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# Authority in Cross-Racial Teaching and Learning (Re)considering the Transferability of Warm Demander Approaches

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## Abstract

This article compares a White teacher's approach to authority with that of an African American warm demander. Ethnographic methods and discourse analysis illuminated how an African American teacher grounded her authority with African American students in shared culture, history, and frame of reference. A comparative analysis makes visible what White teachers need to do differently to establish cross-racial authority with African American students, such as prioritize interpersonal relationships, communicate in culturally congruent ways, link care with justice, develop a critical race consciousness, ally with students, and critique curriculum. The article offers a reconceptualization of the warm demander relevant for White teachers.

## Keywords

race, identity, African American students, urban education, White teachers, language, identity, cultural responsiveness, social, urban, culture, subjects

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This article illuminates the critical role race plays in building productive teacher–student authority relationships in classrooms characterized by racial difference. Studying White–Black teacher–student relationships as a particular configuration of racial difference is important for addressing the needs of African American learners, who continue to be underserved and miseducated by U. S. schools (Irvine, 1991; Milner, 2009). Black teachers are underrepresented in the U. S. teaching force, constituting 7.4% of public school teachers in 2008–2009 (U. S. Department of Education). As a result, some schools that serve African American students are unable to capitalize on the significant roles African American teachers play in facilitating the students’ achievement and positive identity development and (Tatum, 1997). Conversely, White teachers are overrepresented in the public schools, comprising 82% of the teaching force (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). This “demographic divide” (Gay, 2010; Milner, 2009) reflects the historical process of so-called integration, whereby Black teachers were pushed out of public schools (Foster, 1997) and segregated African American school communities were dismantled (Siddle Walker, 1996).<sup>1</sup> Recruitment strategies of predominantly White teacher education programs (Irvine, 2003) and teacher selection criteria that skew credentialing in favor of White candidates (Epstein, 2005)<sup>2</sup> perpetuate the demographic divide so that White women dominate the teaching force (Gay & Howard, 2000). Although the racial distribution of teachers and students varies, the fact that many White teachers teach African American students<sup>3</sup> warrants closer attention to teaching and learning across White–Black racial difference.

The roots of the problem in U. S. classrooms for which racial difference is a factor lie in the remnants of segregation, whereby Black and Latino students tend to be concentrated in particular schools and school districts (Kozol, 2005; Orfield & Eaton, 1996). Having grown up and attended schools in segregated majority White communities, most White teachers have had little contact with African Americans prior to assuming teaching positions (Gay & Howard, 2000; Frankenberg, 2006; Sleeter, 2001); as a result, they inhabit different worlds than their students (Gay, 2010). In this situation, racial difference has the potential to manifest itself in classrooms as cultural misunderstandings around behavior, language, and learning styles. These misunderstandings are articulated in terms of a cultural mismatch or lack of cultural synchronization between students and teachers, and they contribute to negative outcomes for African American students (Irvine, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Because of racial difference and its corollary, cultural mismatch, garnering authority to promote African American student learning can be challenging

for White teachers when they hold different conceptions of authority than their students (Delpit, 1995; Obidah & Teel, 2001). These differing conceptions raise questions about the role race plays in building productive authority relationships in classrooms for which racial difference is a factor.

Literature on effective teaching of African American students suggests that teachers earn their authority through assertive discipline, caring relationships, and congruent interactional styles (Cooper, 2003; Delpit, 1995; Obidah & Teel, 2001). The image of the teacher as “warm demander” (Kleinfeld, 1975), who “provides a tough-minded, no-nonsense, structured, and disciplined classroom environment” (Irvine & Fraser, 1998, p. 1), permeates the literature (Bondy, Ross, Galligane & Hambacher, 2007; Monroe, 2009; Monroe & Obidah, 2004; Patterson, Mickelson, Hester, and Wyrick, 2011; Ware, 2006). Yet the warm demanders’ approach to authority with their students is grounded in their shared race, history, and culture (Irvine & Fraser, 1998; Ware, 2006). This approach warrants consideration of how and under what circumstances culturally specific moves might also be productive for White teachers of African American students.

Drawing from case studies of classroom interaction by both its authors, this article describes how two teachers, one White and one African American, built productive relationships and learning environments with their African American students in their high school English classrooms. A comparative analysis of these two teachers’ culturally specific strategies with warm demander approaches to authority highlights the role race and racial difference can play in teacher–student authority relations. This study’s analysis makes visible the critical difference race makes in cross-racial, White–Black teaching and learning.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### *The Difference Racial Difference Makes*

Teachers’ conceptions of authority are influenced by race. Cooper’s (2002; 2003) research on effective White teachers suggested that although Black teachers and some White teachers are comfortable in their authoritative roles as warm demanders, in general, White teachers seem less willing to directly assert authority. Echoing this distinction, Dickar (2008) described how, at a predominantly Black high school, Black educators raised questions about White teachers’ classroom practices, including modes of dress and disciplinary strategies, which they felt diminished teacher authority. The White teachers defended their practices as democratic and as promoting student

autonomy and agency. These debates warranted Dickar's (2008) speculation that, "Teacher authority may be very much informed by race, with White and Black teachers preferring different strategies to establish that authority" (p. 10). The distinction between how Black teachers and White teachers conceive of and practice authority indicates that more research is needed to tease apart these differences in order to learn how the culturally specific practices of African American educators can be replicated effectively by White teachers.

The gap between White teachers' and Black students' understandings of authority is equally significant. White teachers tend to rely on authority conferred by their institutional role as teacher (Obidah & Teel, 2001). This conception of authority is incongruent with that of Black students, who view authority as earned by personal efforts and traits. Black students expect teachers to earn their respect and trust over time by establishing meaningful relationships and incorporating features of Black communication in classroom interaction (Delpit, 1995). To illustrate, Obidah and Teel (2001) depicted the challenges Teel, a White teacher, faced in garnering authority from African American students. Teel explained how she expected students to automatically pay attention to her, show her respect, sit quietly, and follow her directions without complaint. With guidance from Obidah, an African American teacher educator, Teel learned that she could not presume her authority, but had to earn her students' respect and trust by raising her expectations, being more authoritative and assertive, and following through with consequences for misbehavior. Building respectful and trusting relationships with Black students may be challenging for White teachers because they have to overcome the experiences with, and perceptions about, White people that the students may have (Howard, 2006). Such relationships, however, are essential because they are often a precursor to learning (Irvine, 1991).

This is not to say that all members of racial groups will necessarily hold the racialized conceptions of authority we have outlined. Doing so would unjustly homogenize White teachers as well as Black teachers and students, and it would obscure diversity within groups (Lowenstein, 2009; O'Connor, Lewis, & Mueller, 2007). Yet to ignore how race influences classroom authority relationships would render cultural incongruence inconsequential, invalidate the particular challenges teachers and students face in classrooms characterized by racial difference, and elide how the institutionalized demographic divide shapes schooling experiences. To bring the implications of racial difference to light, we align our work with the tradition of research that portrays race as shared culture (O'Connor, Lewis, & Mueller, 2007), that is, as shared knowledge, customs, values, language, norms, and behaviors

(Irvine, 1991) that shape frames of reference and experiences (Irvine, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994).<sup>4</sup> While this concept of race as culture undergirds our analysis of “White” and “Black” teachers’ approaches to authority, we strive to make visible the points at which the teachers’ strategies complicate such racial classification, particularly as they relate to the warm demander’s approach.

### *The Warm Demander’s Approach to Authority*

Initially used to describe an effective teacher of Athabaskan Indian and Eskimo students in Alaskan schools (Kleinfeld, 1975), the warm demander’s approach to authority is considered to be culturally responsive classroom management for racially diverse students in urban (Brown, 2004) and high-poverty (Bondy & Ross, 2008) schools and, particularly, for African American students (Bondy et al., 2007; Howard, 2001; Irvine & Fraser, 1998; Ware, 2006). The warm demander balances discipline and care to provide a highly structured learning environment (Bondy & Ross, 2008). Warm demanders demand or insist that students meet high expectations without excuses, (Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ware, 2006), and they employ a direct discourse style, “mean-talk,” and other culturally specific communicative practices, often repeating requests and delivering warnings and consequences, to convey these expectations and discipline their students (Bondy et al. 2007; Brown, 2004; Ware, 2006). The warmth of the warm demander is often conveyed through an ethic of care and “other-mothering,” a term with cultural roots in a West African tradition whereby women care communally for children (Ware, 2002). A critical characteristic of other-mothering, which distinguishes it from surrogate parenting, is an expanded conception of care that extends beyond the individual child to include care for the African American community (Irvine, 2002). These caring relationships complement warm demanders’ insistence that their students achieve high expectations. Balancing warmth with demand enables them to establish culturally responsive authority relationships that promote teaching and learning with their African American students.

While the authority of the warm demander is constructed through a confluence of care, discipline, high expectations, and a congruent interactional style, the warm demander’s broader stance is grounded in the shared culture of African Americans. The warm demander in Irvine & Fraser’s (1998) characterization “teaches her African-American students with a sense of passion and mission based in the African-American cultural traditions and history she shares with her students” (p. 1). Ware (2006) found that warm demanders’

strong racial identity and pride served as a foundation upon which their relationships with African American students were built, reflecting a “cultural transmission of beliefs that exceeds generations” (p. 451). Such “racial uplift” has been central for African American educators who pass down culturally grounded knowledge, history, and values through generations (Irvine, 2002). With their situated and culturally specific pedagogies, African American teachers have fulfilled powerful roles in their community, serving as cultural translators, mediators, mentors, advocates, and surrogate parents (Irvine, 2003) as well as counselors, benefactors, encouragers, and racial cheerleaders who promote pride in the race (Siddle Walker & Thompkins, 2004). The warm demander’s stance derives from these multiple roles that support the success of African American students.

Studying the culturally specific practices of Black teachers can expand all teachers’ repertoires, but it is especially critical for White teachers entering urban, racially diverse, or predominantly African American contexts. White teachers can be effective for African American students (Cooper, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Parsons, 2005), and some have suggested that teachers of any race could replicate the practices of effective Black teachers, provided they examine their assumptions about their African American students and reflect on how those assumptions impact teaching and learning (Howard, 2001).<sup>5</sup> However, because some of those practices, including warm demander approaches to authority, are grounded in shared African American culture and values (Howard, 2001), it is important to examine the degree to which they are conceivable and effective for teachers from other backgrounds. Bondy and colleagues’ (2007) study of three elementary teachers indicated that even though teachers’ cultures and styles may vary, Asian and White teachers *can* be effective as warm demanders. Yet what remains to be examined is how a teacher’s race figures in building warm demander authority relationships: What does a White teacher need to do differently to be a warm demander? Exploring the transferability of the warm demander’s approach to authority across different classroom contexts with close attention to the nuances of race could illuminate its potential application in classrooms for which White–Black racial difference is a factor.

### *Authority*

While literature on effective African American teachers offers clear prescriptions for, and descriptions of, their authoritative approach, less attention has been paid to theorizing authority in a way that aligns with African American educators’ culturally specific pedagogy. In its most basic sense, authority

may be defined as legitimate power (Pace & Hemmings, 2006), and at the heart of teachers' and students' differing conceptions of authority is the question of what constitutes legitimacy in the classroom. Pace (2003) claims that "classroom authority expresses the legitimacy of teachers' directives and their connection to the school's responsibility to educate students for individual and social good" (p. 1560). This definition links authority to the role of the teacher, which is understood by White teachers as granted by the institution (Delpit, 1995; Obidah & Teel, 2001) and by African American teachers and students as conferred by the community (Irvine, 2003).

Race may also serve as a source of authority, functioning as symbolic capital that enhances a person's status in a particular context (O'Connor, Lewis, & Mueller, 2007). African American warm demanders' race can operate as capital as they draw on the cultural practices, history, values, and traditions they share with their students. Even though over time it is the individual teacher's style that will enable him to create a productive learning environment, teachers who share the same race as their students may have, at the outset, advantages over teachers teaching across racial difference (Milner & Tenore, 2010).<sup>6</sup> For African American women who act authoritatively, there may be little distinction between power and authority so that their power comes "naturally" to them, that is, "Power that is socially constructed is socially legitimated" (Noblit, 1993, p. 37). This authoritative approach is marked by an ethical use of power or a moral authority that stems from a teacher's willingness to create a productive learning environment (Noblit, 1993).<sup>7</sup> Operating as symbolic capital, White privilege—the unearned but accrued advantage from being a member of the dominant racial group (Lewis, 2004)—can translate into classroom authority through the embodiment of the teacher. Without earning authority, a White teacher may, by default, rely on their White privilege accrued from beyond the classroom. Because even with the best intentions, White teachers are prone to replicating White power and privilege (Hyland, 2005; Milner, 2006; Tyson, 2003), a conception of authority as socially constructed (Pace & Hemmings, 2006) is critical for classrooms characterized by White–Black racial difference.

When earning authority, a teacher's legitimacy rests on students' consent. This conception of authority is socially negotiated and legitimated over time through moment-to-moment interactions that simultaneously reflect and construct a teacher's authority. Because what constitutes legitimacy varies according to context, authority is shaped by multiple, interacting influences, including different perspectives on educational purposes, values, and norms, as well as policy and bureaucratic mandates (Pace & Hemmings, 2006). Studies of authority have considered standardized tests, racial demographics,



and school culture as features that influence classroom authority (Pace & Hemmings, 2006; Pace, 2003, 2006; Wills, 2006). We describe these features of the two teachers' classrooms we studied in order to contextualize how the teachers and students in our case studies built authority relationships through classroom interaction.

## The Case Studies

The case studies presented here are drawn from two distinct, empirical studies of classroom interaction that examined issues of race, culture, and authority. As White women researchers, exploring these issues made it vital for us to see through our "cultural eyes" (Irvine, 2003), that is, to interrogate how our perspectives, questions, methods, and interpretation were shaped by our values, beliefs, and experiences, as well as how they were informed by our race, gender, and other identities. This was an ongoing endeavor that began at the inception of our studies. Both of us brought to the research process experiences as secondary English teachers: Ford in a racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse urban high school and Sassi in a school with a large population of Alaska Native students, who were not adequately represented in the curriculum. Our experiences informed both the way we located problems in cultural misunderstanding and mismatch and the way we sought solutions in teacher–student relationships and interactions around language and literature. Our parallel lines of inquiry, combined with the teachers' qualities within the different school contexts, make the comparison of our two case studies methodologically warranted. Our intent with this comparison is to describe the differences between the two teachers' approaches by situating them in their respective racial contexts to illuminate the particular challenges associated with cross-racial teaching and learning.

### *Teacher Selection: Ms. Turner and Ms. Cross*

Irvine (2003) beseeched researchers, most of whom are White, to look through their "third eye" to see African American teaching and learning through the cultural eyes of African American teachers. Studying the pedagogy of African American teachers is critical because their voices have been silenced and marginalized, leading to portrayals of African American students and teachers as deficient (Foster, 1997; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Siddle Walker, 1996). The case of Ms. Turner, an African American, female English teacher, comes from a study in a racially diverse, medium-sized suburban high school, "Rainfield High." Ms. Turner was a graduate

student in the same program as the researcher, and she volunteered for the study, which centered on the teaching of Native American/American Indian Literature by non-Native teachers. While initial research questions inquired about pedagogical approaches to bridge the “understanding gap” between such literature and non-Native teachers and students, after Ms. Turner began teaching the unit, she revealed to the class that she had some Native American ancestry, although she continued to identify herself as African American.<sup>8</sup> Grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) unearthed race and authority as critical issues in Ms. Turner’s classroom, and codes emerged through the analytical process that pointed to the dimensions of her culturally grounded authority. Eager to participate in the study, Ms. Turner played a central role in a collaborative research process in which decisions about representation and “meaning [were] negotiated through a reciprocal process of discussion and mutual respect” (Irvine, 2003). Her perspective as an African American teacher was validated through a mentoring relationship that became a critical facet of the research methodology (Sassi & Thomas, 2013).

The selected White teacher, Ms. Cross, was discovered through “chain sampling,” which entails identifying information-rich cases through referrals by knowledgeable people (Patton, 2002). An African American superintendent of a predominantly Black, suburban district, referred Ms. Cross, a White, female English teacher at “Metro High” for the study because she had a reputation for establishing positive relationships with African American students, what he called the “It Factor,” a mysteriously tacit ability to make connections across racial difference. Focus group interviews with 22 of Ms. Cross’s students, all of whom identified as Black or African American, pointed to the existence of the It Factor—all described Ms. Cross in various ways as a good teacher. Six students called Ms. Cross their favorite teacher, and two said she was the best they had ever had.<sup>9</sup> These focus groups with students confirmed that Ms. Cross represented an information-rich case for studying ways in which White teachers can build productive relationships with African American students. Ms. Cross was nominated by an African American superintendent and affirmed by African American students.

### *Ethnographic Methods: The School Contexts of Rainfield High and Metro High*

Ethnographic methods of observations and interviews revealed the multiple, distinct contextual features that influenced Ms. Turner and Ms. Cross’s authority relationships with students at Rainfield and Metro High. Each researcher served as a daily participant-observer for four months in her

respective classroom and recorded her observations in detailed field notes following the model of Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995). Our sustained presence in the classrooms allowed us to establish rapport with participants and understand classroom interactions in terms of how they were significant for the teachers and students. Interviews were used to gain greater understanding of the interactional context (Weiss, 1994). Ms. Turner was interviewed face-to-face 14 times and engaged in extensive e-mail correspondence and daily informal conversations with the researcher. Ten formal interviews were conducted with Ms. Cross in addition to informal conversations. Although students at both sites were also interviewed, the present work highlights the perspectives of the teachers. These empirical methods of observation and interview illuminated the significance of the racial context, curriculum, federal and state policies, school culture, and the teachers' beliefs about the purpose of education for teacher–student authority relations.

During the time of the study, Ms. Turner frequently discussed the racial tension at Rainfield High as the school district struggled to address its racial achievement gap (Sassi & Thomas, 2008). In this context, Ms. Turner's decision to teach a Native American text, *Wynema* by Callahan and Ruoff (1891), in her untracked ninth grade English class represented a courageous move. As the first text by a Native American woman, *Wynema* embodied the roots of U. S. racial strife portrayed against the backdrop of Native American genocide. As a lifelong learner with a social justice orientation, Turner, who had not previously taught Native American literature, saw an opportunity both to extend her own learning of American Indian history and culture and to diversify the curriculum at her school. She took on the challenge of facilitating racially loaded discussions in a racially heterogeneous school district amidst a school culture that was characterized by racial tension. In Ms. Turner's classroom of 21 students, one third identified as Black and two thirds as White, with one of the White students also self-identifying as part Hispanic.

While Rainfield grappled with a racial achievement gap within the school, the 98% Black Metro High struggled to raise achievement in relation to other schools. Teachers, administrators, and students felt the pressure imposed by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the state Department of Education to raise test scores. Metro High had not made Annual Yearly Progress for the third year in a row and was in the initial phase of intervention. If test scores were not substantially improved, the school faced repercussions. Ms. Cross was well aware of these sanctions: "I don't want to lose my job because the school closes. I don't want the state to take over the district like they did in [Inner City]. I don't want my kids to lose their school. That's what no one thinks

about: Where do the *kids* go if they close the school?” Metro was a school of choice, and half of its students lived in the surrounding suburb, while the other half commuted 40 minutes from the Inner City because Metro High had a reputation for providing a high quality, structured learning environment for African American students. Ms. Cross was also concerned about how the public and media perceived the school’s test scores, and she did not want Metro to be labeled “failing.” The test consisted of a college entrance exam and other multiple choice tests, and if students completed and passed all components of the test, they were eligible for a state-sponsored scholarship, increasing their opportunities for future educational attainment. Ms. Cross’s concern for students’ achievement on the test reflected her care and devotion to her job, the district, the school, and especially the students of Metro High.

Ms. Cross felt immense pressure to raise students’ test scores, and she firmly believed that with solid instruction, her students’ scores would improve. These beliefs were displayed in her 11th grade general English<sup>10</sup> curriculum, which included extensive test preparation, and in her classroom discourse as she challenged her students to defy stereotypes that Black kids perform poorly on standardized tests. Yet Ms. Cross was ambivalent about the value of the test as curriculum,<sup>11</sup> and she perceived that her authority to make decisions about what to teach was limited due to the pressure to perform on the test.<sup>12</sup>

### *Discourse Analysis: Language-Rich Classroom Interaction*

Our ethnographic observations confirmed that Ms. Turner and Ms. Cross’s classrooms were language-rich classrooms for studying interaction. In order to make visible the process by which authority was socially constructed in classroom interaction, we used discourse analysis, which highlights issues of equity and access in literacy instruction (Rex et al., 2010). Our ethnographically grounded approach to discourse analysis (Gee & Green, 1998) took into account not only the reflective power of language, but also its constitutive power. This approach to discourse analysis is rooted in the linguistic turn in the social sciences, which highlights how language is used to socially construct, or “discourse into being,” everyday life, relationships, power relations, knowledge, social institutions, and realities (Bloome et al., 2008). Employing this approach in our analyses enabled us to illuminate how authority was discursively constructed into being through teachers’ and students’ classroom talk.

To collect data for discourse analysis, we video recorded and transcribed classroom interaction, although the scope and intensity of our

projects differed. Sassi collected 75 hours of video data, transcribing selected episodes of classroom discourse that illuminated how authority relationships evolved over time. Ford collected and transcribed 12 hours of video data that focused on the Native American literature unit. Through our respective ethnographically grounded analyses of classroom discourse, teachers' patterns of language use were made visible as we studied what participants said and how they said it. The four episodes of classroom interaction featured herein were selected because they are representative of patterns that illustrate how the teachers used language to build relationships with African American students in distinct ways. Using classroom discourse as a point of comparison makes visible the difference racial difference can make in classrooms with African American students, especially when issues of race are raised.

Informed by a critical approach to discourse analysis that aims to illuminate "the non-obvious ways in which language is involved in social relations of power and domination" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 229), we employed positioning theory (Harre & Slocum, 2003) as an analytic tool for studying classroom authority. Positioning theory enabled us to examine how participants located themselves and each other in terms of power relations and identities. In our analysis, we noted teachers' use of pronouns, dialect and register, and tonal contouring to show how participants established solidarity with each other or met with conflict as they negotiated authority, and aligned or distanced themselves and each other in relation to racial group membership and within a racial hierarchy. We triangulated our discourse analyses with participants' perspectives gleaned through interviews and observational field notes so that what teachers said could be understood in the context of their broader stance toward teaching African American students.

## **Between Black and White: A Comparative Analysis of Two Teachers' Approaches to Authority**

In the case of Ms. Turner, we offer a portrayal of an African American warm demander with attention to how her authority is constructed through shared language, experience, and history. In the case of Ms. Cross, we illuminate the challenges she faced as a White teacher in garnering authority from African American students and how she grappled with, and overcame, some of those challenges. Comparing the cases of Ms. Turner and Ms. Cross makes visible the role race plays in building authority relationships with African American students.

We spotlight the voices of the two teachers to contextualize and explain the featured episodes of interaction, as well as their beliefs about the purpose of education, race, and approaches to authority. Because the purpose of this analysis is to describe what White teachers might need to do differently to effectively employ the warm demander's stance, we devote particular attention to the beliefs and values that undergird Ms. Cross's approach to authority in the African American context of Metro High.

### *Ms. Turner: An African American Warm Demander*

*Shared language.* Ms. Turner employed a variety of tactics to work successfully with all of her students—White, African American, and Hispanic. Her direct, no-nonsense discourse style fit the model of the warm demander. She acknowledged that she mean-talked students, and like other warm demanders who show a humanitarian concern for their students' well-being, felt the need to apologize for her authoritarian tone (Ware, 2006).<sup>13</sup> Although Ms. Turner usually spoke standard English in her predominantly White classroom, she strategically employed African American English (AAE; Green, 2002) as needed to connect with African American students. This pattern is illustrated in the following episode of classroom interaction in which Ms. Turner employed AAE to redirect an African American female's attention to class activities:

Ms. Turner: Girl, put those away.

Keanna: I am.

Ms. Turner: OK, don't go "I am." Just do it {chuckles}. Don't have to be no fight.

{Keanna put her things away.}

Addressing the student as "girl," the use of double negatives, and subject/verb disagreement mark this exchange as that of a racialized dialect, AAE. The imperatives "put," "don't," and "do" indicate the direct discourse that characterizes the warm demander. Ms. Turner's invocation of their shared identity as females ("girl") prompted intimacy while her chuckle combined with the statement, "Don't have to be no fight" conveyed the warmth of the warm demander and minimized the potential for real confrontation. As a result, Keanna acquiesced to Ms. Turner's demand, authorizing her teacher to shape her behavior.

As displayed in this interaction, Ms. Turner demonstrated her command of AAE. Using this culturally congruent communication represented one way

Ms. Turner garnered authority grounded in cultural legitimacy, establishing her as a warm demander.

*Shared history, experience, and frame of reference.* In addition to shared language, Ms. Turner referenced shared race with her African American students to legitimize her authority. In the following interaction, Ms. Turner modeled a critical race consciousness, an understanding of “the historical and current impact that racism has in perpetuating social inequality” as well as “the asymmetrical power relationships that exist between Blacks and Whites in America” (Carter, 2008, p. 14). Ms. Turner grounded this critical race consciousness in the frame of reference she shared with Lyric, an African American male. While researching the topic of Wounded Knee in the school library, Lyric indicated that he was having trouble finding sources. Ms. Turner encouraged Lyric to think critically about why he could not find information on Wounded Knee in history books.

Ms. Turner: OK. Lyric, are you finding what you need? You’re not?  
There’s nothing about the Indian Wars in that book? Really? Have you checked the index?

Lyric: Yes.

Ms. Turner: That’s really interesting. [. . .] One of the things that you can say about that in your research is this: think about the reasons why it’s not in the book about Indian Wars. This is an event so terrible. Was this Wounded Knee? Why is it on on-line, but not in history books published [. . .] You know, go get the Indian Wars book back because this may be interesting. Sometimes research isn’t just about what you find. It’s about what they don’t put in books. You know, as a young African American man, that’s something that you probably can relate to, and I can relate to, right? So they don’t write down everything that happens in the books. [. . .] Oh, this is fascinating.

Warm demanders maintain high expectations for students’ learning (Irvine, 2003), and Ms. Turner effectively insisted that Lyric think with her about what is included and excluded from history books. Her insistence was mediated by her warmth as a warm demander conveyed through her positioning of Lyric as a coinvestigator: Twice she said “Let’s,” emphasizing the first person plural, and she characterized their work together as “fascinating.” As a warm demander, she modeled for Lyric a way of critically thinking about the authority of printed texts.

To model this critical thinking, Ms. Turner engaged in a critique of curriculum. Her authority was constructed as she aligned herself with Lyric “as

a young African American man” by suggesting that they both can “relate” to things being left out of history books. The unspoken assumption here was that Lyric understands, as Ms. Turner does, that much of African American history has been suppressed in history books. Significantly, she distances herself from authors of the books in the school library, saying it is “they” who don’t write everything that happens in the books. By using this pronoun, Ms. Turner expressly rejected the kind of legitimacy she might claim by aligning herself with the institution of schooling, constructing instead her legitimacy as an African American who shares the experience of marginalization with her student Lyric and other oppressed peoples, like Native Americans. It is in such alignment around shared racial history, experience, and frame of reference that the legitimacy of the warm demander is constituted.

This discursively constructed authority positioned Ms. Turner as a mentor or guide for her African American students as they encountered racial oppression in their study of Native American literature and history. In doing so, she modeled a critical race consciousness that connected Native American genocide with racism toward African Americans and enacted a kind of moral authority. Her comment, “This was an event so terrible,” implied a moral judgment on those who would commit such atrocities as well as on authors who would leave out such terrible events from their history books. As she enacted this moral authority grounded in a shared frame of reference, she transmitted culturally grounded values, simultaneously constituting herself as a warm demander and Lyric as a student with the power to critique racist curriculum.

*Beliefs about the purpose of education.* Ms. Turner’s interaction with Lyric represents the enactment of her beliefs about the purpose of teaching and learning: cultivating students’ critical race consciousness. Ms. Turner believed that it was important to foster students’ understanding of racialized power relations, both in terms of historical events and how they are represented in texts: “I want kids to begin to question why our history is taught the way that it is . . . I really want to scaffold [their learning] with historical texts, primary source material [ . . . ] because kids really need to think about their conception of the way the country was born.” Ms. Turner’s attention to power dynamics that determine who gets to tell the histories and how they are told applied to the interrogation of White privilege for White students and the multiple histories of oppressed peoples—she drew connections for her students between African American slavery, Native American genocide, and the Jewish Holocaust (Sassi & Thomas, 2008). Her goals of fostering students’ critical race consciousness served as the foundation of Ms. Turner’s legitimacy as a warm demander who draws on shared language, history, and experience



to constitute a shared frame for the advancement of the African American community and all people of color. The case of Ms. Turner offers a portrayal of a warm demander that serves as a catalyst for considering how African American teachers' culturally specific approaches might be applicable for White teachers of African American students.

### *Ms. Cross: A White Teacher With the "It Factor"*

*Limitations of being mean and other-mothering.* Comparing the case of Ms. Cross to Ms. Turner illuminates the subtle but critical importance of cross-racial communication in building authority relationships with African American students. Echoing aforementioned literature (Cooper, 2002; 2003; Delpit, 1995; Dickar, 2008), Ms. Cross explained how establishing authority with students at the predominantly Black Metro High presented a challenge for all teachers, but how the strategies she employed to garner authority as a White teacher needed to differ in significant ways from those of her Black colleagues, who recommended she approach authority in the classroom by "going hard" on students, a phrase associated with how effective Black teachers of Black children approach their authority (Cooper, 2002). Ms. Cross narrated

Yeah, when I first started teaching here—it's not just me, it's any classes that I see here—it's very difficult to get through to these students, to get them to sit down and pay attention to you, [to convey to them] that you mean business. They [Black colleagues] tell you when you first get here, "You have to be grouchy. You can't be their friend." [. . .] And it took me not very long to realize that as a White teacher, "going hard on them," like they like to say, and being mean to them is to totally turn them away. Completely turn them away [. . .] Like, "Here's this White person who's gonna boss me around. *My mama* don't boss me around like you, let alone a *White* person do it." So you know, that's difficult, and there had to be a way to get by that.

Ms. Cross explained how she found "going hard" on her Black students and "being mean to them" problematic. Yet these are precisely the qualities admired in effective African American teachers, such as Ms. Turner, for whom "being hard" reflects the high expectations African American teachers hold for their students (Siddle Walker, 1996) and "being mean" signifies caring (Foster, 1991). Employing such a demanding approach was ineffective for her as a White teacher because of her race. She noted that students very

explicitly distinguished her from their mamas, distancing her from the role of surrogate parent and precluding her from employing a style that involved “going hard” and “being mean” to convey high expectations and care for students, a style which stems from a tradition of African American parenting (Delpit, 1995; Ware, 2006). So how did Ms. Cross “get by that” and build productive authority relationships with African American students?

*Culturally congruent communication.* As an alternative to the direct discourse style or “mean talk” employed by warm demanders, Ms. Cross frequently employed indirection, a form of Signifying, to convey her expectations for students’ behavior (Ford, 2013). Signifying is understood as a discourse genre particular to the African American community that relies on indirection and wit to make a commentary on someone’s behavior (Smitherman, 1977). Like Ms. Turner, Ms. Cross used a culturally specific, African American discourse practice, but without the grammatical features of AAE. What made her discourse distinguishable as Signifying was the prosody and dramatic intonation frequently associated with Black speech (Green, 2002). These qualities of her discourse are highlighted by accents that mark emphasis and arrows that indicate tonal variations in the following illustrative transcript of classroom interaction.

- Ms. Cross: OK. So w<sup>h</sup>át-cán-you-do to incréase your réading speed?  
 {Cindy is looking in a pocket mirror and patting her hair back from her face.}
- Ms. Cross {aside to Cindy}: You look beau:utiful, dár↑lin↓  
 {Cindy smiles as she looks down and slides her mirror into her bag.}
- Ms. Cross {to the class}: Tera?
- Tera: Look for the main ideas

In this interaction, the warmth of the warm demander was conveyed through the compliment, “You look beautiful” and the term of endearment, “darlin’.” However, embedded in Ms. Cross’s compliment was an insistence that Cindy meet her behavioral expectations by putting the mirror away and paying attention. It was also Ms. Cross’s tone that conveyed this demand to Cindy. Ms. Cross exaggerated the long “u” sound in “beautiful,” and the tone of “darlin’” was infused with dramatic variation. Distinguished from sarcasm by the aural qualities of Black speech, this form of Signifying was an example of a “left-handed compliment” (Mitchell-Kernan, 1972), which is used to convey a negative commentary within a complimentary remark. Ms. Cross’s use of indirection in the form of a left-handed compliment allowed Cindy to respond to the warm, flattering message, while heeding the commentary

on her unacceptable behavior. Because when Signifying, a speaker's intention is subject to interpretation, this left-handed compliment afforded both Ms. Cross and Cindy the option of avoiding a real confrontation. Ms. Cross warmly demanded that Cindy put away the mirror and direct her attention to the class activity, and as she complied, Cindy authorized her teacher to shape her behavior, constituting Ms. Cross's legitimacy.

*Raising race across racial difference.* Whereas Ms. Turner could rely on a shared racial frame of reference to address issues of race with her African American students, Ms. Cross recognized that as a White teacher, she had to find another way. She explained how it was vital for her to construct positive, trusting relationships with her African American students across their racial difference before they would authorize her to "teach the tests" and discuss race:

I'm able to say things [about racism] that are true that people don't like to hear in the classroom and [. . .] get them to agree and see it. There's no way I'd be able to teach the tests and subjects people don't like to talk about. There have been times, I'm like, "You know, I hate to say this, but I can say this because you guys know me: this is what people see." It's a touchy subject. They accept it from me and they learn, whereas from another teacher who might not have built that relationship, they'll just view him as "whatever" and they'll just see him as being White and prejudiced, that he doesn't like Black kids anyway.

Addressing issues of race in the classroom required Ms. Cross to overcome the obstacle presented by racial difference. She had to both allow students to get to know her and convince them that she liked them as Black kids. In turn, students authorized her to talk about race: Her warmth warranted her demand that students listen to what she had to say about race, despite her White identity.

*Beliefs about the purpose of education.* One issue of race Ms. Cross raised involved the racial politics surrounding the standardized test. Both Ms. Cross and students were struggling to raise their test scores under the pressure of NCLB and the state's system of rewards and sanctions. Ms. Cross felt that if race were a factor in some students not fully applying themselves to the test, then openly discussing it might motivate them to meet her high expectations: "I'm trying in as many ways as I can to motivate the kids to do well, to try to get them to think of it as just not any other test. [. . .] Maybe these ten students have a big issue on race and don't like feeling that people think obviously they can't do it." Ms. Cross's purpose in raising the issue of race in this

instance was to motivate students to defy society's expectations that they would not perform well.

To explore the possibility that the test was racially biased, Ms. Cross designed a daylong lesson with a homework assignment to draft a letter to a government official in which the students explained their view on the test. After leading the students through a series of writing and talking activities to ascertain their views, Ms. Cross facilitated a conversation about the ways the test may be biased. The class discussion culminated with call-and-response, an African American rhetorical strategy often used to construct solidarity whereby a speaker calls and a listener responds in an affirming or encouraging way (Smitherman, 1977). Although at first students' responses varied, gradually more and more students responded in chorus:

Ms. Cross: Where does the test come from? Who writes the test?

Students: [Iowa.] [People in Iowa.]

Ms. Cross: Who is the test written for?

Student: The majority.

Ms. Cross: Who is the majority?

Students {in chorus}: White people.

Ms. Cross: Who does better on the test?

Students {in chorus}: White people.

Ms. Cross: One of the big questions is whether that's intentional or not.

Ms. Cross: What do people *expect* you to do on the test?

Students {in chorus}: Fail

Ms. Cross: But what *are* you gonna do?

Students {in chorus}: [Pass]

Calvin: [Fail]

{Ms. Cross scolds Calvin in front of the class; Calvin sits with his head down. The bell rings, dismissing class.}

Ms. Cross {to me}: I hate being mean to kids. {Sighs} I have to go find Calvin.

By raising the possibility that the test may be biased against them, Ms. Cross challenged students to defy society's expectations that they would "fail," insisting instead that they meet *her* expectations, rise to their potential, and "pass" the test, which was Ms. Cross's primary goal in raising the issue of race in this lesson.

*Allying with students against racism.* By having this conversation with students, Ms. Cross aligned herself with them against the forces imposing the test and its associated preparation and pressure. She made visible the

machinations of racial oppression by outing “White people” as having a stake in orchestrating a test on which they could succeed more easily than Black students. In doing so, she positioned herself as a White ally with students in resisting societal racial oppression, legitimizing her authority in this moment through a political alliance.

However, this alliance was short lived because once it was established that “White people” created the racially biased test, the racial difference between students and teacher came to the foreground. If the test were racially biased, and Ms. Cross demanded that they do well on it, then she was perpetuating the legitimacy of a racist test. Her allegiance was ambiguous, and she was no longer trustworthy. The alliance further breaks down when Ms. Cross boiled the issue down to intentionality saying that “one of the big questions is whether that’s [the racial bias is] intentional or not.” This sentence offered Ms. Cross inoculation, letting White people, including herself, off the hook if they don’t *intend* to be racist. Intentional or not, racism in the education system has a profound effect on students’ lives, and without a shared frame of reference, Ms. Cross missed an opportunity to convey a moral stance condemning racism and the imposition of the racially biased test. This prevented her from fully aligning herself with her students, and as a result, in this moment, the legitimacy of her authority was complicated by racial difference.

*Racial safety in the context of difference.* Despite her intentions, addressing the issue of racial bias held the potential to undermine Ms. Cross’s instructional goals. If students perceived the test as racially biased and acknowledged that they were not expected to do well because of their race, they could internalize low expectations. By explaining what she meant by “being mean to kids,” Ms. Cross demonstrated a humanitarian concern about the degree to which students felt racially safe in her classroom. She described how this discussion about race was “about a deeper, more serious issue” that made it different from the usual way she “lay(s) into them” to convey her high expectations for students’ achievement:

I felt like I was being mean because they left feeling dejected, I made them feel bad [. . .] It was about a deeper more serious issue, too. Usually when I lay into them it will be quick: mostly about their grades and not performing. And now I went kind of deeper. I think at that point, I may have touched some of them. But what made me feel like I was being mean [. . .] was because I wasn’t able to lift them back up. As I said, they left feeling dejected. It was a pretty somber atmosphere

when it was all said and done, and they had to leave. That prompted me to think I was being mean to them.

In delimiting what counts as “being mean” to students, Ms. Cross made visible why the warm demander’s “mean talk” needs to be mitigated by care for her students. To Ms. Cross, bringing up the issue of the test being racially biased was not mean, nor was it mean to engage the students’ emotions around issues of race, especially to motivate them to achieve academically. What *was* mean was that she did not have the opportunity to “lift them back up,” to verbalize their emotion, to ease the tension, to come to a resolution about how to approach the problem of racial bias in the test. To Ms. Cross her insistence did not feel *warmly* demanded, and as a result, the discussion about race ended in discomfort and dejection rather than empowerment and motivation.

Ms. Cross acknowledged that discussing the racial politics of the test was a hard discussion to have with students. She reflected, “Perhaps they were uncomfortable. Perhaps they didn’t want to discuss it at that point.” What went unspoken was how Ms. Cross’s Whiteness may have contributed to the tension.

*Repairing interpersonal relationships.* One of Ms. Cross’s strategies to building relationships was repairing with students with whom she had a conflict. After Calvin responded unexpectedly to her call, Ms. Cross sought him out, saying, “I hate being mean to kids. I have to go find Calvin.” In doing so, she demonstrated a preference for addressing conflict over avoiding confrontation, a communication style attributed more to African American culture than to White (Kochman, 1981; Obidah & Teel, 2001). Ms. Cross described her approach to such interpersonal repair as she narrated her interaction with Calvin:

I found him in the lunchroom and I called him outside. He saw me and had that smile on his face that he always has constantly glued to his face. Called him out in the hall on the side and I asked him—like when I get on the kids I’ll let them, “Take a break,” and I go and grab that child and ask him, like I do every child, I ask them, “Do you know why I acted like that toward you like I did?” If they know, they’ll say yes or no. So I can get a feel toward them—He said no. I explained to him about the fact it was a serious topic and it was OK and I thought people were grasping the point and here it comes: a joke. And you laughed, and that just blew my whole point. I asked him, “Did you say that for a reason? Were you joking around? Did you say it because you wanted

to change the subject? Or what?" He said, "I was just joking around." According to him, he was just joking around. OK. We came to an agreement.

Rather than view Calvin's inappropriate response as an affront to her authority, Ms. Cross sought to repair their relationship. Her narration of the interaction with Calvin is characterized more by warmth than demand. What was important to Ms. Cross was that Calvin understood why she reproached him, that he had a chance to explain his behavior, and that he did not feel unjustly reprimanded. Calvin's account of this interaction correlated with Ms. Cross's: He said that he learned to take the test more seriously and that he and Ms. Cross were "cool" because she came to talk with him about the incident, effectively apologizing for her mean talk.

Repairing with Calvin was significant for the class's learning environment: Their relationship served as a kind of barometer. The next day, Calvin and Ms. Cross greeted each other, and the class felt warm and productive as it usually did. A larger number of students than usual completed the homework assignment, suggesting that despite the racial tension, students were engaged in the subject of race as it impacted their schooling. Students' letters to governmental officials conveyed various arguments that the test and its effects were racially biased, yet these arguments remained unexplored in classroom interaction, and the issue was not raised again in the researcher's daily, extended presence.

## Seeing Eye to Eye

Illuminating the significance of these case studies requires situating the analysis of Ms. Turner and Ms. Cross within warm demander approaches that were conceptualized through studies of effective Black teachers of Black students (Irvine, 2003). These studies are critical for informing White teachers on how to effectively teach African American students, and until African American teachers are more fully represented in the U. S. teaching force, preparing effective White teachers is an important endeavor. Researching the implications of race has, for too long, either been from solely a White perspective, suppressing the views of people of color, or, more recently, shifted almost entirely onto the shoulders of people of color (Rex, 2007; Swisher, 1996). We believe that research on race should be a collaborative endeavor. Contributing the case studies of Ms. Turner and Ms. Cross to the broader body of literature on effective teachers of African American students (e. g., Bondy et al., 2007; Cooper, 2002, 2003; Howard, 2001; Irvine, 2002;

Ladson-Billings, 1994) moves toward bridging perspectives between Black and White educators, whose perspectives in many ways have remained segregated (Delpit, 1995; Dickar, 2008; Noblit, 1993). We believe that when engaged in intergroup conversation, we have the potential to see eye to eye and enhance the quality of education for African Americans and all students of color in urban schools and elsewhere.

### *Re-Viewing Warm Demander Approaches to Authority*

By illuminating how the warm demander's legitimacy is constructed between a Black teacher and Black students, this case study analysis complicates the presumed transferability of the warm demander approach to classrooms characterized by White-Black racial difference. For the African American warm demander, a source of legitimacy is the culture, history, experiences, and traditions she shares with her students, and when conveying the values of the African American community, this legitimacy assumes a moral authority characterized by a culturally grounded, ethical use of power (Noblit, 1993). White teachers are limited in their ability to capitalize on a shared frame of reference, and they need to consider the difference their racial difference makes in teaching and learning.

*What do White teachers need to do to position themselves as warm demanders?* Like warm demanders, both Ms. Turner and Ms. Cross maintained high expectations for their students' academic achievement and behavior. Both teachers were convinced their African American students were capable learners, a shared assumption that has served as the basis for effective teachers' practice (Howard, 2001). They also created structured learning environments characterized by effective disciplinary strategies, warmly demanding that their students change their behavior, to which students acquiesced without confrontation. Ms. Turner used a more strict, "no-nonsense," direct discourse style characterized by commands mitigated with terms of solidarity and humor that conveyed warmth. In contrast, Ms. Cross engaged in Signifying that allowed her insistence to be veiled by the warmth of a compliment, reflecting her preference for indirection over mean talk, but belying the soft-spoken, nonconfrontational, indirect speech often attributed to White women's communication styles (Brantlinger, Morton, & Washburn, 1999; Thompson, 2004). This is not to say that Ms. Cross and Ms. Turner never employed alternative discourse styles with positive results, or that either of these styles would necessarily be effective in other classroom contexts. Yet Ms. Cross's effective indirection troubles prescriptions that teachers should employ more direct ways of communicating with African American students



(Delpit, 1995) and as part of warm demander approaches to authority (Bondy et al., 2007; Brown, 2004). For an African American parent, direct discourse may sound “a little too much like slavery” coming from a White teacher (Foster, 1997, p. xxix). Because of Ms. Cross’s indirect discourse style, she could be likened to other White teachers who are less inclined to act authoritatively with African American students (Cooper, 2002). Yet her indirection was interpreted by students as consequential, and her discipline style reflected a “situated pedagogy” that was effective with her students (Irvine, 2003).<sup>14</sup>

Ms. Cross respected the boundaries students drew around their teacher–student relationship that precluded her from assuming the role of an “other-mother.” Students’ clear demarcation of these boundaries points to the complications of White teachers employing an African American parenting style and serving as an other-mother for their African American students. With cultural roots in a West African tradition, other-mothering is displayed in how African American teachers described their familial relationships with students in terms of “taking ownership” of and responsibility for their students. For instance, one African American teacher employed a naming ritual: “The kids call me Mama. You know, I take ownership of these kids. I tell them on the first day to attach my last name to their last name” (Irvine, 2003, p. 11). While this strategy may be effective for African American teachers, it may not be not accessible to White teachers because of the legacy of slavery that involved Whites assigning their last names to Black slaves: If a White teacher were to tell a Black student to attach her last name, it could be construed as an act of ownership and oppression. Compared to their African American counterparts, White teachers are less likely to use familial terms to characterize their relationships with students (Cooper, 2002), even though some White teachers have assumed maternal roles with young children (Cooper, 2003). White teachers may need to find a different way to validate the emphasis placed on familial connections by the Black community (e. g., Milner & Tenore, 2010), taking into consideration their age (Ware, 2006) and the grade level taught (Cooper, 2002).

Ms. Turner’s modeling of a critical race consciousness is an example of care that transcends the individual to transmit the shared values of the Black race, conveying a culturally grounded moral authority. While Ms. Cross’s discussion of the racial bias surrounding the standardized test could have fostered a shared frame of reference and moral stance, her purpose in raising the issue was to motivate students, and her attention was drawn to individual students’ emotional and psychological discomfort. This concern for students’ “racial safety” differs from reasons explained in literature as to why White teachers may avoid conversations about race, for instance, that they perceive

color blindness as equitable and fear retribution from administrators (Cooper, 2003). In contrast to these reasons, Ms. Cross's concern for students' racial safety represented an ethical use of power (Noblit, 1993). But to reflect the culturally grounded moral authority enacted by African American teachers, White teachers need to envision racial justice as integral to care, as Eileen Parsons (2005) suggests: "[J]ustice and caring must come together in the act of teaching; if not, systemic inequities and inequalities are preserved and perpetuated by the teacher's actions" (p. 26). Such culturally relevant care that acknowledges justice as a purpose of education holds the potential to empower White teachers to "lift up the race" with public and political acts of caring more consistent with their African American counterparts' womanist pedagogies (Green, 2004; Parsons, 2005; Patterson et al., 2011).

### *How Can White Teachers Establish Cross-Racial Legitimacy?*

Our case studies suggest that while positive relationships are important for White teachers to engage African American students in teaching and learning and discussions of race, they may be insufficient for White teachers in establishing the culturally grounded legitimacy of the warm demander. To counteract the tendency to privilege Whiteness in the classroom, White teachers can cultivate an alliance with their students to combat racism. Ms. Cross's efforts to use racism as a motivational factor and to critique the racial politics surrounding the test illustrate the potential of this strategy. Performing well on the test was presented as a way to challenge negative perceptions of Black students and attain further education. Thus, the groundwork for fostering a shared frame of reference and students' critical race consciousness was laid as they explored the racial bias of the test.

To realize the full potential of alliance-building, White teachers may need to more fully ally themselves with their students and be prepared to critique and challenge racist policies and practices that do not serve their African American students (Ladson-Billings, 1994). One way to accomplish this involves "sharing authority" as did White teacher Brian Schultz, who deferred to students' knowledge of racial politics when authorizing discussions of race (Schultz & Oyler, 2006). Such sharing of authority might involve discursively positioning students as coproducers of knowledge on the subject of race or engaging in a more thorough critique of the curriculum. For Ms. Cross, this would have required her to study arguments critiquing standardized testing (e. g., Meier & Woods, 2004) because she lacked the knowledge and experience that would inform her critical race consciousness around

the racial bias of such tests. Admittedly, critiquing the curriculum represented a difficult endeavor for Ms. Cross because policies like NCLB can conflict with the well-being of African American students, yet are accompanied by rewards and sanctions that have serious consequences for students' present and future access to education. This dilemma made critiquing the test more challenging for Ms. Cross in the context of Metro High, which was under the threat of sanctions, so forming an alliance around the issue of the test's bias may have been more complicated to achieve.

Constructing cross-racial legitimacy requires White teachers to develop their own critical race consciousness. Such legitimacy is grounded in a shared frame of reference that serves as the basis for shared goals and values that configure a cross-racial alliance between White teachers, Black students, and their communities. Just as African American teachers draw from their experiences with racism, so also White teachers have to acknowledge theirs. Teachers who have served as White allies demonstrated awareness of how their Whiteness positioned them in relation to their students (Hyland, 2005; Parsons, 2005; Schultz & Oyler, 2006) and within a history of White dominance (Howard, 2006). The alliance needs to be authenticated by the teacher's genuine commitment to combating racism and a shared frame of reference.

Like cross-racial alliances, culturally congruent communication practices need to be authentic to be effective. As a facet of the It Factor, Ms. Cross's use of Signifying was deemed legitimate by her students (Ford, 2013). But in the particular episode of interaction analyzed herein, Ms. Cross's use of call-and-response backfired when Calvin responded inappropriately to Ms. Cross's call, resulting in a conflict that required interpersonal repair. This suggests that while replicating culturally-based communicative practices can be done, knowing when and how it is appropriate to do so is another matter. Perhaps in this moment the subject of race was too complex for call-and-response. Ms. Cross's inclination to confront the issue rather than avoid conflict enabled her and Calvin to come to a mutually agreeable way to construct and resolve the problem of interpersonal conflict (Rex, 2007), but not the issue of whether standardized tests are biased. Ms. Cross and Calvin's interpersonal relationship was restored, but at the expense of developing a shared frame of reference that would promote students' critical raced consciousness.

Our case study analyses make visible some subtle distinctions between how a White teacher and an African American teacher constructed authority and practiced situated pedagogy in her respective context. Ms. Cross focused on test preparation in an 11th grade general English class in a district facing sanctions from NCLB, and Ms. Turner emphasized critical thinking in an untracked 9th grade English class in a district striving to address racism in

schools. The teachers' curricular choices represented distinct responses to Black–White achievement gaps that were consistent with the culture and racial composition of their schools. While the grade level and academic track may have influenced their curricular decisions, observations and interviews<sup>15</sup> suggest that the teachers' beliefs about the purposes of schooling had a profound impact on their choices. Ms. Cross focused on test preparation believing it to offer access to educational opportunities, and Ms. Turner emphasized critical thinking and taught a racially controversial novel in order to foster students' critical race consciousness. Although classroom interaction is specific to its context, the results point to implications for how warm demanders are conceived, their authority, and the applicability of their approach across racial contexts.

## Implications

This comparative analysis of how an African American teacher and a White teacher built authority relationships with African American students enables a reconceptualization of the warm demander. For authoritative Black teachers like Ms. Turner, the role of the warm demander seems to come naturally because it reflects traditions of African American parenting, caring, and racial uplift. To be authentic, a warm demander needs to be able to draw upon the shared experience, history, traditions, and frame of reference of African Americans in order to transmit shared values across generations. For White teachers, serving as a warm demander is less of a fixed identity, more a fluid position that they can occupy, sometimes tentatively and temporarily. Whereas African American teachers can embody the warm demander role, White teachers can try it on and even wear it for a while. White teachers can be effective with Black students: They can have a knack for building relationships, an “It Factor,” and they can practice Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (Bondy et al, 2007; Milner & Tenore, 2010) and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994). However, if, as Ware (2006) suggests, racial heritage is a significant factor in teachers' development into warm demanders, then perhaps White teachers cannot fully “be” warm demanders because even if they engage in what are understood as Black cultural practices, including culturally congruent communication, they lack the shared history, experiences, and traditions of African Americans.

Positioning theory makes possible the conceptualization of the warm demander as a fluid, dynamic position that conveys alignment with cultural groups within hierarchies of power. White teachers can discursively position

themselves as warm demanders, constructing a sense of solidarity across racial difference to cultivate a cross-cultural legitimacy and earn their authority over time. This sense of solidarity can be accomplished by using culturally congruent discourse practices, seeing through the cultural eyes of African American teachers and students, and assuming a political stance that challenges racism. By examining case studies of classroom interaction such as those illustrated herein, teacher educators can guide teachers in considering how they can use language effectively to build productive authority relationships with students.

While White teachers can appropriate some of the facets of the warm demander's pedagogies, doing so without a deep understanding of African American parenting and communication styles can threaten students' racial safety, create cultural misunderstandings, and reproduce White privilege as grounds for classroom authority. Introducing White teachers to the culturally specific practices of African American teachers will help them develop their third eyes, capable of seeing from an African American frame of reference (Irvine, 2003). While knowledge of culturally specific strategies is useful, to capitalize on these approaches, including that of the warm demander, White teachers need to adapt their instruction as a situated pedagogy that responds to the needs of their particular African American students as well as the broader Black community (Irvine, 2002). Tailoring the appropriate method to the context makes the warm demander approach transferable across contexts.

More research is needed to examine the warm demander's applicability to other contexts. Our analysis has focused primarily on teachers' interactions with African American students. Future studies might examine other cross-racial interactions, such as between Black teachers and White students or White teachers with students from diverse backgrounds, or they could illuminate the approaches of White teachers with White students as culturally specific, making visible the role race plays in racially homogenous classrooms. Considering multiracial and intersecting identities to constitute the warm demander's stance could also yield valuable insight.

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## Notes

1. Oral histories (Patterson, Mickelson, Hester, & Wyrick, 2011), life histories (Foster, 1997), and historical accounts (Siddle Walker, 1996) that illuminate the perspectives of African American teachers, parents, students, and communities convey the critical role segregated Black schools played in the education of Black children by supporting students' educational attainment, identity development, and political awareness. As schools were desegregated, Black teachers experienced job loss as White teachers assumed the vast majority of teaching positions in desegregated schools (Ladson-Billings, 2004). The demographic divide is, thus, an ironic product of school desegregation.
2. Irvine (2003) calls for more effective recruitment strategies to bring teachers of color into the pipeline, while Epstein (2005) highlights how emphasis on standardized certification tests serves as a barrier for prospective teachers of color. She estimates that half of them do not pass the California Basic Skills Test and are, therefore, precluded from entering the profession.
3. The distribution of teachers and students by race varies across classrooms, schools, districts, and regions, making it difficult to ascertain the specific number of White teachers who teach African American students. However, Frankenberg's (2006) study of 1,000 teachers points to clear patterns of segregation in the public school system, offering insight into the dispersion of White teachers and Black students by comparing numbers of White teachers to Black and Latino students. Frankenberg's data suggests that even though Black and Latino teachers tend to be overrepresented in schools attended by Black and Latino students, a significant percentage of the faculty at such schools is White. Specifically, in schools where Black and Latino students constituted 90% of the population, on average, 40% of the faculty was White, and in schools where Black and Latino students constituted at least half the population, 73% of the faculty was White. This suggests that even though the Black and Latino students have some access to the Black and Latino teachers that make up the teaching force, many White teachers are still teaching students of color and need to develop the capacity for teaching across racial difference.
4. This understanding of race as shared culture is conveyed through our alternating use of the terms "African American" to represent people descended from African ancestry and "Black" and "White" to convey the historical significance of U. S. race relations.
5. The African American teachers in Howard's (2001) study indicated that "non-African American teachers could replicate the practices that they used. They maintained that it would require a willingness to conduct critical self-examinations about assumptions, beliefs, and stereotypes they may have about African

- American students and, more important, how these assumptions negatively or positively affect the teaching and learning process for such students” (p. 199).
6. Milner and Tenore’s (2010) study of classroom management in diverse classrooms featured two men: one White and one African American. The African American male teacher stated that being Black gave him an advantage with Black students “initially, because they can relate to me because of my ethnicity . . . Initially. *But the effectiveness comes from my style, how I teach and how I manage*, and any person of any race can do that [succeed] if trained properly. Any gender can do that” (p. 590).
  7. This type of moral authority, particular to the authoritative African American woman, implies that while race may serve as a source of legitimacy for warm demanders, gender may also figure into their authority. Warm demanders portrayed in literature are typically women, but it is possible for teachers of any race and gender to earn their authority by cultivating respectful and trusting relationships and employing culturally congruent communicative practices (Delpit, 1995; Irvine, 1991; Howard, 2006).
  8. Ms. Turner is researching her Native American/American Indian ancestry, but she is not an enrolled tribal member.
  9. Only two students qualified their positive valuations of Ms. Cross. Carl said he wished he had more African American male teachers who could serve as a role model for him, while Candy said she wished Ms. Cross would share “more personal stuff” with the students.
  10. There were two English tracks for 11th graders at Metro High: General and Honors.
  11. Although Ms. Cross was committed to preparing students for the test, she was ambivalent about its value as curriculum. On one hand, she appreciated the test driving the curriculum because it seemed aligned with many of the state standards. On the other hand, it did not assess listening, speaking, and critical thinking skills, which she also saw as important. She speculated that her English curriculum would look very different if not for the test, which emphasized speed-reading and skimming short passages in order to answer multiple choice questions.
  12. The school district was under so much pressure to improve tests scores that the Superintendent contracted a private test preparation company to provide test preparation for all 11th graders. An instructor from the company visited 11th grade English (and math) classes one day per week for one hour a day and taught from the company’s handbook. Ms. Cross’s emphasis on test preparation reflected the priorities of the district and school culture.
  13. In an episode of interaction with a White student, Carl, Ms. Turner attempted to repair her interpersonal relationship with him because she had mean-talked him

the day before and was concerned that he wouldn't recognize "being mean" as caring (Foster, 1991). She admitted, "I was pretty mean to you yesterday when you first came in, wasn't I? [. . .] Did you dwell on how mean I was to you, or didn't you think about it?" Carl responded, "You always do it, so we're used to it." Although the focus of our analyses is interaction with African American students, Ms. Turner's reparation with Carl indicates that her mean talk, or direct discourse style, was understood as part of her overall stance to which students were accustomed. As Bondy & Ross (2008) explain, "When students know that you believe in them, they will interpret even harsh-sounding comments as statements of care from someone with their best interests at heart" (p. 2). This substantiates our portrayal of Ms. Turner as a warm demander.

14. That Ms. Turner found direct discourse effective with both Black and White students calls into question the style's cultural specificity, even though her concern for the White student she mean-talked implies her understanding of differences in Black and White parenting styles.
15. Observations indicated that Ms. Cross's emphasis on test preparation was not limited to her 11th grade general English class: it extended to her 10th grade Honors class, whom she began preparing for the 11th grade test during the last three months of the school-year. Ms. Turner never conducted test preparation during the semester she was observed. Teachers' responses to interview questions about their decisions did not indicate the specific ways grade level or academic track might have influenced their curricular choices, but they did illuminate their underlying beliefs about teaching and learning and their responses to school context.

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