fact that the NCDPI is progressive in their actions to monitor and ensure the educational success of their multiracial students by complying with the 2007 USDE Final Guidance, while concurrently preserving data procedures which allow for the collection of information on multiracial students.

In closing, the NCDPI has been on the cutting edge of racial reporting because of their forward thinking in employing a multiracial classification within their educational system. One administrator proudly stated, “We had multiracial as part of our state testing [and have] always had multiracial as part of that as well.” While the CDE has not employed a multiracial classification, they have allowed students to mark more than one racial classification. The pending release of the CDE’s CALPADS longitudinal data system in 2009-2010 will be the first large scale change California takes in implementing the “two or more race” category required by USDE. Thus, both the CDE and the NCDPI have made substantial progress, and will continue to do so in the future with regards to their commitment to ensure all students achieve, including their students of mixed heritage.

**Racial Classification**

During the data collection process the NCDPI shared two primary reasons for implementing the use of a multiracial category. One response involved their
desire to monitor the academic achievement of the Native American Indian group that was smaller in size than the multiracial subgroup. The following information was shared:

When the State Board had to make the decision about which racial ethnic groups would be held accountable under NCLB there was a lot of discussion about how...[we would monitor the achievement of the Native American Indian students]. So the bottom line was, we knew as a state that we would be monitoring the performance of the Native American Indians. Because of that, it seemed inappropriate to include a group of student that actually was fewer in number than the multiracial category. And that’s why that occurred.

It was 2002, because that was the year that NCLB was signed into law. Because states had to put together a plan for the 2002-2003 school year.

The statement above indicates that the NCDPI was prompted by a desire to monitor the academic achievement of a smaller subgroup, the Native American Indian students, and therefore felt compelled to include a multiracial subgroup in academic achievement monitoring, because multiracial students were a larger group than the Native American Indian students.

*Parent Influence*. In addition, the NCDPI administrators revealed that the initial reason for implementing a multiracial category for student registration, enrollment, and other data collection purposes more general than academic achievement monitoring, was due to the sub-theme of *Parent Influence*.

Respondents shared the following comments:

But it seems to me that there was at some level in the state, either a lawsuit or a threat of lawsuit from parents who wanted their children classified as multiracial, because I think what I recall is a Black/White racial mix and that the student... it was not an accurate reflection of that student.
I don’t know if it actually reached the stage of a lawsuit or if it was just in a particular district that there was a really strong movement, that we classify students in that category. And why we selected [multiracial] instead of biracial is because at that time, biracial was a more common term than multiracial and I don’t know why we went where we did. I don’t recall that. I know that at least somewhere along the line there were some movements on the part of parents to get that classification.

As you will see by additional data that follows, the sub-theme of parent influence represents one of nine controversial sub-themes emerging from the findings of this study.

When delving deeper within the parameters of this study to investigate why the NCDPI began utilizing a multiracial classification, one staff member who had worked in the NCDPI when the category was implemented stated:

It should not have [happened]. It’s a mistake. One parent insisted that her child was neither Black or White and they allowed it. She just raised cane and people gave up. …Because one lady made so much noise …the Superintendent said, give her what she wants. …The mom sent a letter. I read the letter. …It’s so politically charged that no matter what side you take somebody’s not happy.

The comments above point to the original reason the NCDPI added a multiracial classification just over a decade ago. Here, the data shows that the NCDPI added the multiracial category in response to a concerned parent of a biracial student who was both Black and White. The parent did not feel that the racial and ethnic classification structure utilized by the NCDPI at the time allowed for her to accurately identify the racial make-up of her own mixed race child. Thus, this parent insisted that the NCDPI create a multiracial category. In this case, parent influence was the primary motivating factor for the NCDPI to expand their racial classification structure. Furthermore, it is evident by the statements
above that not all staff members involved in implementing the addition of a multiracial category in 1996-1997 concurred with the change. Thus, parents’ influence regarding the creation of a multiracial classification draws forth debate that reveals contrasting opinions on the topic of racial classification of multiracial students.

NCDPI Research Themes

The findings within this study reveal that the NCDPI also encounters all six major research themes. However, through analysis primarily of interviews, documents, and archival records, the data reveals that the NCDPI has particularly high frequency levels in three major research themes: Racial Classification, Data Methodologies, and Multiracial Student Needs. As defined earlier, frequency refers to the number of occurrences per repeating theme or sub-theme. Table 12 shows the sub-themes that emerged specific to the NCDPI and its current policies regarding multiracial students. By comparison, data drawn from the CDE highlights three major research themes, with two being different from the NCDPI: Racial Classification, Federal Public Policy, and Data Methodologies. The data shows that the NCDPI and the CDE are addressing multiracial students and their needs in various ways.
Research findings related to Theme II: Federal Public Policy and Theme IV: Academic Achievement are reviewed in the summary of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction section and the overall chapter summary.

Finally, please note the themes and their sub-themes will not appear in sequential order within this section of the chapter, as the findings flow more readily when themes are arranged by content.

Table 12. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Research Themes and Sub-Themes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Themes</th>
<th>Research Sub-Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme I: Racial Classification</td>
<td>Multiracial School Enrollment Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme III: Data Methodologies</td>
<td>Data Accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data System Limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funding Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiracial Data Tabulation Struggles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Methodologies and Staff Decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme V: Multiracial Student Needs</td>
<td>Difficulties at School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Racial Classification

Multiracial School Enrollment Procedures. Prior to 1996 the NCDPI did not have a multiracial classification. During this time the NCDPI exclusively utilized monoracial categories. Their state administrators shared:
When I was teaching beginning in ’82 and I know at that time when we had the California Achievement Test [North Carolina administered the CAT for a period of time] it was always an issue of… kids had to choose… we had to help them.

I don’t think we had multiracial.

I don’t think so either.

And the rule of thumb in some districts or in some schools was, you give the rights of your mother. In others it was give the rights of your father. So it was always this controversy….

The information here indicates that North Carolina was not utilizing a multiracial classification in the 1980s and early 1990s. In addition, multiracial students during these times were required to choose a single race identity for both school registration forms and standardized testing purposes.

In 1996, the NCDPI was prompted by a vocal parent to create and implement a multiracial category. Therefore, when asked during the group interview process how they classify their multiracial students, the representatives from the NCDPI provided the following responses:

Again, our system has a multiracial button that you can classify as multiracial.

And when the parent goes into the school office and completes the registration papers how does that work?

They mark the multiracial subcategory.

I’m sure this grew out of a very vocal set of parents you see that said this is not right.

Currently, the NCDPI employs the use of a multiracial category for the purpose of school enrollment. In addition, they also utilize this racial classification for the monitoring of student achievement.
Data Methodologies

Data Accuracy, Data System Limitations, and Funding Issues. One of the reasons the USDE opted to apply for a waiver for such a long period of time was due to the sub-theme titled, Data System Limitations. This sub-theme surfaced when interviewing administrators within the data divisions from both the CDE and the NCDPI. This study discovered that in order to change the existing racial classification fields within statewide student database systems, a significant amount of labor is required to update and create new software programs that can manage a broader range of information. An administrator from the NDCPI explained the complexity of implementing the new USDE guidelines that require a category for mark more than one race: “There are major discussions going on now, because it’s going to impact our student information management system and all of those things.”

In addition, another reason the educational arena has yet to comply with the 1997 OMB Directive No.15 has to do with the sub-theme in this study named, Funding Issues. As a data statistician from the NCDPI described:

We’ll re-write computer systems. This will cost an insane amount of money. …It will cost hundreds of millions of dollars to change those systems. Right now they’re laying off people. [This statement is referring to the current economic crisis and its impact on the public education budget.] What are the unintended consequences of the FERPA problem?

While this study did not fully investigate the actual cost of changing student information systems within a state’s educational framework, it is evident from the comment above that changing statewide databases for K-12 education is an expensive endeavor.
North Carolina’s Department of Public Instruction is certainly unique in that they have employed a multiracial classification for over a decade. The *data accuracy* issue they run into however, is that the federal department of education has yet to allow for a multiracial field. Thus, when the NCDPI submits their student information data to the USDE, they employ the following data procedure: “Everything multiracial was rolled into Black because [we] had to upload data to the federal government.” By virtue of being on the cutting edge, compared to the federal department of education and other state departments of education, in their practices of employing a multiracial category the NCDPI continues to confront data aggregation issues between its own state practices compared to those on a national level. The methodology of basing probabilities on changes in racial distribution over time is a problematic technique for a number of reasons, including but not limited to, migration patterns of students in and out of school districts and the inconsistent manner in which multiracial individuals identify their racial identity.

This problem has caused the NCDPI to analyze student demographic trend patterns that reveal that the decrease in the Black student population compared to the increase in the multiracial student group since 1996-1997 have balanced one another out. Thus, the data in the NCDPI indicates that the majority of multiracial students in North Carolina are a combination of Black and one or more other races. Granted, currently in North Carolina if a student is a combination of races that does not include the Black racial category, for the purpose of uploading data to the federal department of education, this student
would still be counted within the Black monoracial category with all other multiracial students for the purpose of federal academic accountability. Herein lies one issue that the NCDPI continues to grapple with in terms of data accuracy as they attempt to combine their own racial classification structure with that currently employed by the USDE for academic achievement data.

*Multiracial Data Tabulation Struggles, and Data Methodology and Staff Decisions.* An NCDPI official observed, “We were ahead of the curb in going to the multiracial [classification] because I know years ago when the feds would ask us to report data [they did not have a category for us to report out our multiracial student data].” In the case of North Carolina, the issue they have had to wrestle with has to do with how to comply with federal department of education regulations when reporting student data on a national level. Here, the NCDPI must report student data utilizing only the racial classification structure the USDE employs. Thus, the NCDPI must aggregate the multiracial student data into a single monoracial classification. Therefore, for the purpose of reporting to the USDE, “the data guru of all of this federal reporting” and the individual within the data division “who compiles the state’s statistical profile…took anyone who was classified as multiracial and put them in the Black category.”

As stated earlier, the premise for making this decision was primarily a mathematical approach wherein the proportional decrease in African American students compared to the growth in the multiracial category balanced one another out. The latter approach was determined by an administrator within the data division of a state department of public instruction. Thus, the important role
of state administrators employed in the data divisions was revealed by the sub-theme titled, *Data Methodology and Staff Decisions*. Administrative decisions determine how racial data is reported to the federal department of education, and which parts (and races) of more sophisticated state data systems are lost in the process.

*Multiracial Student Needs*

*Difficulties at School.* This research also revealed that the sub-theme, *Difficulties at School* is a topic warranting more in-depth study. It appears that educators have observed that students of multiracial heritage may struggle to fit into certain monoracial groups. One research participant described this dynamic in the following words:

In the Black/White [student] it tends to reveal itself with disciplinary issues. Not really fitting in this group or the other group. But, I’ve seen it more there with the Black/White combination than with other ethnicities that might be grouped together.

In this example from an administrator in the NCDPI, multiracial students who are specifically part Black and part White have trouble finding acceptance by the White group of students and also their Black group of peers.

The lack of acceptance by one peer group or another based on race may cause multiracial students to make poor behavior choices at school. As one NCDPI administrator described, “Those are the kinds of things that trigger either a retreat on the part of the child or the anger that results in some type of discipline infraction. …That’s sort of what I have seen in the LEA.” In sum, multiracial students are not a large enough demographic to be their own racial
group in school environments nor do they have easy entry into monoracial peer
groups whose heritage they share..

Summary of Chapter

*Racial Classification*

*Receptivity to Change.* In this study evidence emerged indicating that
racial and ethnic classification structures are on the cusp of change due to the
need to comply with evolving public policies at the national level. Within the last
decade, both the OMB and the USDE have announced mandatory changes for
maintaining, collecting, and reporting race and ethnicity data. As one educational
administrator in the CDE put it, “Well, it’s more done by what’s happening at the
federal level as far as what trickles down to everything else.”

In 1997, the OMB adopted revised standards for classifying race and
ethnicity, which included allowing for mixed race individuals to “mark more than
one” racial classification. The OMB revised its standards in response to the need
to reflect the increasing diversity of the population of the United States. In 2007,
ten years later, the USDE (2007) released its own guidance on how education
institutions will be required to collect and maintain data on race and ethnicity on
both students and staff, along with how data will be aggregated and reported to
the USDE. The USDE issued the 2007 guidelines for racial and classification
methods in an effort to conform to the OMB’s revised 1997 standards as
delineated in Directive No. 15. Implementation of the new USDE racial and
The revised USDE standards have two categories for data on ethnicity ("Hispanic or Latino" and "Not Hispanic or Latino") and five minimum categories for data on race, of which students are allowed to select more than one. Table 13 indicates USDE's new racial and ethnic classifications along with the definitions employed by USDE.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Categories</th>
<th>Ethnic Category Definitions</th>
<th>Racial Categories</th>
<th>Racial Category Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The term, “Spanish origin,” can be used in addition to “Hispanic or Latino.”</td>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (USDE, 2007)

The 2007 USDE standards shown in the chart above vary from OMB Directive No. 15. The following major differences are reflected in the list below of USDE specifications:

- Ethnicity and race must be collected separately. All individuals are to be identified as either “Hispanic or Latino” or “Not Hispanic or Latino”, regardless of race.
- Respondents are allowed to select one or more races.
- The previous category, “Asian or Pacific Islander” has been separated into two new categories, “Asian” and “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.”

Furthermore, local level educational agencies may utilize additional racial and ethnic categories, provided they are subcategories of the one ethnic and/or five primary racial groups.
The 2007 USDE guidelines on aggregating local data for federal reporting on race and ethnicity indicate that information should be merged into the seven categories below:

- Hispanic/Latino of any race;
- and, for individuals who are non-Hispanic/Latino only:
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Black or African American
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - White
  - Two or more races

Based on interview data gathered both from the CDE and the NCDPI, it is evident that both state educational agencies are moving towards complying with the new 2007 USDE guidelines for maintaining, collecting, and reporting race and ethnicity data. An example of the CDE’s receptivity to change is apparent in the following comment made by one of their educational administrators:

The higher education [universities] are doing it nationally. What OMB and the reason that we know about this is we are intending to implement them. The feds actually came out with the guidance this year ... they came out with a regulatory guidance on how to implement the OMB Directive #15. Our intent is starting with the CALPADS, the longitudinal student information system to implement those standards in 2009-2010.

This statement reflects the next steps the CDE plans to implement in an effort to comply with the 2007 USDE racial and ethnic classification structure.
Although the USDE expects educational agencies to put into operation their newly released guidelines by the 2010-2011 school year, the CDE has plans to initiate the new guidelines one year earlier, in 2009-2010, with the phase-in of its new CALPADS system. California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell released a statement to all local education agencies on November 6, 2008, informing California school districts that the CDE is just one year away from implementing CALPADS. In his letter to local education agencies (LEAs) Superintendent O’Connell states:

The successful implementation of CALPADS is one of my top priorities. It is only with such a system that we can better identify and address our state’s dropout crisis and our pernicious achievement gap (O’Connell, 2008).

The CALPADS longitudinal database will be the first significant information system change that the CDE intends to comply with the new USDE 2007 guidelines for race and ethnic classifications. During the group interview with the CDE, one respondent stated:

…currently we’re doing orientations for the CALPADS reporting requirements and we have started describing what is required and our intent is to post on our internet site the frequently asked questions about the implementation as well as that sample section of the school registration form.

This statement is consistent with the written update from Superintendent O’Connell regarding the CDE’s intent to prioritize the implementation of the CALPADS statewide information system. Put simply, the CDE has a clear and decisive plan for the first steps they will take in implementing the new 2007 USDE racial and ethnic guidelines.
Although the NCDPI has utilized a multiracial category for over ten years, its administrators are keenly aware of the newly released USDE guidelines for racial and ethnic data collection. In terms of their receptivity to change given the new federal guidelines they provided the following statements:

- We are moving toward the new OMB mandated ones but that’s still two or three years away.
- Yeah. I think we have to have it implemented by 2010-2011.
- There are major discussions going on now, because it’s going to impact our student information management system and all of those things.

This information indicates not only awareness on the part of the NCDPI that the USDE has released new regulations for racial and ethnic classification, but it also indicates a plan to implement the changes by the school year 2010-2011. Given that the NCDPI has employed a multiracial category on a state level for some time, they are aware of the difficulties any changes can have on their statewide database.

In closing, findings within this sub-theme signify a high level of receptivity to change on the parts of both the CDE and the NCDPI with regards to implementation of the 2007 USDE guidelines on maintaining, collecting, and reporting race and ethnicity data.

*Academic Achievement*

*Accountability.* On a national level, the educational arena does not know how multiracial students are achieving academically in school. While the majority of states do not know how many multiracial students attend their schools or how
they are progressing in academics, there are just under ten unique states with the ability to determine if multiracial students are meeting AYP targets as delineated by the NCLB Act. The primary reason for this disparity is that the federal department of education and the vast majority of state departments of education do not utilize a multiracial category within their racial classification structure. The findings of this research study verify that although the USDE requires that state and local education agencies incorporate a category for “two or more races,” this category does not apply to academic achievement monitoring on a federal level. In fact, embedded within the Federal Register notes regarding USDE’s 2007 guidelines for collecting and reporting race and ethnic racial data this comment is made:

Under NCLB [No Child Left Behind], states will continue to have discretion in determining which racial groups are “major” for the purposes of fulfilling NCLB accountability requirements for making AYP [Adequate Yearly Progress] determinations and issuing State and local report cards. Using data collected at the school level, States will continue to be able to count individual students as a part of the same “major” racial groups for AYP purposes in the same manner that they do currently. States implementing this final guidance are not required to change the racial and ethnic categories USDE for AYP determinations.

Therefore, while the U.S. is moving in the direction of acknowledging the existence of mixed race students, one of the fastest growing populations of students surfacing within education, we are yet to be held accountable for their academic achievement.

In closing, although on a national educational level we currently do not know how multiracial students are achieving academically in schools, it is evident
that in North Carolina this group of students is meeting the statewide proficiency
targets for the two core curricular areas of language arts and mathematics.

California Department of Education

State vs. Federal Student Achievement Data. The CDE currently allows
for multiple race designation but requires primary and secondary race
delineations. With this racial classification structure in place, the CDE defaults all
data into the students’ primary race field for the purpose of both data collection
and student achievement monitoring.

The CDE currently does not employ a method of academic data collection
specifically for multiracial students. One CDE administrator, commented:

…currently we have no reporting for well statewide reporting in terms of
who falls into what category or in testing and accountability reporting that
goes into a category called multiracial. So, the answer there would be, we
don’t at this point, though we will starting with data collected in 2010.

The CDE represents one of many states unable to answer the question:

How are the multiracial students in your state achieving academically?

In terms of future data collection practices, the CDE is aware that the
NCLB Act does not have to adhere to the newly established racial and ethnic
classification requirements delineated by the USDE. Thus, a purely monoracial
classification system can be maintained when state education areas upload their
student academic achievement data or AYP results to the federal department of
education for NCLB. One CDE educational leader described this phenomenon in
these words:
…when it comes to accountability, the guidelines or the regulations say that states for the purposes of AYP under No Child Left Behind are not subject to those specific aggregations, that we can work through the AYP workbook to propose changes or stay with what they’ve been doing.

The findings of this study bolster the federal department of education’s claims that it has prioritized complying with the revised 1997 OMB regulations for race and ethnic classification to the degree that students will be allowed to identify themselves as more than one race. However, despite the lapse of time of over a decade that it has taken the USDE to move towards adhering to the OMB guidelines, the USDE is not yet receptive to prioritizing student academic achievement monitoring specific to a multiracial subgroup. It is unknown at this time when there will be a unified effort throughout our country on federal, state, and local education agency levels to move in the direction of accounting for and holding high academic standards for one of our fastest growing populations, multiracial students.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Accountability. Within this comparative analysis, one of the two state departments of public instruction, the NCDPI, has employed a multiracial subgroup category for approximately ten years. Therefore, it has the tools necessary to indicate how this population of students is performing academically. As stated earlier, one NCDPI educational administrator shared a graph titled, “Trends in Subgroup Performance, Reading Composite, Grades 3-8” (Appendix E). Using this graph, the administrator was able to share the following detailed
information regarding how multiracial students in North Carolina are performing throughout the state:

…you will see that our White student category was scoring about 67.9%, almost 70% proficiency. Now this graph is a composite of third through eighth grades. And you’ll see multiracial coming in at about 57.1%. But that will give you some indication about how they perform as compared to the other subgroups.

The graph that was shared shows that the NCDPI utilizes six racial classifications: American Indian, Asian, Black, Hispanic, Multiracial, and White. In looking at the graph it is clear that the White students are the top performing group and the second highest category are Asian students.

The multiracial subgroup of students in North Carolina currently holds the third highest reading scores for grades three through eight. It appears this achievement ranking may be true for other academic subjects tested using formative assessments. A group interview participant shared:

…I think with that report [Preliminary: The North Carolina State Testing Results 2007-2008] that I gave you, that you’ll see that those students…they are not scoring necessarily as high as Whites or Asians but they are scoring better than Hispanic and Native American Indian.

In fact, in the “Preliminary: The North Carolina State Testing Results 2007-2008” packet of statewide student assessment, data Figure 2d reveals that from 1995-1996 when the NDCPI first employed a multiracial classification to 2007-2008, the multiracial group of students consistently ranked third highest in academic achievement in both reading and mathematics for grades three through eight on a statewide standardized test (NCDPI, 2008a). Table 14
highlights the academic assessment scores for all racial groups in the NCDPI in both reading and mathematics for 2007-2008.

Table 14. 2007-2008 North Carolina Department of Public Instruction End-of-Grade General Test Multiple-Choice Test Results Statewide Percent of Students At or Level III in Both Reading and Mathematics, Grades 3-8, for All Ethnicities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percent of Students At or Above Level III in Both Reading and Mathematics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>67.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Racial</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (NCDPI, 2008a)

_Multiracial Student Needs_

Despite the rapidly growing number of multiracial students in schools across the nation, little is known about their racial identity development, or their academic, social, and emotional needs. This research study concentrates on the extent public policy decisions regarding accountability affect the reporting of educational outcomes for multiracial students. To date, educational federal public policies have yet to fully implement a common practice of accounting for multiracial students by allowing them to identify as more than one race. Granted, by fall of 2010 the USDE requires all state departments of public instruction to
fully comply with newly released guidelines for racial classification which do provide a venue for mixed race students to be recognized as more than one race. However this practice will not be mandated for the purpose of academic accountability standards.

As a nation we are not currently able to quantify the number of multiracial students currently attending our schools. The second part of research interview question number nine represents the more challenging issue at hand in that, as a country we not know the needs of multiracial students. In fact, we will continue to remain in the dark regarding this matter as long as this group of students is not looked at as a distinct category for the purpose of academic achievement. For those few states that sit on the cutting edge of progress with regards to rendering mixed race students visible and monitoring their academic progress, they must aggregate the valuable data they are currently collecting into single monoracial categories for purposes of federal academic accountability. The NCDPI serves as an example of one of under a dozen states who currently face this dilemma.

In general this study found that the needs of multiracial students are virtually unknown within state departments of education. When educational administrators in both the CDE and the NCDPI were asked what the educational needs of multiracial students are the following comments were given:

[CDE Participant] We really don’t have a clear picture. …So we simply don’t know.

[CDE Participant] I have to pass on this because I don’t think I have a clear handle on where I would even find that information.
[CDE Participant]...In terms of how we monitor their achievement ...currently we have no reporting for well statewide reporting in terms of who falls into what category or in testing and accountability reporting that goes into a category called multiracial.

[NCDPI Participant] I can’t really say that I have been able to distinguish a subset of needs that just this group would have over the others.

Overall, the above findings of this study indicate that current and future public policies fail to render the needs of multiracial students visible. Thus, educational institutions are left in the shadows of obscurity regarding the academic, social, and emotional necessities of mixed race students, despite rapid growth of their population.

Interestingly, while the total of “Two or more races” population in the Census 2000 was almost 6.8 million, or about 2.4 percent of the total population, the percent reporting “more than one race” varied by race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001c). It is important to note that approximately one in three people in the “Two or more races” population described themselves also as Hispanic. The White population, and the Black or African American population had the lowest percentages reporting mixed race combinations. Two and a half percent or 5.5 million of the White population reported at least one other race, while 4.8% or 1.8 million of the Black or African American population reported a mixed race combination.

By comparison, 13.9% or 1.6 million of the Asian population reported more than one race and 17.1% or 3.2 million of the “Some other race” indicated at least one other race. The American Indian and Alaska Native population, and the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population had the highest
percentages reporting multiple race combinations. 39.9% or 1.6 million, indicated American Indian and Alaska Native along with one other race. In comparison, 54.4% or 476,000 reported Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander as well as one other race or more. Given this 2000 Census demographic trend data, state education agencies can utilize this information to begin identifying the needs of multiracial students.

Key Research Findings

The key research findings of this study reveal the research themes and sub-themes in Table 15 are the most pressing issues regarding the unit of study on multiracial students.

Table 15. Key Research Findings by Themes & Sub-Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Findings Research Themes</th>
<th>Key Findings Research Sub-Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme I: Racial Classification</td>
<td>Multiracial Student Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Race vs. Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme III: Data Methodologies</td>
<td>Bridging Methodologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme IV: Academic Achievement</td>
<td>State vs. Federal Student Achievement Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme V: Multiracial Student Needs</td>
<td>Racial Identity Crisis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The organization of this section of Chapter Four titled, *Key Research Findings* will be structured by content area rather than thematic numerical order.
This will provide an opportunity for interweaving research themes within the state by state comparative analysis.

Key Research Finding #1 – A lack of alignment exists between state and federal education agency racial classification systems utilized for monitoring academic achievement.

The findings of this study indicate that there is a distinct lack of alignment between the USDE’s racial classification system and that of state education agencies. For example, although the NCDPI is currently collecting data using a multiracial category, the federal department of education has no viable place for them to put this information on mixed race students. Interestingly, the NCDPI staff pointed out the following:

Actually on the Consolidated State Performance Report they do not include a multiracial category. So typically in our reporting we will add a paragraph... a sort of footnote because in the past when we've submitted data on the CSPR, ...When we submit that for that last several years we have included this footnote that says multiracial... we also collect multiracial data but this data is not included in this report because they do not break it down. They only give us the current designations and multiracial is not one of them. So they get left out.

The data above reflects a strong disconnect between the NCDPI’s statewide educational practice for collecting and monitoring student achievement of multiracial students compared to the federal department of education’s racial and ethnic group classification structure, which is based on five minimum categories of the OMB’s Directive No. 15. Table 16 compares the OMB’s
minimum racial and ethnic classification system compared to both structures currently utilized in the CDE and the NCDPI.

Table 16. A Comparison of Racial and Ethnic Classification Structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Native Alaskan</td>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>American Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>Black or African American Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Multi-Racial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American, not Hispanic</td>
<td>In 1997, OMB determined that individuals could mark more than one of the five races denoted above.</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, not Hispanic</td>
<td>Ethnicity Classifications:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Not Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*157*

Sources: (CDE, 2008b; NCDPI, 2008b; OMB, 1997)
The results of this research also indicate that the NCDPI must decide when and how to report various multiracial student data to the federal government. The manner in which its department of public instruction has addressed this dilemma is described within this statement, “Everything multiracial was rolled into Black because [we] had to upload data to the federal government. …[Federal] Data systems do not have a field for the multiracial category.” When asked to explain why the decision was made to merge the multiracial data into the Black category the following reasons were provided:

From 1996 to 2007-2008, Blacks [decreased from] 30.66% to 27.88%. …From 1996 to 2008, [there is a] constant 31% between Multiracial and Blacks.

Multiracial is not specific enough to determine [what single race category to put for] multiracial. There is not enough room on the registration form. This is the problem.

In order to extract the data within the statement above, the administrator from the data division shared that a number of programs had to be written in order to develop a spreadsheet with the information needed for the study.

For the purpose of this research, I extend sincere appreciation to the data division within the NCDPI for taking the time to create software programs and an excel spreadsheet with multiracial data so as to provide accurate data for the findings of this study. The programs created allowed for the multiracial student data that had been combined with the Black student data to be disaggregated into two distinct groups for study. One rationale the NCDPI provided for merging multiracial and Black student data files was that the NCDPI information charts
created for this study revealed that placing the multiracial student scores in the Black subgroup was the best choice. These charts revealed a decrease in the Black student population compared to a proportional increase in the multiracial student population within North Carolina’s public education system.

A secondary cause provided for blending the data files of these two distinct racial groups was that on the state’s school registration forms students may be delineated as multiracial. However, the combinations of races that make up multiracial are not identified. Thus, the state utilized informal staff observation of the racial appearance of multiracial students to ascertain that the majority of multiracial students in their state embody a Black and White racial mix. The informal staff observations were paired with the proportionate rise in the multiracial student population and subsequent decline of the Black student population to make the determination that the multiracial student data should be blended into the Black student data files for federal education reporting.

While the reasoning behind blending the multiracial student data with Black student data files is substantiated, two thoughts emerge: 1) State departments of public instruction who have made progressive strides to employ a multiracial category encounter significant data management problems, such as data system limitations, a lack of a coherent data bridging methodology, and a lack of support on a federal level for efforts taken to allow for a mixed race classification; and 2) While the NCDPI stands out as being progressive in their efforts to recognize a more diverse student population by expanding their racial classification structure to include a multiracial category, data system limitations
and a lack of a multiple race option at the federal department of education serve as setbacks.

*Key Research Finding #2 – The NCDPI has actively employed a multiracial classification for just over ten years while the CDE allows mixed race students to identify themselves within a primary and secondary racial classification system.*

For the purpose of comparative analysis, Table 17 shows the different racial and ethnic classifications employed by the CDE and the NCDPI.

Table 17. Racial and Ethnic Classification Structures in California Department of Education & North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CDE Racial &amp; Ethnic Classifications</th>
<th>NCDPI Racial &amp; Ethnic Classifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Native Alaskan</td>
<td>American Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>Multi-Racial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American, not Hispanic</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, not Hispanic</td>
<td>CDE allows for a primary and secondary race to be delineated for students of mixed race</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings of this study verify that the CDE and the NCDPI have different methods of classifying mixed race students, as shown in the chart above. The CDE has seven distinct racial and ethnic classifications and allows for
multiracial students to delineate between a primary and secondary race. For the purpose of data aggregation and student achievement, the CDE collapses data of students identified as having a primary and secondary race into the primary race category. By contrast, the NCDPI utilizes six primary racial and ethnic classifications, of which one is Multi-Racial. Note, the NCDPI spells the term multiracial in two different ways throughout their documents: Multi-Racial or multiracial. For the purpose of this study the term multiracial has been utilized.

Key Research Finding #3 – School enrollment procedures for multiracial students varies between the CDE and the NCDPI.

The CDE and the NCDPI currently utilize different racial and ethnic classification structures from one another for the purpose of multiracial school enrollment procedures. As noted, the CDE allows multiracial students to identify more than one race, as long as they also delineate a primary and secondary race. The NCDPI has utilized a multiracial classification for school registration, academic achievement monitoring, and other educational data purposes since 1996. Thus, within the educational arenas in the states of California and North Carolina, there are two distinct practices in which a multiracial student may be identified.

Key Research Finding #4 – Controversy exists on both the federal and state levels regarding the distinction between race and ethnicity.

This sub-theme titled, Race vs. Ethnicity emerged as a controversial issue for state departments of education. The evidence reveals that the federal
Department of Education is requiring state and local education agencies to first distinguish whether or not an individual’s ethnic background is “Hispanic or Latino” or “Not Hispanic or Latino.” Once ethnicity has been identified, then the USDE regulations allow respondents to identify one or more races as long as they are “Not Hispanic or Latino.” With regards to aggregating the category, “Two or more races”, the USDE’s 2007 guidelines require the following directives to be adhered to:

1. Individuals who choose “Hispanic or Latino” should be aggregated into the “Hispanic or Latino” category despite their race selection(s).

2. Respondents who choose one race and are “Not Hispanic or Latino” should be aggregated into the single race category they selected.

3. Individuals who choose more than one race and are “Not Hispanic or Latino” should be aggregated into the “Two or more races” category.

The requirements above stipulate that any person who denotes an ethnic background of “Hispanic or Latino” may not indicate they are “Two or more races” but rather must be placed exclusively in the “Hispanic or Latino.”

The reason this sub-theme of Race vs. Ethnicity emerged as a controversial issue is due to the fact that neither state within this study understands why an individual of “Hispanic or Latino” ethnicity may not identify themselves as two or more races.

definitions for the terms *ethnicity* or *race*. The lack of functional definitions for these key terms leads to widespread confusion and misunderstanding. An administrator from the NCDPI articulated the uncertainty surrounding distinguishing between ethnicity and race in the following statements:

[People are] mixed up between race and ethnicity. …The premise of the question is wrong. This is a race and ethnicity question. There is no definition of race and ethnicity. People are trying to avoid that. Look at the Hispanic group for instance. What is that? There is only one explanation: a political pressure group. You can be pitch Black and be from Nicaragua and be classified Hispanic.

Herein lies not only puzzlement in how one defines the terms race and ethnicity, but also mystification regarding why a person of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity may not be categorized racially.

Both the OMB and the USDE group “Hispanic or Latino” as an ethnicity, not a race. The USDE defines “Hispanic or Latino” as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The Hispanic population has grown over the last few decades. In fact, the Hispanic or Latino group has become the largest minority group in many school districts (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001b; U.S. Department of State, 2006). Data emerging from Census studies found that Hispanic reporting was more accurate when forms require a two-part format, inquiring about both ethnicity and race. These studies along with the Bureau of Labor Statistics discovered that asking respondents whether or not they are Hispanic or Latino prior to asking them to identify a race reduces the inclination to mistake race with country of origin.
Rationale provided within the Federal Register explains that this approach is part of a longstanding federal effort to obtain accurate ethnic data (U.S. Office of Management and Budget, 1997). In 1976, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, requiring the collection, analysis, and publication of federal statistics on persons of Spanish origin or descent (Voting Rights Act, 1976). This law was in response to an apparent under-count of Americans of Spanish origin or descent in the 1970 Census.

This dilemma of delineating between race and ethnicity leads to a simple question: \textit{If the OMB and the USDE allow individuals to identify themselves as more than one race, then why would a person of Hispanic and Latino ethnic background not have this same privilege?} As one CDE administrator explained:

I mean, it's a pretty challenging question to say you can be multiracial unless you're Latino and then you can no longer be considered to be multiracial. It trumps all. If you check that you're Hispanic Latino and anything else or everything else you're counted only as Latino. But, if I check that I'm Asian and Anglo or Asian and African American or any other combination I do fall into this multiracial category.

Clearly, this commentary sheds light on the controversial implications that state educational agencies will confront with regards to addressing the sub-theme of \textit{race vs. ethnicity}.

\textit{Key Research Finding #5 – Multiracial students do not collectively identify themselves in the same way and they may change racial identities based on the context and situation of the various environments within which they navigate.}

To expand on the topic of multiraciality, it is important to recognize that multiracial individuals do not identify themselves racially in the same cohesive
manner. Research indicates that multiracial individuals encounter the following broad categories of influence when asked to self-identify a racial classification: geographical history of race; gender; family influences; individual “personality;” community; and generation (Morning, 2002). For the purposes of implementing the 2007 USDE Final Guidance, state and local education agencies are already beginning to realize that multiracial students do not have a unified approach to racial identification. For example, an administrator from the NCDPI stated, “They do not always choose to mark multiracial.” This research participant explained an observation that some multiracial students who are part Black choose to exclusively mark Black on college and scholarship applications because there are more scholarships for Black students.

While the example above serves as one reason for a multiracial individual to identify within a single racial category, another explanation that is prevalent is the issue of a multiracial individual “Accepting the Identity Society Assigns” to them. Within the latter racial identification choice lies the “one-drop,” or hypodescent rule, wherein a person embodying any degree of color is delineated within a non-White racial classification. This certainly was the only viable option until about thirty years ago. To have identified differently would have resulted in serious social repercussions.

Key Research Finding #6 – The USDE has operated under a waiver for just over a decade, which has allowed federal, state, and local education entities the opportunity to postpone complying with the OMB’s 1997 revisions to racial and
ethnic classifications that allow multiracial individuals to identify as more than one race.

One reason researchers know so little about multiracial students is that most federal, state, and local database systems, up until recently, did not account for this population of students. In 1997, the OMB implemented new guidelines for federal data collection in an effort to expand the racial and ethnic choices available and be more representative of the growing diversity within our nation. However, more than a decade later, the USDE has yet to implement the updated OMB guidelines for racial classifications. In 2007, the Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, stated that the USDE postponed the changes until the 2010-2011 school year to give schools and other agencies more time to prepare (USDE, 2007).

A section of the 1997 OMB Federal Register Notice, titled, “Tabulation Issues” sheds light on the complexities of data tabulation given the revised standards that allow for the reporting of more than one race (OMB, 1997). Data drawn from the two group interviews conducted with administrators from both the CDE and the NCDPI indicate that one of the major research themes emerging from the study is that of data methodologies. Out of six major research themes emerging from the data analysis component of this study, the theme of data methodologies tied in ranking for second place with the theme of federal public policies in terms of highest degree of frequency.

Clearly, both state departments of education, the CDE and the NCDPI have been in the midst of dealing with data accuracy issues that appear to date
as irreconcilable, given the vastly different methodologies for classifying multiracial students on state levels and the federal level.

*Key Research Finding #7 – In an effort to link past data with new data on racial groups, the USDE’s Final Guidance allows state education agencies to “bridge” the “two or more races” category into a single-race classification.*

The USDE recognizes that bridging estimates will not provide a completely accurate depiction of the racial and ethnic makeup of populations before and after the standard change, but hopes they will give a ballpark figure that will bridge the gap between the old and new standards. In this research study it was apparent that the data divisions in both the CDE and the NCDPI were aware of the option to adopt a bridging methodology. One administrator within the CDE commented:

> The Department of Labor and Statistics back in, I think it’s 2003, came to the Department of Finance and presented on a number of bridging methodologies for between the two the old and the new. And options that states might want to take into consideration when looking at how to bridge across years.

The NCDPI also recognizes the need to bridge information between the old and new reporting standards as seen here in one research participant’s comment: “[There is a] data continuation problem [and a] data aggregation problem.”

Interestingly, bridging estimates are only deemed necessary in cases where there are respondents who identify themselves as more than one race. Due to the fact that the new 1997 standards allow for multiple race identification,
the task of presuming which single race multiracial students would have chosen for themselves if utilizing the 1977 guidelines for racial classification becomes complicated. Thus, a formal bridging methodology becomes necessary in the eyes of both the OMB and the USDE.

Clearly, this research sub-theme of bridging methodologies is complex and has far reaching significance as we move forward in implementing the new USDE guidelines for race and ethnicity data collection and reporting procedures.

In conclusion, state education areas have the option to adopt a bridging methodology for the interim period in which our nation’s educational system transitions to an OMB compliant racial classification system that allows for students and staff of multiple races to identify the blend of heritages that they embody.

Key Research Finding #8 – The needs of multiracial students have yet to be identified or addressed on a national level and continue to be neglected by most state education agencies.

The following comments were shared by state educational administrators from the NDCPI when asked about the topic of a racial identity crisis among multiracial students:

Have you ever read Barack Obama’s, “My Father’s Dream?” …For me that was probably the best explanation I’ve ever heard or read about of a racial identity crisis.

I think that would be their greatest need. Especially in looking at the Black/White biracial child. Again, Hispanic/Black or White/Hispanic or maybe even Hispanic/Asian or other combinations, it doesn’t seem to be as prevalent as the Black/White. Again, I wonder because the schools I
working most closely with they were basically the largest percentage Black and White. So such a large percentage Black and White meant there was more pressure because of the larger number of students. So maybe with a larger group saying you don’t really belong to us and you don’t really belong to us and they really didn’t belong to the other group either because the other small group for the most part was probably Hispanics.

The two quotes above point to the fact that the education field is becoming aware of the topic of racial identity for multiracial students. As this awareness grows, teachers and administrators will better understand that a racial identity crisis is a difficulty of knowing where one fits in or belongs, and that in the current school climate, this is both understandable and evident.

As Naomi Zack, an author on multiracial subjects once wrote, “…there is something about the discomfort of being more than one race in the United States which speaks to a universal aspect of the human condition” (Kwan & Speirs, 2004; Zack, 1995). The word “discomfort” describes the day-to-day experiences multiracial students have in schools that are primarily monoracial demographically but also monoracial in terms of their racial classification systems.

Indeed, where does a mixed race student fit in an American school? Where do they belong? These simple questions represent the essence of what multiracial students in American schools grapple with each day.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

With the historic day of January 20, 2009 marking our nation’s inauguration of its first multiracial president, Barack Obama is causing many in our country to examine their views on race. The icon of an American President who embodies a mixed heritage draws attention to the nation’s growing multiracial population, whose youngest affiliates are appearing with increasing frequency at the doorstep of America’s schools. In these words, President Obama shares his own American story:

I am the son of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas. I was raised with the help of a white grandfather who survived a Depression to serve in Patton’s Army during World War II and a white grandmother who worked on a bomber assembly line at Fort Leavenworth while he was overseas. I’ve gone to some of the best schools in America and lived in one of the world’s poorest nations. I am married to a black American who carries within her the blood of slaves and slave owners - an inheritance we pass on to our two precious daughters. I have brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, uncles and cousins, of every race and every hue, scattered across three continents, and for as long as I live, I will never forget that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible.

It’s a story that hasn’t made me the most conventional candidate. But it is a story that has seared into my genetic makeup the idea that this nation is more than the sum of its parts - that out of many, we are truly one. (Obama, 2008)
President Obama’s mixed race background can be described as multiracial. He represents a congruent blending of races, cultures, and creeds that has been rapidly growing in the U.S. population for the last few decades.

Yet while the rhapsody to multiraciality has been quietly reaching a crescendo across the landscape of America, little is known about multiracial children and how they are doing in our schools. Few studies have investigated the unique challenges these children may face growing up, such as the following experience chronicled in President Obama’s autobiographical memoir:

As an African American teenager in a school with few African Americans, I probably questioned my identity a bit harder than most. …As a kid from a broken home and family of relatively modest means, I nursed more resentments than my circumstances justified and didn’t always channel those resentments in particularly constructive ways (Obama, 1999).

Not only do we not have a clear understanding of the needs of multiracial children, our understanding of the educational progress of these students is even more limited.

The 2000 U.S. Census was the first in which individuals could mark more than one racial category. At that time, 6.8 million people throughout the country identified themselves as multiracial, and a majority of them were under 18. In fact, in at least ten states, more than a quarter of the school-age children were characterized as multiracial (Viadero, 2009). Those ten states are: California, New York, Texas, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, New Jersey, Washington, Michigan, and Ohio (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001c). For the purpose of this study, it is important to note that of the 6.8 million people who marked “two or more races”
on the 2000 U.S. Census, 1.6 million of these individuals, or 24%, resided in one state, California (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001a, 2001c). For this reason, California’s Department of Education was one of the two states selected for comparison within this research study. For purposes of comparison, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction was also identified for this research, given that it represents one of few than a dozen states that currently employ a multiracial category for the purpose of academic accountability measures.

Chapter Organization

Chapter Five summarizes the key research findings of this study in relation to the research questions. This chapter aligns the discoveries presented in this study with the previous review of literature. In addition, caveats of the study are raised. The chapter concludes with an overview of potential implications of this study and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Study

By the nature of their existence, multiracial people call to question deeply held notions of race held by Americans. Despite their presence throughout the 20th Century, multiracial individuals have been rendered invisible by our country’s perpetuation of a racial classification system based on monoracial categorization. Controversy has emerged over the rapidly growing numbers of multiracial people in the United States (Funderburg, 1994; Winters & DeBose, 2003). Unfortunately, myths and stereotypes regarding interracial marriages and multiracial people foster discrimination towards this population. It is projected that by 2050, the
multiracial population will become a majority group of people whose presence will force our nation to redefine racial constructs, racial identification, and racial classification (Winters & DeBose, 2003).

While multiracial students become ever more prevalent in our nation’s schools, multiracial identity is rarely acknowledged as an important topic of diversity within the educational arena. As the number of multiracial students in America’s classrooms becomes more and more evident it will cause educators to face the challenge of recognizing and being responsive to the histories, experiences, identities, and academic needs of these students. Children of mixed race heritages embody a unique set of advantages, while at the same time they confront certain societal challenges. It is distinctly difficult for multiracial students to develop their racial identity while enrolled in schools that preserve a single race classification structure (Chiong, 1998; Herman, 2002; Renn, 2000b). In spite of increasing numbers of multiracial students in schools, little is known about their racial identity development, or their academic, social, and emotional needs.

This research sought to determine how and to what extent public policy decisions regarding accountability of states in reporting demographic statistics affect the reporting of educational outcomes for multiracial students. By incorporating a comparative case study approach, this study assessed the similarities and differences between educational policies regarding accountability for multiracial students in the states of California and North Carolina.
Overview of the Problem

For more than two decades federal organizations within the United States have been required to comply with the Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB) standards for racial classification structures. The OMB’s Statistical Policy Directive No. 15 provides a common language for data on race and ethnicity for the population groups so as to provide uniformity and comparability of data across the nation. In 1997, the OMB announced an amendment to OMB Directive No. 15 on Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting that required agencies to allow mixed race individuals the opportunity to “mark more than one” of the racial categories delineated within the directive.

It was not until 2006 that the United States Department of Education released proposed plans for amending the manner in which state education agencies and local education agencies such as school districts are expected to maintain, collect, and report data on race and ethnicity based on the 1997 OMB revised guidelines for race and ethnicity data collection. Thus, there was a nine-year lapse in time that occurred prior to the USDE aligning its racial and ethnic classification standards to the 1997 OMB criteria. The USDE’s Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education (2007) requires individuals to be reported in one of the following race and ethnicity combinations:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
• Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
• White
• Two or more races
• Hispanic of any race

This new racial classification structure that includes the category titled, “two or more races” must be implemented by educational institutions by the 2010-2011 school year. However, there is no requirement for the new USDE racial categorization system to be utilized within education for the purpose of federal academic accountability.

The U.S. educational system continues to preserve an antiquated racial classification structure that denies the multiple heritages of mixed race students who are becoming more and more visible within schools across the country. In fact, more often than not multiracial children are confronted with the denial of their mixed race backgrounds prior to even entering the classroom due school registration forms that often require them to identify a primary race. Furthermore, the curriculum does not reflect mixed race families or multiracial students and their heritages. For the most part, the present manner in which society operates requires multiracial students to assimilate into isolated racial groups that in turn cause them to dismiss one or more parts of their heritage. To be present but not be acknowledged by one’s true racial and cultural background causes multiracial students to feel like outsiders every day they attend school.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose and primary research question in this comparative qualitative research study is to determine how and to what extent public policy decisions
regarding accountability of state educational agencies to report comprehensive demographic statistics affect the report of educational outcomes for multiracial students. By incorporating an exploratory case study approach, this research investigated the contextual conditions that are significant to the data collection practices of multiracial students, particularly racial classification structures and academic data collection practices. This comparative analysis is drawn from data gathered from the California Department of Education, which does not currently utilize a multiracial category for the purpose of academic achievement, and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, which has been employing a multiracial classification for almost ten years.

This study addressed the following three research sub questions:

1. What subgroups are identified within the accountability movement in two states that differ in their multiracial category policies?

2. How are academic achievement data disaggregated according to policies in two different state education agencies?

3. To what degree are multiracial students rendered visible in the reporting of academic achievement data to identify their educational progress and needs in two states with varying methods of identifying multiracial students?

Review of the Methodology

The research methodology selected for this study is qualitative in nature as this investigative approach allowed for systematic data-based inquiry, focused on efforts to increase human effectiveness. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative research is to inform the populace, enhance decision-making, and utilize the learning from studies to address the human and societal issue of meeting the
needs of multiracial students in U.S. schools. Furthermore, this study employed an exploratory case study approach that investigated a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. This case study was comparative in nature, in that it compared the public policies specific to the racial classification and needs of multiracial students within the educational systems in California and North Carolina. The unit of analysis within this case study is the multiracial student and the bounded context is the state department of education in two states.

The case study protocol executed within this research rests primarily on scaffolded group interviews, student assessment data, document analysis, and review of archival records. The main source of data gathered for this study came from the qualitative group interviews that allowed for participants to express their views and opinions in their own words, rather than through surveys and observation. These semi-structured interviews brought to the surface real world descriptions shared by the interviewees as they interpreted the meaning of the specific phenomena studied in this research. There were a total of two group interviews conducted, one in California and one in North Carolina. Each group interview included four educational administrators holding influential positions within their respective state department of education. Each research candidate signed a Participant Consent Form. Both interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Once the data collection process was completed, a disciplined approach to bringing the order to the information gathered was followed. This allowed for
the research data to be coded and categorized by themes and sub-themes. The research data was then simplified down to key research findings on both federal and state levels. The data coding, data reduction, and data display process of this study were verified by checking the data, forming a matrix, and noting patterns and explanations.

The theoretical framework and lens through which the data was studied rests on the foundation of racial identity development models (RIDMs), specific to multiracial individuals. This theoretical framework ascertains the premise that multiracial people acquire their individual identity through a series of developmental stages, intrinsically linked to understanding the meaning of embodying a mixed racial heritage. RIDMs do not concur with deficit model theories that characterize multiracial people as marginal. Rather, RIDMs describe a variety of approaches, linear and non-linear, that multiracial individuals may navigate as they develop their own unique racial identity within society’s historical context of racial classification.

In conclusion, the methodological approach to this research study can be described as a qualitative comparative case study analysis that seeks to determine how and to what extent public policy impacts the academic achievement of multiracial students. This research employed both an inductive and deductive approach to the data analysis process in order to validate and generalize the conclusions drawn from the study.
Major Findings

Primary Research Question: How and to what extent do public policy decisions regarding accountability affect the report of educational outcomes for multiracial students?

Racial Formation as a Theoretical Framework. The literature begins with a definition of racial formation as a theoretical framework through which racial categories are formed (Omi & Winant, 1994). Here, classifications of race are developed by social, economic, and political factors of the time. Racial categorization changes over time to emulate current conceptions of race. Historically, the term “race” in America has referred to the delineation between two distinct categories, Black and White. In fact, interracial unions were taboo and in most states illegal until 1967, when the U.S. Supreme Court issued its ruling in the case Loving v. Virginia, bringing an end to anti-miscegenation laws in the United States (Loving, 1967). In 1977, the OMB issued Statistical Policy Directive No. 15 established four racial categories: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black, White, and Some Other Race. By 1997, the OMB revised their guidelines regarding race and ethnic data to allow respondents to select more than one race of the following categories: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or White.

The United States Census represents our country’s long-standing use of race for the purpose of statistical data collection practices. The first Census was
taken in 1790 and was later enacted by Congress as a permanent fixture with the development of the Census Bureau in 1902. The U.S. Census is taken every ten years. The 2000 Census marks a poignant time in civil rights history, given that for the first time it strayed from the tradition of “check one box only” and transitioned to allowing respondents to check more than one racial classification. The data drawn from the 2000 Census highlights a population boom of 6.8 million multiracial people identifying themselves as multiracial in the United States (K. M. Williams, 2006). In fact, it is projected that by 2050 the multiracial population will emerge as a majority group of people whose presence will compel our nation to redefine once more current constructs of race, racial identification, and racial classification (Winters & DeBose, 2003).

Federal Public Policy. In the last few decades policy makers and educational leaders throughout the country have focused on academic accountability in response to a rising concern about improving student achievement. Although all states have moved in the direction of establishing high educational standards, there continues to be a struggle to achieve an equal education for all students. This is evident in persistent achievement gaps, particularly for certain racial and socio-economically disadvantaged student groups. The most recent national movement that required adequate yearly progress goals in student proficiency levels was NCLB. In fact, NCLB established a nationwide expectation for all students to reach educational proficiency levels by 2013-2014. However, NCLB does not address the needs of
multiracial students, as there is currently no common racial classification
delineated on a national level for these students’ academic achievement scores.

In 2006, the U.S. Department of Education released proposed plans for
modifying the manner in which state and local education agencies were expected
to maintain, collect, and report data on race and ethnicity based on the 1997
OMB revised guidelines. Thus, the USDE has taken almost a decade to comply
with federal requirements for allowing mixed race individuals or students to mark
more than one racial category. The USDE’s *Final Guidance on Maintaining,
Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of
Education* (2007) allows schools, districts, and state departments of education to
collect race and ethnic data utilizing the following categories:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or more races
- Hispanic of any race

The above revision for educational institutions includes a category titled, “Two or more races.” All educational agencies are required to comply with these
new guidelines for race and ethnic data reporting by the 2010-2011 school year. However, these guidelines are not applicable to the reporting of student
academic achievement data to the USDE for the purpose of NCLB. Because of
this, public policy will continue to play a critical role in preserving the invisibility of
multiracial student academic achievement scores on a national level.
The findings in this study have answered the primary research question: *How and to what extent do public policy decisions regarding accountability affect the reporting of educational outcomes for multiracial students?* Simply stated, federal public policy decisions regarding academic accountability have the single greatest impact on the reporting or non-reporting of educational outcomes for multiracial students. This research reveals that federal public policy does not yet support the implementation of a multiracial category for the purpose of educational accountability. Therefore, state education agencies will continue to have the latitude to utilize a racial classification system that does not recognize the multiracial student achievement in their schools. In the case of a few states’ departments of education, such as the NCDPI, there will most likely be an attempt to employ two racial classification systems when monitoring student educational outcomes. In the latter example, states choosing to use a multiracial category will need to employ one racial classification system for the state and one they modify for the purpose of reporting academic achievement results to the USDE.

The findings of this study reveal the major research themes shown on the inverted triangle in Figure 4: Federal Public Policy; Racial Classification; Data Methodologies; Academic Achievement; and Multiracial Student Needs. In addition, the major research theme titled, *Controversial Issues* remains significant and is interwoven throughout the sub-themes of the major research themes shown in Figure 4.
Figure 4. Major Research Themes

- **THEME I**
  - FEDERAL PUBLIC POLICY

- **THEME II**
  - RACIAL CLASSIFICATION

- **THEME III**
  - DATA METHODOLOGIES

- **THEME IV**
  - ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

- **THEME V**
  - MULTIRACIAL STUDENT NEEDS
Research Sub Question 1. What subgroups are identified within the accountability movement in two states that differ in their multiracial category policies?

State Response to Federal Policy. In 1997, the OMB issued their revised guidelines for racial and ethnic classifications. However, the USDE did not provide state departments of education guidelines to follow in order to comply with the OMB modifications. Therefore, state and local education areas were left to make important racial classification decisions on their own, without the guidance of the USDE. Thus, in the case of the California Department of Education (CDE), its response to the OMB’s modified regulations was to utilize the following racial classifications and to allow students of mixed race to be identified using a primary and secondary racial classification:

- American Indian or Native Alaskan
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Filipino
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American, not Hispanic
- White, not Hispanic

Although the CDE provided a vehicle for multiracial students to be identified with a primary and secondary racial classification, it does not utilize a multiracial classification for the purpose of student monitoring of academic achievement.

The research data does reveal that the CDE intends to implement the new USDE guidelines for racial and ethnic classification with the launch of their new
CALPADS and CALTIDES student and staff longitudinal information databases in the 2009-2010 school year, one year prior to the federal implementation deadline. The CDE will need to determine whether or not to utilize the “Two or more races” category for the purpose of monitoring student achievement data on a statewide level.

By comparison, the research shows that fewer than ten states have chosen, for a variety of reasons, to employ a multiracial category. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) is one of the few state departments of education in the country currently utilizing a multiracial category, both for purposes of identifying the number of multiracial students in their schools and for the monitoring of their academic achievement. The six racial classifications currently in use by the NCDPI are:

- American Indian
- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic
- Multi-Racial
- White

Interestingly, the research found that the NCDPI has employed a multiracial subgroup category since the 1996-1997 school year, for the last 11 consecutive years. Although the NCDPI diligently collects data at the local and state education levels on multiracial students, there is currently no venue for it to upload this data to the USDE for the purposes of academic accountability, demographic data collection, or any other federal education data collection reason. This lack of alignment between federal and state practices for allowing a
multiracial classification, particularly with regards to educational student achievement data, creates multiple data methodology challenges for states employing the multiracial classification.

Research Sub-Question 2. How is academic achievement data disaggregated according to policies in two different state education agencies?

Academic Achievement. The literature review embedded within this study indicates that only a narrow strain of research exists on multiracial student achievement in schools. The historical indicators limiting the breadth of research on multiracial students include the nation’s struggle to determine how to classify persons of mixed race, a prevalent inability of schools to accurately account for multiracial students, and society’s evolving perception of this population. The literature does reveal findings parallel to a racial hierarchy of student achievement among monoracial youth. A renown Dartmouth University assistant professor and highly published author, Melissa Herman conducted one early study of close to 1,500 multiracial high school students and their academic achievement patterns concluded achievement gaps that exist in monoracial subgroups mirror those of certain racial combinations of mixed race youth (2002). Thus, some biracial students flourish in school while others appear to struggle academically.

A second study highlighted in the literature review was conducted by the Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN) in the 2000-2001 school year. The MSAN study explored student achievement in 15 middle and upper-middle
income districts in North Carolina, California, and Virginia with the goal of identifying specific factors impacting student achievement among racially disaggregated groups. This is one of the rare studies available that includes multiracial students as a disaggregated subgroup, emphasizing the fact that we are only in the infancy stages of researching the topic of academic achievement in multiracial students. The findings of this study revealed that 41% of the mixed-race students with a grade point average of D+ or below felt their teachers did not grade them fairly, while 38% shared their friends don’t ask for help in school (Ferguson, 2002). Also, 41% of the multiracial students stated they understand half or less of the curriculum. The study shows a need for teachers to develop positive relationships with multiracial students in their classrooms and provides compelling evidence that the academic needs of multiracial students are not being met.

For the purpose of academic accountability, the newly released USDE guidelines for race and ethnic reporting standards do not require education agencies to comply with these regulations, which allow multiracial students to be identified as more than one race. As a CDE administrator pointed out:

However, when it comes to accountability, the guidelines or the regulations say that states, for purposes of AYP under No Child Left Behind, are not subject to those specific aggregations, that we can work through the AYP workbook to propose changes or stay with what they’ve been doing.

Therefore, throughout the nation the educational arena may employ two very different approaches to collecting data on mixed race students. For the
purpose of collecting data, multiracial students can be counted in a category titled, “two or more races.” However, when monitoring student academic achievement, students identified within the classification of “two or more races” are subject to the state identifying a data bridging methodology that would allow their academic achievement scores to be collapsed into one of the monoracial classifications currently recognized by NCLB. At this time, the CDE does not employ a statewide category for reporting academic achievement results of multiracial students. Thus, California is not able to identify how students of mixed raced are performing on standardized academic benchmarks.

North Carolina has been utilizing a multiracial subgroup category for 11 consecutive years for the purpose of monitoring educational outcomes. In fact, the NCDPI employs the multiracial classification when disaggregating student achievement data for the purpose of trend analysis. Interestingly, this research study found that the NCDPI concluded that multiracial students in grades 3-8 held the third highest reading scores statewide out of the following six racial subgroups: American Indian, Asian, Black, Hispanic, Multiracial, and White (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI], 2008b). White and Asian students scored 10% - 13% higher in reading proficiency scores than the multiracial students. Additionally, from the 1995-1996 school year to the 2007-2008 school year, multiracial students consistently ranked third highest in academic achievement in both reading and mathematics for grades 3-8 on the NCDPI statewide standardized test. Specifically during the 2007-2008 school year multiracial students in grades 3-8 scored 53.3% proficient on the statewide
end-of-grade assessment in both reading and mathematics (NCDPI, 2008a). Multiracial students continued to rank third highest by racial subgroup in proficiency scores and showed a 14.5% difference compared to the Asian student population along with a 12.7% difference weighed against the White subgroup of students.

In general, the NCDPI data indicates that multiracial students show a slight achievement gap behind White and Asian students, but are achieving higher proficiency scores compared to the Hispanic, American Indian, and Black student populations. The multiracial subgroup is not specific enough in North Carolina to indicate the racial backgrounds of mixed race students. Thus, this research was not able to determine if certain racially mixed students performed better than students of other race combinations. Finally, the findings indicate that by the 2007-2008 academic year, slightly over half of the multiracial students achieved proficient scores in reading and mathematics. Therefore, almost half of the multiracial students did not reach proficiency targets in 2007-2008, making NCLB’s adequate yearly progress target of 100% proficiency for all students by 2013-2014 steep for this group of students.
Research Sub-Question 3. To what degree are multiracial students rendered visible in the reporting of academic achievement data to identify their educational progress and needs in two states with varying methods of identifying multiracial students?

Multiracial Student Needs. The findings of this study highlight a striking difference in the ability to report multiracial student achievement data, educational progress, and needs between a state education agency utilizing a multiracial classification and one that does not. This research highlights the unique tools that the NCDPI has in place to render visible multiracial students. The NCDPI knows exactly how many multiracial students are attending its schools statewide and has the ability to report and monitor the academic achievement of this population. By comparison, the CDE does not currently have the necessary instruments in place to echo the same multiracial student achievement monitoring practices of the NCDPI.

Due to the fact that the educational community has yet to fully comply on a national level with the OMB regulations mandating the option for multiracial students to identify in more than one racial category, it remains difficult to distinguish the needs of this population. The literature review shows that only a limited body of research exists regarding multiracial students. However, recent studies are beginning to reveal problems that these students are facing at school. For the most part, troubles that mixed race children confront at school involve issues of racial identity.
Maria P. P. Root, a researcher and psychologist on the topic of multiraciality, has found that students of mixed race backgrounds find themselves having to pass “authenticity tests” in order to be accepted by a monoracial peer group (Root, 1996; Viadero, 2009). This often results in the multiracial student having to deny friends who are of the same race as well as one side of their very own family. Root has found that “One of the things educators can do is become more educated about the monoracial bias of the system” (Viadero, 2009). The lack of acceptance into a peer group may lead to disciplinary problems for multiracial students at school. An NCDPI educational leader described this by stating, “Those are the kinds of things that trigger either a retreat on the part of the child, or the anger that results in some type of discipline infraction.”

In general, the research findings of this study indicate that multiracial students struggle to fit into monoracial peer groups. One research participant characterized this exclusionary practice of peer groups towards mixed race youth as “not really fitting into this group or the other group”. Furthermore, if a multiracial student gains access into a monoracial peer group, the very act of identifying a group of friends of a single race often causes them to deny one part of their family. In addition, by virtue of their physical appearance, multiracial students are often confronted at school by both adults and students with the question, “What are you?” While this question appears both simple and innocent, mixed race students may have different reactions and responses, both positive and negative. Either way, the question in and of itself tells a story of society
trying to determine where a multiracial individual fits in within a predominantly monoracial structure.

The findings of this study reveal that the most difficult interview question for educational leaders today to comprehensively address is: How many K-12 multiracial students currently attend schools in your state and what are their educational needs? As a nation we are not currently able to quantify the number of multiracial students that are in our schools. Furthermore, less than 1/5 of states have implemented a racial category allowing a multiracial student to be identified as more than one race. The most poignant finding of this study highlights the fact that our American education system has yet to fully recognize the multiracial population of students and is far from being able to identify or meet the needs of these students. The reality that education remains in a stage of infancy with regards to understanding the needs of multiracial students was best characterized in the words of one CDE administrator, “…we simply don’t know.”

Caveats of the Study

Although the federal policies in the educational arena regarding the reporting of racial and ethnic classifications have yet to fully capture the number of multiracial students throughout our nation, or with their educational needs, the degree of receptivity on the part of both state departments of education in California and North Carolina to participate in this study unveiled a genuine interest to learn more about multiracial students. Each of these states allowed
prominent educational leaders to participate in the group interview portion of this study, despite variable including scarcity of time and a potentially controversial unit of study on multiracial students, a group of students that as a nation we know little about. The findings of this study indicate that both California and North Carolina are amenable to meeting the needs of all students, including but not limited to their multiracial students.

One additional caveat of this study can be described as the critical role that the data division plays with regards to data collection procedures within each state education agency. The data departments must be knowledgeable of all USDE and OMB guidelines with regards to racial and ethnic classification structures. In turn, these federal regulations must not only be interpreted by state education data divisions, but they must also be acted upon. Given that there has been a misalignment between the 1997 OMB revised guidelines for racial and ethnic categorizations and the USDE’s regulations, state education data departments have had to determine which direction to take. In addition, many database systems do not have the capability to allow for an individual or student to be designated as “Two or more races.” Thus, many state education agencies will confront exorbitant costs when upgrading their longitudinal data systems.

Finally, data divisions will need to identify a bridging methodology when linking past student data collections with new student data that allows for “Two or more races.” In closing, it was surprising that the findings of this study
uncovered the critical role state education agency data divisions and their staff members play when it comes to racial and ethnic classification systems.

**Implications for Theory**

*Racial Identity Development Theoretical Framework.* Despite the increasing numbers of multiracial students in schools throughout the nation, little is known about their racial identity development. The primary theoretical framework utilized within this research study is that of racial identity development. Most research and theory on the distinctive experiences of multiracial people has only been conducted in the last 20 years. This research defines racial identity development as the pride in an individual’s racial and cultural identity (Sue, 1981). It is important to support multiracial children in acquiring a positive self-concept in light of the fact that racial and ethnic group differences play a significant bearing on children’s social development (Schwartz, 1998a). Early studies indicate that multiracial children need to understand what it means to have a mixed race heritage, and they need to acquire coping skills to deal with racism and discrimination (Root, 1996; Wardle, 1987). Families and schools must provide a supportive community that values multiracialism as the U.S. continues to have few fully integrated and peacefully racially mixed neighborhoods (Miller & Rotheram-Borus, 1994).

A number of racial identity development models such as Strongquinst’s (1937) model of “marginality”, Morten and Atkinson’s (1983) Minority Identity Development Model, and Cross’ (1971) model of identity development, center on
deficit models of multiracial people. These models include several limitations and promote the preservation of discriminatory views regarding mixed race individuals. The principal error embedded in these racial identity development models is the common characteristic of an inherent system of marginality applied toward multiracial individuals. The findings of this study indicate that these rigid models of racial identity development do not reflect the various ways a mixed race individual may choose to self identify. Furthermore, the data drawn from this research show a reluctance on the part of public policy, not multiracial individuals, to change fixed monoracial classifications for the purpose of academic accountability. The aforementioned racial identity development models do not address the fact that current racial classifications utilized in our country have been slow to include a placement for a mixed race individual to denote their true heritage. Therefore, this study counters racial identity development models that denote multiracial individuals as marginal and provides evidence indicating the marginality and rigidity of racial classification models currently utilized in the U.S.

This research promotes the utilization of two progressive models of racial identity specific to multiracial individuals. First, Poston’s (1990) Biracial Identity Development Model (BIDM) highlights the unique aspects of biracial individuals and dismisses deficit models of biracial identity development. BIDM maintains a five-stage model of biracial identity development and suggests that all biracial individuals will experience some conflict during the identity development process. The first stage of Poston’s model, *personal identity*, typically occurs in childhood,
when biracial individuals are unaware of their mixed race heritage. The second stage, *choice of group categorization*, involves a number of societal and parental influences that prompt multiracial individuals to identify one racial group identity. The third stage of BIDM, *enmeshment/denial*, is described by individuals feeling guilty and disloyal about choosing one racial group over the other. During the fourth stage, *appreciation*, biracial individuals may remain pledged to one racial group, but they tend to explore the previously ignored racial group as their degree of awareness rises. Finally, the fifth stage of BIDM, *integration*, features the point wherein biracial individuals may still identify with one racial group but value the integration of their multiple racial identities (Poston, 1990).

Furthermore, BIDM asserts a number of important assumptions: 1) if outside prejudice and values are internalized, biracial individuals might have identity problems; 2) a number of variables influence an individuals’ identity choice (i.e. family and friends); 3) biracial people may feel alienated at the choice phase and might make a choice despite their comfort level; 4) feelings of guilt may surface at the choice face when an individual chooses one identity over another; 5) integration is linked with positive indicators of mental health; and 6) the most tenuous time of adjustment and identity confusion is during the choice phase and the denial phase (Chang, 1974; Poston, 1990; Sebring, 1985). BIDM is a complex and important process in the life of a multiracial individual. While most multiracial individuals move through the developmental stages of BIDM successfully and become well-adjusted people, there are individuals who are not
as successful at negotiating societal and familial hurdles related to race (Gibbs, 1987).

The second racial identity model this research draws upon is known as the situational identity model initially proposed by psychologist, Maria P.P. Root (Renn, 2003; Root, 1996). This racial identity model employs a nonlinear model for biracial identity. In fact, the situational identity model implies that a chameleon effect is inherent within multiracial individuals, wherein they have the ability to change identities based on the setting, location, and circumstances at hand. Root’s theory of identity formation relies on an individual’s ability to be at ease with self-definition within, across, and between categories. The forte of changing racial identities depending on various societal contexts serves as a dominant survival mechanism that many multiracial individuals develop, as they take on the cultural characteristics of the racial group with whom they are interacting in order to function and adapt to the different racial worlds within which they live.

*Implications for Practice and Policy*

The focus of this research study centered around the extent public policy decisions regarding academic accountability affect the reporting of educational outcomes for multiracial students. To date, educational federal public policies have yet to comprehensively implement a common practice of accounting for multiracial students by allowing for a standardized mixed race classification. The USDE has determined that by fall of 2010 all state and local education agencies
must fully comply with their newly released guidelines for racial and ethnic classification, which require the use of a category titled, “Two or more races.” However, this USDE multiracial classification does not apply to the academic monitoring of student achievement on a federal level for Congressional acts such as NCLB. An educational administrator described the lack of alignment between the new USDE guidelines for racial and ethnic classifications and the requirements for NCLB in these words:

You know one footnote on the guidelines themselves…when it comes to accountability the guidelines or the regulations say that states for purposes of AYP or No Child Left Behind are not subject to those specific aggregations, that we can work through the AYP workbook to propose changes or stay with what they’ve been doing.

Thus, a major finding of this study reveals that federal public policies have the most significant bearing on whether or not multiracial students and their educational needs are rendered visible or not.

U.S. history involves numerous laws passed by legislatures that made interracial marriages illegal for many generations (Baysden et al., 2005). Although multiracial people have lived in the United States since the 17th Century it was not until the 21st Century when multiracial people achieved governmental legitimacy by having the 2000 U.S. Census recognize them as mixed race individuals and accurately count them. In fact, nearly 7 million people checked more than one racial category in the 2000 U.S. Census, representing 2.4% of the U.S. population (Downing et al., 2005; Farley, 2002). Although public policy has been slow to recognize the multiracial population in the U.S., the exploding population of mixed race children emerging throughout schools in our nation is
compelling evidence that we are on the cusp of change with regards to our understanding of race as we define it today.

Recommendations for Future Research

It would be important to replicate this study at the federal department of education level, with a larger sample size, across multiple state education agencies, and in a variety of educational settings. In addition, further research evolving around the eight key findings of this study would be warranted:

- Ascertain the supports and barriers of federal academic accountability policies such as NCLB to implementing a multiracial classification.
- An in-depth study of all state education agencies currently employing a multiracial category.
- How will state education agencies respond to the USDE’s new guidelines for racial and ethnic classifications that require a category titled, “Two or more races” by 2010-2011?
- The impact of federal policy that does not allow a student of “Hispanic” ethnicity to be designated as “Two or more races.”
- Further exploration regarding racial identity development models that expands upon the biracial identity development models (BIDMs) that currently exist.
- The degree of alignment between the OMB’s 1997 revised guidelines for race and ethnic classification and implementation of the USDE’s Final Guidance subsequent to the first year of completion in 2010-2011.
• A state-to-state study of which bridging methodologies each state chooses to employ to implement the USDE’s Final Guidance.

• Significant research on the specific needs of multiracial students should be conducted to guide the educational community regarding the development of curriculum, social and emotional necessities, and staff professional development involving this group of students.

Concluding Remarks

Early studies show that multiracial students face struggles with their racial identities and with fitting into their communities and schools (Viadero, 2009). These students are frequently faced with a common racial question, “What are you?” This question often arises due to visible differences in their appearance and color of their skin. Since it is usually apparent that they are somehow different, multiracial students often feel as though they do not fit in or belong. In short, their story is one of isolation from those around them. This story of feeling lost within America’s social structures rings true for our new president, Barack Obama. The day of January 20, 2009, marked the Inauguration of the United States’ first biracial president. A decade and a half prior to this historical day, in 1995, President Obama wrote the following words about his mixed race identity:

...constant, crippling fear that I didn’t belong somehow, that unless I dodged and hid and pretended to be something I wasn’t, I would forever remain an outsider, with the rest of the world, black and white, always standing in judgment. ...When people who don’t know me well, black or white, discover my background ... I see the split-second adjustments they have to make, the searching of my eyes for some telltale sign. They no longer know who I am (Obama, 1995).
For President Obama, approximately two million people stood by his side on the day of the Inauguration, a record-breaking number for any event in the nation’s capitol. He no longer stands alone but rather serves as a beacon of hope for America to move forward into a new era of change.

Notwithstanding the highly public successes of multiracial celebrities such as golfer Tiger Woods, actress Halle Berry, and now President Barack Obama, little is known about multiracial people. Early studies on multiracial children imply there may be cause for concern about the challenges multiracial students face. In fact, some studies suggest mixed race students struggle with their racial identities, fitting into their environments, trouble in school, and that they may be more prone to depression and substance abuse than monoracial children (Viadero, 2009). An assistant professor of sociology at Dartmouth College, Melissa Herman, indicated that the negative picture of multiracial students emerging from early studies may have been because they were based on clinical samples and that “Most of the modern stuff is showing some of [a] happier side” (Viadero, 2009). In a recent study published by Herman, she found that the manner in which students identified their own race had a greater impact on their grades than their actual racial background.

The 2000 Census marks the first time in the history of America that multiracial people were able to identify their mixed race heritages (Jones & Smith, 2001). This shift is a sign that our nation is on the cusp of being responsive towards the civil rights and social realities of multiracial people. Mixed race individuals living in the United States have endured our country’s lengthy and
onerous history of racism and discrimination. For centuries, the U.S. has adhered to the legal construct known as the “one-drop rule,” which defaulted the multiracial population into single race classification so as to maintain a monoracial categorization structure (Root, 1992). Given this chronological milieu, it is not surprising that although we are now in the 21st Century we have yet to fully acknowledge the multiracial population or amass a noteworthy body of research to help guide us in the present and into the future.

Our nation is at a crossroads that can be described as a defining moment in time when a significant multiracial population has surfaced and is not only visible throughout our many states and cities but is now the discernable face of our new mixed heritage President, Barack Obama. While President Obama deliberately avoided calling attention to his race, a discordant force in politics during the election, he is now beginning to share how his mixed racial identity represents the hope we have in America to transform and unify as one. In his own words he states, “This belief comes from my unyielding faith in the decency and generosity of the American people. But it also comes from my own American story (Obama, 2008).”

The rapid emergence of a growing population of multiracial students in our nation’s schools will cause educators to confront the challenges of recognizing and being responsive to the histories, experiences, and identities of this group of students and their families. In general, the research findings indicate multiracial students are invisible when it comes to accounting for their achievement in schools. This dynamic of being visible yet invisible by the majority of today’s
racial classification structures will reach a critical turning point as the number of multiracial students continues to grow more prominent. In fact, the multiracial population is growing so quickly that by 2050, they will emerge as a significant majority in America (Winters & DeBose, 2003). Their very presence will require our nation to redefine current constructs of race, racial identification, and racial classification.

My hope in America is steadfast. This study signifies a belief in the integrity of our country to uphold the values expressed within the preamble of the United States’ Constitution:

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

These simple words define the legacy of our nation and serve as the premise for our trust and belief in America. The essence of diversity is framed each time the United States is referred to as a “melting pot,” wherein the ingredients embody a heterogeneous society of different cultures, races and religions emerging as one great country. What began as a story of large-scale immigration has now become a nation that has reached a pinnacle of diversity through the evolution of a new race defined by the amalgamation of more than one race.

This is my family’s American story.
Gina Acosta Potter, a graduate student researcher within the joint education doctoral program between the University of California at San Diego, San Diego State University, and California State University San Marcos is conducting a study on multiracial students. The title of the project is *The Invisibility of Multiracial Students: An Emerging Majority by 2050*.

The purpose of the study is to determine how and to what extent public policy decisions regarding accountability affect the report of educational outcomes for multiracial students. The results of this study will help educate state departments of education, public policy officials, educational administrators, teachers, and students on the degree to which multiracial students are rendered visible in the reporting of academic achievement results so as to identify their progress and needs. In addition, the research may help to address questions regarding the racial classification and racial identity development models for multiracial students. Finally, this study will enhance the limited body of research currently available on multiracial students.

In order to identify possible participants for this study, the researcher is asking that you take a few moments to complete and return the attached *Request for Information Questionnaire*. This study seeks to gain valuable insight and historical and current data from a select group of eight public policy officials or staff who work within the state departments of education in California and North Carolina. Perhaps you know of a professional colleague who would serve as a beneficial participant in this study. In order to gather data and narrow the study sample, please pass this along to that colleague.

If it is determined that you are a candidate for study, an invitation to participate will be embedded within a *Participant Consent Form* detailing the study that will be sent to you via e-mail.

There are no known risks attached to this *Request for Information Letter or the Request for Information Questionnaire*, and the benefits of the study may prove to be invaluable to the educational arena. Your information and responses will be kept confidential, available only to the researcher and her university advisor for analysis purposes. Your name will be kept confidential along with any individual names that you may disclose during the interview process. All data for this study will be locked in a safe place.

Although there is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study, if chosen you will be provided with a copy of the results of this study and you will have access to the digital dissertation once it is available. Your participation will also
contribute to the limited research and literature currently available on multiracial students in America.
Participation is voluntary. You do not have to participate in this research study if you do not choose to do so. If you agree to be in this study, but later change your mind, you may withdraw at any time without penalty.

If you have questions about this study, you may contact the principal investigator, Gina Acosta Potter (gpotter@lgsd.k12.ca.us or (619)889-0015) or the researcher’s advisor, Dr. Carolyn Hofstetter (chofstet@ucsd.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a potential research participant you may also contact the University of California, San Diego Human Research Protections Program at (858)455-5050, the California State University, San Marcos Institutional Review Board at (760)750-4029, or the San Diego State University Institutional Review Board at (619)594-6622.

By responding to this email request for information you can indicate your informed consent to participate in this portion of the study, the Request for Information, only.
1. Are you a public policy official or staff member who works within the state department of education in either California or North Carolina? If so, what is your job title and which department do you work within?

2. How many years have you had your current position?

3. What other positions have you held for the state department of education? How long have you held each position?

4. Do you have knowledge of the racial classification system currently utilized within your state department of education to disaggregate student achievement data?

5. Are you familiar with how K-12 multiracial (of two or more races) students are classified within your state department of education and how they are achieving academically?

6. Can you describe the public policies your state department of education utilizes to classify K-12 multiracial students?

7. Given the questions above do you have professional colleagues who may be valuable participants for this study? If so, what are their names, job titles, and contact phone numbers?

Thank you for completing the Request for Information. Please email your response to the principal investigator of this study, Gina Acosta Potter at gpotter@lgsd.k12.ca.us or (619)889-0015. Any and all information you provide will be confidential.
The Invisibility of Multiracial Students: An Emerging Majority by 2050

I, Gina Acosta Potter am conducting this study as part of my dissertation research in the joint education doctoral program shared between the University of California at San Diego, San Diego State University, and California State University San Marcos. The purpose of this study is to determine how and to what extent public policy decisions regarding accountability affect the report of educational outcomes for multiracial students. The results of this study will help educate state departments of education, public policy officials, educational administrators, teachers, and students on the degree to which multiracial students are rendered visible in the reporting of academic achievement results so as to identify their progress and needs. In addition, the research may help to address questions regarding the racial classification and racial identity development models for multiracial students. Finally, this study will enhance the limited body of research currently available on multiracial students.

I invite you to participate in this study because you have been identified as a public policy official or staff member who works within a state department of education division that focuses on assessment and accountability. Thus, you are a valuable and rich resource for information relevant to this study.

Procedures
The procedures of the study involve field notes and tape recordings of interviews with public policy officials and/or staff who work within the state departments of education in California and North Carolina. The audiotapes will be USDE to increase the accuracy of what transpired during the interviews. Participation as an interviewee in this study will require approximately two hours of your time. Interviews will be scheduled at times and locations that are convenient for the participant.

Your participation requires that you meet with the researcher in an interview setting and address questions regarding public policies, legal regulations, student achievement accountability rulings, and data collection procedures specific to multiracial students. During the meeting, you are free to ask the researcher to turn off the tape recorder. The researcher and advisor will be the only individuals who have access to the data. At the end of the interview, the audiotapes will be kept in a secured cabinet at the researcher’s home; the tapes will be destroyed when they are no longer needed for study purposes.

The results obtained from this study may be published in scholarly journals or presented at scholarly conferences and meetings.
Confidentiality
All information collected in this study is confidential. Participation is anonymous. Pseudonyms will be used in place of the actual names of the participants in order to conceal their identity. The tapes made of the interviews will be transcribed by me and I will be the only one with access to the tapes and transcripts.

Freedom to Withdraw and Ask Questions
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with me or UCSD, SDSU, and CSUSM. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. Should you decide to withdraw data collected from you will be destroyed and will not be used in the study.

Contacts and Questions
You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered prior to agreeing to participate or during the interview. Questions or concerns about the study may be directed to Gina Potter at (619)889-0015 or email at gpotter@lgsd.k12.ca.us. Or you may contact my advisor, Dr. Carolyn Huie Hofstetter at chofstet@ucsd.edu. You may also contact the Institutional Review Boards at the University of California in San Diego at (858)455-5050, San Diego State University at (619)594-6622, and California State San Marcos (760)750-4029. with any questions or concerns.

Risks of the Study
There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

Statement of Consent
I have read the above information and desire to participate in the proposed research being conducted by the UCSD, CSUSM, and SDSU Doctoral Program candidate, Gina Potter. You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. In addition, you are agreeing to have the interview audiotape recorded. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate and understand the information presented. You will be provided with a copy of this consent form to keep.

I recognize the value of your time and believe that the potential positive results for multiracial students, educational leaders and staff members, and public policy officials, justifies the time it will take you to complete the interview.

Sincerely,
Gina A. Potter
Researcher

______________________________
Signature of Research Participant

______________________________
Date
The Invisibility of Multiracial Students: An Emerging Majority by 2050

Introduction:

Thank you so much for visiting with me today. I am very interested in hearing about your state department of education’s public policies and their impact on educational outcomes for multiracial students. A multiracial individual is defined as a person who is a mixture of two or more races.
This conversation will be audiotape recorded and transcribed. I will then provide you with a copy of the transcriptions for your review and records.

Do you have any questions about this interview or about this study? Are you ready to begin?

(Turn on audiotape)

**Theme: Racial Classification**

**Question 1:** Please describe the demographics of the K-12 student population in your state.

**Question 2:** What racial classification system does your state’s K-12 public education structure currently utilize and why?

**Question 3:** What government agencies and public policies does your state department of education follow for racial classifications?

**Theme: Accountability**

**Question 4:** How does your state department of education currently collect student achievement data on K-12 multiracial (which refers to an individual of two or more races) students and subsequently monitor their achievement?

**Theme: Academic Achievement of Multiracial Students**

**Question 5:** How are the K-12 multiracial students currently achieving in academics in your state?

**Question 6:** For the purpose of federal academic accountability regulations such as No Child Left Behind, how does your state department of education classify multiracial students and account for their academic achievement results?

**Theme: Racial Identity**

**Question 7:** Does your state department of education utilize a multiracial category for K-12 students? If so, why? If not, what were the reasons to choose an alternative method of classifying multiracial students?
**Question 8:** Employing the current racial classification system in your state department of education how would a multiracial student be categorized for the purposes of activities such as school registration, CBEDS, and the monitoring of academic achievement?

**Question 9:** How many K-12 multiracial students currently attend schools in your state and what are their educational needs?

**Theme: Documents**

**Question 10:** What written documents, public policies, or archival records does your state department of education utilize as guidelines for the racial classification system used in the past and present?

**Question 11:** What next steps would you recommend for your state department of education with regards to how to addressing the academic needs of multiracial students in your schools?

**Closing Question**

**Question 12:** Is there any information or recommendations you’d like to add that may be beneficial to this research study

(Turn off audiotape)

Do you know anyone else who works in the state department of education who may hold valuable insights regarding this research topic? Could you tell me their name and provide me with their contact information? I certainly would like to listen to any staff member within your state department of education that might be whose professional experience and expertise would provide rich insight into the topic of this research study.

Name: _____________________________

Job Title: ___________________________

Phone #: __________________________

Email: ______________________________
APPENDIX E - North Carolina Department of Education: Sample Subgroup

Composite Scores

Trends in Subgroup Performance, Reading Composite for 3-8

All
Am Ind
Asian
Black
Hispanic
Multiracial
White
Econ Disadvan
LEP
SWD

2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008

20
40
60
80
100


Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia. (1640). *Minutes of the council and general court of colonial Virginia: Punishment for a white man and a black woman who committed fornication, October 1640*. Williamsburg, VA: McIlwaine (ed.).


black and Adolphus who wishes he were. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology, 7*(2), 182-196.


Renn, K. A. (2004). Because the numbers matter: Transforming postsecondary education data on student race and ethnicity to meet the challenges of a changing nation. *Educational Policy, 18*(5), 752-783.


