The Evolution of Race-Focused and Race-Reimaged Approaches in Educational Psychology: Future Directions for the Field

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Abstract

In this article, we discuss using race-focusing and reimaging as a metatheoretical approach to be used during the process of theory building, expansion, and adaptation. To do so, we demonstrate how, over the last decade, the use of race-focusing and reimaging approaches has advanced our understanding of the racialized nature of research in education psychology (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2024). In addition, we provide a discussion of areas where educational psychologists have yet to theoretically explicate or should further explore in current educational psychology theories.

Keywords Race · Racism · Race-focused · Race-reimaged · Color-blind racial ideology · Critical race theory

Ten years ago, we published an article entitled "Researching Race Within Educational Psychology Contexts" in the *Educational Psychologist* (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014). We decided to write the article because we had grown weary of the lack of discussion of race and racism, leading to a paucity of race-related research being published in educational psychology journals. In that article, we addressed two issues. The first was to investigate if and how authors who publish in educational psychology journals talked about and investigated issues related to race. In essence, as we expected at that time, inquiry and publication related to issues of

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race in educational psychology journals were not much different than what Graham (1992) found 22 years earlier when investigating some American Psychological Association journals. In other words, once you remove articles that used race as simply a demographic variable, a limited number of race-centered articles remained, and those articles tended to cluster into a few special issues.

The second issue we addressed was ways for scholars to reimagine race-neutral theories to center issues of race in their research. Thus, we introduced and explicated *race-focused* and *race-reimaged* approaches to research. A decade later, in this article, we revisit race-focused and race-reimaged approaches by discussing how our ideas have grown over the last decade and how other scholars have begun to use these approaches to center race in their inquiry and why. To do so, we begin with a discussion of our metatheoretical assumptions that provide our foundation for inquiry. Next, we discuss the role of race, the history of racism in educational psychology, and the emergence of *race-focused* and *race-reimaged* approaches. Then, we discuss how other scholars have embraced and used *race-focused* and *race-reimaged* approaches in their inquiry and what we see as the path forward for scholars and their theories that center race in theoretical inquiry.

Developing Race-Focused and Race-Reimaged Approaches

As described by Greene (2022), the role of theory is to describe phenomena and to explain why and how it occurs. Once a theory has been developed, it can also be integrated with other theories or refined, resulting in either the expansion of the original theory or the creation of a new theory. For example, in educational psychology, there has been limited theory development regarding race and racism with only a paucity of theories focusing on the role that race plays in cognition, development, and motivation. To address this paucity, we present race-focused and race-reimaged approaches as a metatheory or a "fundamental set of ideas about how phenomena of interest in a particular field should be thought about and researched" (Bates, 2005, p.2). As a metatheory, our approach provides suggestions for how a theory should be refined and reconstructed, including guidance on the generation of research inquiry (Finkel, 2014). Thus, we currently see our race-focused and race-reimaged approaches as metatheoretical lenses allowing educational psychologists to both critique and expand their theories to include racial-focused constructs in their inquiry (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014). Specifically, we conceptualize race-focused constructs as being at the center of racial, ethnic, or cultural theories. Race-focused research involves centering race within the data collection and analysis processes. Examples include racial identity, racial socialization, and racial microaggressions. Race-reimaged constructs, on the other hand, are created by critiquing and expanding a traditional theory using a critical social-cultural-historical lens. Ultimately, race-reimaging will end in the development of a race-focused construct. An example includes reimagining the construct of self-concept using a Chicana feminist epistemological framework (Bernal, 1998). Like in a race-focused approach, race is at the center of the entire research process.

Table 1 Inquiry beliefs and assumptions	Inquiry beliefs and assumptions
	Transformative worldview
	Social justice focus
	Universalistic perspective
	Research as problem solving
	Race-focused constructs
	Race reimaging color-evasive constructs
	Critical lens
	Critical consciousness
	Critical Race Theory
	Pragmatic approaches to inquiry
	Examination of original sources (e.g., historical documents)
	Interdisciplinary approaches
	QuantCrit
	Critical race mixed methods (CRMM)
	Centrality of experiential knowledge, counterstories

Metatheoretical Beliefs and Assumptions About the Role of Race in Inquiry

At the center of our theorizing,[1] processes are our metatheoretical beliefs and assumptions about the role of race in inquiry (Witherington et al, 2018). In addition to a focus on how a theory should be refined and reconstructed, Overton (2015) indicates that metatheories also "involve a set of *background concepts* – various philosophical beliefs and assumptions that we, as humans and as scientists, hold concerning the nature of reality (ontology) and how we come to know that reality (epistemology)" (p. 182). Either implicitly or explicitly, our metatheoretical beliefs and assumptions about inquiry (i.e., our philosophy of science) influence what we choose to investigate as well as how we conduct those investigations. Our current theorizing continues to emerge from our foundational metatheoretical or positionality beliefs and assumptions about the nature of "realities" and the inquiry approaches we use to investigate aspects of those perceived "realities." Our inquiry beliefs and assumptions have emerged through synthesizing *transformative*, *critical*, and *pragmatic* inquiry worldviews (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014, 2017; Lincoln et al., 2018; McCrudden & Rapp, 2024; Mertens, 2020).

From *transformative worldviews* (see Table 1), we tend to focus on social justice by using inquiry to empower racially marginalized communities while working to identify and dismantle settler White colonialism within and around educational systems (McCrudden & Rapp, 2024; Mertens, 2020). To do so, we approach inquiry

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[1] We use the gerund "theorizing" (i.e., verb) as opposed to "theory" (i.e., noun) to indicate that theorizing is a continual, potentially unending, process within ever-changing social–historical contexts.

from a *universalistic perspective*[2] (Berry et al. 2011; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014, 2017; Zusho & Clayton, 2011). From our universalistic perspective, we suggest that there are cultural influences on the development and expression of psychological processes. Therefore, understanding social-cultural-historical influences on those processes is important to inquiry designed to solve social justice problems related to education. As such, we approach inquiry as a *problem-solving activity* embedded within broader social-cultural-historical contexts (e.g., systems theory, Bronfenbrenner, 1979; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017). To do so, we center race using critical social-cultural-historical perspectives to investigate schooling in the U.S. The investigations of these contexts are central to our efforts to address the various race-related problems within education (DeCuir-Gunby, 2024; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014, 2017; Delgado and Stefanic 1999; Schutz, 2014, 2020; Smedley & Smedley, 2005).

In addition to the social justice focus of *transformative worldviews*, we are also informed by various *critical approaches* (see Table 1). As educational psychologists, critical approaches allow us to expand outside of an intraindividual focus to include broader social-cultural-historical approaches while focusing on structural systems that produce educational disparities. Freire (1970) refers to this emerging process as *critical consciousness*. In other words, educational disparities that are associated with racism are integrated within social structures and therefore have substantial influence on educational systems. As scholars theorizing and investigating problems within education and educational psychology, we center and focus on race. For example, when investigating educational problems, such as the underrepresentation of Black, Indigenous, and Latinx students in gifted programs in the U.S. (Ford et al., 2020, 2023; Vega, 2024), it is useful to include critical approaches that address issues of redlining (Solórzano, & Vélez, 2017), redistricting (Donnor, 2019), and the over-representation of White women teachers in our schools (Ingersoll et al., 2019). Thus, in addition to *critical consciousness*, we are also informed by Critical Race Theory (CRT),[3] where scholars examine the role of race, racism, and power within the law and its systemic impact on racially marginalized groups within educational communities (Bell, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Although our research questions emerge from our *transformative* focus on social justice through viewing research as a *critically* focused problem-solving activity, to answer our research questions, we approach research methods and methodologies from a *pragmatic worldview* (see Table 1). In doing so, we are eclectic in that, if our research aims to solve critical social justice problems, it is important to use any rigorous research methods that may help us understand and solve those problems (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, and/or mixed methods). However, in doing so, we align, and most often augment, those research methods and methodologies to adhere to our critical social justice framework (e.g., QuantCrit, TribalCrit, Critical Race Mixed

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[2] As opposed to an *absolutist perspective* which suggests that psychological processes are basically the same in all cultures, a *relativistic perspective* suggests that psychological processes are culturally shaped (Berry, et al. 2002).

[3] Elsewhere, we explicated in greater detail some of our CRT foundational ideas (DeCuir-Gunby, 2020, 2024; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014, 2017).

Methods (CRMM), Counterstories). This pragmatic worldview allows us to broaden our inquiry using race-focused and race-reimaged approaches while investigating the role of race in educational psychology. Thus, from our metatheoretical perspective, *race-focusing* and *reimaging* approaches are strategies scholars use while racializing race-neutral aspects of theories.

The Role of Race and the History of Racism in Educational Psychology

As indicated, our development of race-focused and race-reimaged approaches was a response to, and critique of, the research conducted in the field of educational psychology. We were reacting to the ways educational psychology, and in many ways, the larger field of psychology socializes its members to ignore or even negate the role that race plays in society. Specifically, our approach was inspired by the history of racism in the field of educational psychology (and psychology), the creation and implementation of race-neutral theoretical frameworks in educational psychology, and the misuse or non-use of race in methodology within educational psychology. Here, we provide a brief historical discussion to provide context.

The Role of Race

As we indicated, our thoughts about race-focusing and reimaging emerged from our concern about the lack of acknowledgment of the central role that race plays in issues that are important to educational psychologists. We first investigated educational psychology journals to clarify the nature of the problem as a lack of centering of race within the discipline (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014). Our examination of the published literature in the top-tiered journals in educational psychology, where only 1.3% of all articles focused on race, was similar to what Graham (1992) found when she discovered that only 3.6% of studies published in psychology journals focused on African Americans. This lack of representation resulted in some educational psychologists, who were interested in inquiry that centered on race, needing to publish in journals outside of traditional educational psychology journals, mainly because the top journals were not as receptive to race-centered research.

Within the context of our investigation, we also worked to explore the importance of race in the U.S. education system and educational psychology.[4] The work of Smedley and Smedley (2005) was key. In that article, Smedley and Smedley (2005) laid out the historical emergence of the concept of race and how that concept, via an unholy alliance among ethnocentrism, capitalism, and religious zealotry, was used to justify the taking of Indigenous land and the buying and selling of humans to work those stolen lands (Spring, 2016). This justification came in the form of laws and activities that resulted in the dehumanization of people of color (POC) (e.g.,

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[4] Although centered within the U.S., our approach can be applied to international contexts as racism and racist practices exist worldwide (see Doharty, & Esoe, 2023; Zembylas, 2010 for examples of race-focused work outside of the U.S.).

Black people counted as 3/5 of a person in the U.S. Constitution and efforts to see Indigenous peoples as "savages" who needed to be converted to "White" Jesus). Smedley and Smedley (2005) suggested.

> In an era when the dominant political philosophy was equality, civil rights, democracy, justice, and freedom for all human beings, the only way Christians could justify slavery was to demote Africans to nonhuman status (Haller, 1971; Smedley 1999). p. 19

The perceived idea of "race" as a biological and hierarchical concept where "Whiteness" was seen as the apex of the hierarchy and other perceived "races" were seen as less than and led to White educational psychologists attempting to justify their perceived superiority through a narrow view of intelligence. In terms of that biological view of race, Smedley and Smedley (2005) indicated.

> The consensus among most scholars in fields such as evolutionary biology, anthropology, and other disciplines is that racial distinctions fail on all three counts— that is, they are not genetically discrete, are not reliably measured, and are not scientifically meaningful. p. 16.

However, due to the prolonged exposure to the belief, and the resulting influence on all aspects of life in the U.S., race has emerged as an ever-changing (e.g., Irish and Italians as non-White) criteria and an influential social construct that has the potential to influence biological outcomes (e.g., see Omi & Winant, 1994; Smedley & Smedley, 2005). For instance, health disparities in African Americans (e.g., low birth rates, high infant mortality rates) have been linked to racism (Bailey et al, 2017).

The History of Racism in Educational Psychology

In addition to the role of race, the history of racism in the field of psychology and the sub-field of educational psychology influenced our creation of *race-focused* and *race-reimaged* approaches. We developed these approaches to help counter this history of racism. To better understand the severity of the history of racism in the field, although crafted 7 years after our initial article was published, it is useful to reference the American Psychological Association's (APA) adopted resolution entitled,[5] *Apology to People of Color for APA's Role in Promoting, Perpetuating, and Failing to Challenge Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Human Hierarchy in the U. S.* Adopted in 2021, largely in response to the nation-wide racial protests and calls for racial justice, the resolution explicitly states how APA has been complicit in contributing to and promoting systemic racial inequities that have harmed POC. This statement particularly explained how the organization and the field of psychology were influenced by its White, male, racist leadership:

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[5] See https://www.apa.org/about/policy/racism-apology.

APA was established by White male leadership, many of whom contributed to scientific inquiry and methods that perpetuated systemic racial oppression, including promoting the ideas of early 20th-century eugenics; Eugenics is defined as the idea that racial differences and hierarchies are biologically based and fixed, and was used to support segregation, sterilization, and antimarriage laws (Cummings Center for the History of Psychology 2021).

Specifically, within the field of educational psychology, the thinking of White male racist leaders helped to shape the field (Strunk & Andrzejewski, 2023). For example, Edward Thorndike was considered the "father" of educational psychology, having founded the *Journal of Educational Psychology.* He was a eugenicist and held sexist beliefs regarding women. Similarly, G. Stanley Hall was the "father" of the field of adolescence. He believed in the mental inferiority of Black people, and his beliefs had an enormous impact on the field. Then, there were theorists such as Lewis Terman, who studied intelligence and wrote about the intellectual inferiority of Black people (for more examples, see Cummings Center for the History of Psychology 2021).

Always having to rely on scholarship that is rooted in White supremacy perpetuates racism within the field and subordinates scholars of color. Similarly, we were frustrated that very few theorists that are promoted in most major educational psychology textbooks are POC. With the emphasis on racist thinking in the field, there has historically been little to no room for promoting the experiences of POC, especially from the perspectives of psychologists of color, who have the most authority to write about the experiences of racially marginalized communities. For instance, we rarely if ever read about Kenneth and Mamie Clark (racial identity studies), Franz Fanon (racial identity and sexuality), Chester Peirce (microaggressions), and Juan Luis Vives (learning and memory). Although more contemporary scholars like Robert Sellers, Margaret Beale Spencer, and Sandra Graham are sometimes included, they have not received the notoriety that they deserve (see Tettegah, et al., 2023). As a result, we aimed to develop an approach that could be used to help counter the negative roots of educational psychology, instead of promoting the strengths of POC.

Race-Neutral or Deficit Theoretical Frameworks

Because educational psychology was founded by scholars with racist ideologies, it is no surprise that the theories and research they created were influenced by their positionality beliefs. POC were not often included in the key theories. However, when POC were included, they were often viewed from a deficit perspective. Differences from the White norm were seen as deficit or deviant. Early educational psychology scholars often created deficit-oriented theories, attempting to demonstrate that POC was inferior to White people (Kumar & DeCuir-Gunby, 2023; López, 2022; Strunk & Andrzejewski, 2023).

The APA resolution describes how deficit-oriented beliefs have systematically influenced POC:

> Since its origins as a scientific discipline in the mid-19th century, psychology has, through acts of commission and omission, contributed to the dispossession, displacement, and exploitation of communities of color. This early history of psychology, rooted in oppressive psychological science to protect Whiteness, White people, and White epistemologies, reflected the social and political landscape of the U.S. at that time. Psychology developed under these conditions, helped to create, express, and sustain them, continues to bear their indelible imprint, and often continues to publish research that conforms with White racial hierarchy (Cummings Center for the History of Psychology 2021; Helms, 2003; Luther et al., 1996; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2016) (American Psychological Association 2021).

In developing our approaches, we wanted to counter the deficit-oriented perspective that has been created by theorists in educational psychology. To do so, we focused on approaches that could help scholars examine the impact of race on the lives of POC and not view racial differences negatively. By examining race-focused constructs and engaging in race-reimaging, researchers can view the influence of race and racial differences from a non-stereotypical, strength-based perspective.

In more recent years, many scholars have abandoned the blatantly racist deficit-oriented approach and have instead taken up the more subtly race-neutral perspectives (Bonilla-Silva, 2019, Bonilla-Silva 2022). Such scholars tend to embrace an absolutist, culture-neutral approach, stating that all individuals have similar experiences (Zusho & Clayton, 2011). In essence, they claim that race does not matter. Either implicitly or explicitly, scholars with a race-neutral approach focus on the experience of constructs as a common experience for all and do not consider race. Yet most theories were created using White populations from predominantly White institutions (PWI). They claim to not consider race because they view the White perspective as the norm and assume that all other racial groups experience constructs in the same manner (i.e., absolutist view). Our approach directly challenges this perspective, allowing for race to be centered and showing how race plays a role in the lives of individuals.

The Misuse or Non-use of Race in Methodology

Similarly, since psychology is rooted in racist beliefs, racism has permeated both the creation and implementation of research methodology as well as psychological tests and instruments. Most methodological approaches and psychological instruments are not culturally relevant and, in some cases, were designed to create racial deficits (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). As described in the APA resolution.

> psychologists created and promoted the widespread application of psychological tests and instruments that have been used to disadvantage many commu-

nities of color (Fass, 1980; Helms, 2002; Kaestle, 2013; Kevles, 1968), contributing to the overdiagnosis, misdiagnosis, and lack of culturally appropriate diagnostic criteria to characterize the lived experience and mental health concerns of people of color (American Psychological Association, 2021).

Thus, we were concerned about the way race has been historically used in research. We also developed these approaches to provide researchers with ways to critique and modify existing methodologies and psychological assessments. It was important to us that educational psychology researchers be provided with ways to help create culturally relevant constructs. For instance, through race-reimaging, a non-culturally relevant construct can be made culturally relevant through the integration of critical social-cultural-historical theories and the examination of communities of color.

We also had questions about the misuse as well as the underuse of race in methodology. Because educational psychology is rooted in positivism/post-positivism, researchers are often encouraged to use experimental/quasi-experimental designs which require a control group and a treatment/experimental group (Zusho & Clayton, 2011). It is not uncommon for researchers wanting to study communities of color to be told by advisors or journal reviewers that to do so, they need to have a control group. And the suggestion is to use a White control group. This is done because being White is considered normal. To be non-White is to be abnormal. Our approach challenges this perspective by supporting the value of studying communities of color in their own right. In terms of the underuse of studying race, too often when race is featured in educational psychology research, it is used as a demographic variable that appears in the description of the sample and then is not discussed again in the article. Rarely is it used to foreground potential social-cultural-historical influences. Emphasizing race-focused constructs highlights the importance of examining race as more than a demographic participant descriptor.

The State of the Race-Focused and Race-Reimaged Theories

Because race is such an important construct, it is necessary to better understand how researchers attempt to study race-related concepts. As such, it is necessary to explore the utility of the race-focused and reimaged approaches that have emerged out of our metatheoretical beliefs and assumptions. Over the last 10 years, researchers have continued to acknowledge the importance of approaching research from a race-focusing and reimaging perspective. Currently, we see these approaches as central to solving educational social justice issues. According to Google Scholar, around 200 publications have referenced the DeCuir-Gunby and Schutz (2014) article. Most of these publications have referenced the article to support the call for more research on race in the field of educational psychology and other areas of education (e.g., Burt et al. 2020; Grant & Allweiss, 2023; Murphy et al., 2022). However, a portion of these publications have engaged in race-focused or race-reimaged empirical work

Table 2 Race-focused and race-reimaged articles in educational psychology journals (2014 to 2023)

Citation	Construct(s) of interest
Byrd, C. M. (2017). The complexity of school racial climate: Reliability and validity of a new measure for secondary students. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *87*(4), 700–721	School climate
Clayton, K. E., & Zusho, A. (2016). A cultural heuristic approach to the study of Jamaican undergraduate students' achievement motivation. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 86*(1), 8–36	Foregrounding cultural theories
Gray, D. L., Hope, E., Matthews, J. S. (2018). Black and belonging at school: A case for interpersonal, instructional, and institutional opportunity structures. *Educational Psychologist, 53*(2), 97–113	Belonging
King, R. B., McInerney, D. M., & Pitliya, R. J. (2018). Envisioning a culturally imaginative educational psychology. *Educational Psychology Review, 30*, 1031–1065	Foregrounding cultural theories
Kumar, R., Zusho, A., & Bondie, R. (2018). Weaving cultural relevance and achievement motivation into inclusive classroom cultures. *Educational Psychologist*, *53*(2), 78–96	Achievement motivation
Matthews, J. S. (2018). When am I ever going to use this in the real world? Cognitive flexibility and urban adolescents' negotiation of the value of mathematics. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 110*(5), 726–746	Cognitive flexibility and value
Urdan, T., & Bruchmann, K. (2018). Examining the academic motivation of a diverse student population: A consideration of methodology. *Educational Psychologist*, *53*(2), 114–130	Academic motivation
Usher, E. L. (2018). Acknowledging the whiteness of motivation research: Seeking cultural relevance. *Educational Psychologist*, *53*(2), 131–144	Whiteness
Zusho, A., & Kumar, R. (2018). Introduction to the special issue: Critical reflections and future directions in the study of race, ethnicity, and motivation. *Educational Psychologist, 53*(2), 61–63	Race-focused and reimaging inquiry
Bergey, B. W., Ranellucci, J., & Kaplan, A. (2019). The conceptualization of costs and barriers of a teaching career among Latino preservice teachers. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 59*, 101794	Perceived costs and barriers
Fong, C. J., Alejandro, A. J., Krou, M. R., Segovia, J., & Johnston-Ashton, K. (2019). Ya'at'eeh: Race-reimaged belongingness factors, academic outcomes, and goal pursuits among Indigenous community college students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *59*, 101,805	Belonging
King, R. B., & McInerney, D. M. (2019). Family-support goals drive engagement and achievement in a collectivist context: Integrating etic and emic approaches in goal research. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 58*, 338–353	Foregrounding cultural theories
Seo, E., Shen, Y., & Benner, A. D. (2019). The paradox of positive self-concept and low achievement among Black and Latinx youth: A test of psychological explanations. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 59*, 101796	Self-concept

Table 2 (continued)

Citation	Construct(s) of interest
Villanueva, I., Di Stefano, M., Gelles, L., Osoria, P. V., & Benson, S. (2019). A race re-imaged, intersectional approach to academic mentoring: Exploring the perspectives and responses of womxn in science and engineering research. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 59*, 101786	Academic mentoring
DeCuir-Gunby, J. T. (2020). Using critical race mixed methodology to explore the experiences of African Americans. *Educational Psychologist*, 55, 244–255	Mixed-method designs
DeCuir-Gunby, J. T., Allen, E. M., & Boone, J. K. (2020). Examining pre-service teachers' color-blind racial ideology, emotion regulation, and inflexibility with stigmatizing thoughts about race. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 60, 101,836	Color-blind racial ideology
Gray, D. L., McElveen, T. L., Green, B. P., & Bryant, L. H. (2020). Engaging Black and Latinx students through communal learning opportunities: A relevance intervention for middle schoolers in STEM elective classrooms. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 60, 101,833	Communal learning and engagement
Matthews, J. S., & López, F. (2020). Race-reimaging educational psychology research: Investigating constructs through the lens of race and culture. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 61*, 101878	Race-focused and reimaging inquiry
Schutz, P. A. (2020). Race focusing and reimaging research: Where do we go from here? *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *61*, 101,871	Race-focused and reimaging inquiry
Gray, D. L., Ali, J. N., McElveen, T. L., & Sealy, M. (2022). The cultural significance of "we-ness": Motivationally influential practices rooted in a scholarly agenda on Black education. *Educational Psychology Review, 34*(4), 1985–2013	We-ness (communalism)
López, F. (2022). Can educational psychology be harnessed to make changes for the greater good? *Educational Psychologist*, *57*(2), 114–130	Anti-racist research approaches
López, F., González, N., Hutchings, R., Delcid, G., Raygoza, C., & López, L. (2022). Race-reimaged self-determination theory: Elucidating how ethnic studies promotes student identity and learning outcomes using mixed-methods. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *71*, 102,119	Self-determination theory
Williams-Johnson, M., & Fields-Smith, C. (2022). . Homeschooling among Black families as a form of parental involvement: A focus on parental role construction, efficacy, and emotions. *Educational Psychologist, 57*(4), 252–266	Black homeschooling
Kumar, R., & DeCuir-Gunby, J. (2023). What is the role of race in educational psychology? A review of research in Educational Psychologist. *Educational Psychologist*, *58*(1), 1–17	Anti-racist research approaches
Strunk, K. K., & Andrzejewski, C. E. (2023). Racisms of commission and omission in educational psychology: A historical analysis and systematic review. *Educational Psychologist*, 1–13	Anti-racist research approaches

within education and educational psychology journals (see Table 2).[6] As such, in this section, we begin by highlighting some scholars in educational psychology who have approached their inquiry from a race-focusing approach followed by scholars who have helped to explicate ways of race-reimaging constructs from existing educational psychology-based theories.

Race-Focusing Approaches

There have been several articles using a race-focused approach. In terms of recent race-focusing efforts being published in educational psychology journals, DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2020) foregrounded pre-service teachers' color-blind or color-evasive racial ideology while investigating how pre-service teachers regulated their emotions related to beliefs about race. There are several key elements to this inquiry. First, the U.S. Department of Education (2023) indicated that only 25% of teachers identified as teachers of color in 2017–2018, and at the same time, the National Center for Education Statistics (2022) projected that by 2030, 56% of the public-school population in the U.S. will be students of color (SOC).[7] Second, as discussed earlier, color-blind racial ideologies are based on the idea that race no longer matters. However, because POC are still experiencing systemic discrimination in schools (e.g., over-representation of POC in special education), color-blind ideologies continue to lend themselves to deficit beliefs about SOC and their communities. In this study, pre-service teachers who scored higher on color-blind racial ideologies scales tended to have difficulties in both regulating their emotions in racial situations and changing their negative thoughts regarding other racial groups (DeCuir-Gunby, et al., 2020).

When we move to the wider school level, these race-neutral ideologies have the potential to influence the schools' overall racial climate. Byrd (2017) used a race-focusing approach by creating a multidimensional framework to explore school-level racial climate. By using two race-focused theoretical approaches, *interracial interactions*, and school *racial socialization*, she developed a scale to investigate how school climate was related to student motivational outcomes. Findings suggest positive relationships between the subscales of her school racial climate measure and key motivational constructs such as interest, belonging, and utility value (Byrd, 2017).

As a potential antidote to race-neutral ideologies, other scholars have proposed critical pedagogical approaches such as funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, et al., 2005), culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012), and asset-based pedagogy (López, 2024), where the goal is to acknowledge and support POC social–historical backgrounds in schools and

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[6] To create our list of relevant articles, we only considered those that explicitly used a race-focused or race-reimaged approach, referenced the DeCuir-Gunby and Schutz (2014) article, and are in one of the top educational psychology journals (*British Journal of Educational Psychology, Contemporary Educational Psychology, Educational Psychologist, Journal of Educational Psychology,* or the *Review of Educational Psychology*). These are the same journals used in the DeCuir-Gunby and Schutz (2104) article.

[7] Again, from our inquiry worldview, as a scholar, it is not possible to solve problems in education and educational psychology without centering the social–historical notion of race in those inquires.

classrooms. Building on these pedagogical approaches, Kumar et al. (2019) used a mixed-method approach to develop a scale to measure culturally inclusive and responsive curricular learning environments (CIRCLEs). Their results suggest that as we move forward, cultural self-other awareness and openness to different ways of thinking are important to designing culturally inclusive curricula, policies, and programs.

What is key about these three data-driven articles is that critical race-focusing theoretical frameworks were foregrounded during the development of the studies, as well as during data collection, analysis, and interpretation. However, as indicated, what has been less clear are the approaches that have been race-reimagining approaches used in educational psychology. As such, below we provide the work of scholars who have provided some of the exemplary articles using this approach.

Race-Reimaging Approaches

Overall, we see that the goal of the race-reimaging approach is to take constructs and theories used in education and educational psychology that do not center on race and infuse them with critical race-focusing theoretical approaches. Scholars exploring race-reimaging approaches have focused on infusing critical constructs with existing race-focusing approaches. For example, López et al. (2022) use a race-reimaging approach with constructs from Self-Determination Theory (SDT). To do so they used Freire's (1970) conception of *critical consciousness* where the focus is on engaging in critical thinking that emerges from an awareness of and an interest in social-cultural-historical factors that produce systematic educational disparities. Thus, when discussing SDT's basic need for relatedness, López et al. (2022) suggest it is important that SOC's sense of belonging emerges from a critical understanding of the social-cultural-historical factors involved in their marginalization as well as affirmations of their ethnic/racial identities within the school community.

Similarly, Fong et al. (2019) also focused on reimaging the motivational construct of belonging. In this research, they used race-focused approaches of CRT (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tate, 1997) as well as Tribal Critical Race Theory (Tribal-Crit) (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy & Chin, 2018) while reconceptualizing belonging for Indigenous community college students. To do so, using TribalCrit, they centered social-cultural-historical influences on Indigenous identities and experiences. Important to their focus was a distinction they made between belonging, where the institution provided a context that supports and honors Indigenous students' identities, as opposed to belonging being seen as the need for SOC to assimilate into the institution, without changes to the institution.

In addition, Gray et al., (2020) used a race-reimaging approach with motivational constructs of utility value and student engagement by developing a relevancy intervention for Black and Latinx middle school STEM students. Like López et al., (2022) and Fong et al., (2019), Gray et al., (2020) used critical race-focusing approaches to facilitate the reimaging of those motivational constructs. By focusing on *cultural continuity* and *communalism*, they developed their intervention by broadening the ideas of utility value and goal affordance to include Black and Latinx

students' commitment to social connectedness which transcends individual privileges (i.e., communalism).

One of the basic assumptions of our metatheory is that to investigate issues or problems in education or educational psychology, you need to foreground issues of race. As such, it is important to keep in mind that the goal of a race-reimaging effort is to transform the constructs and the theories in which those constructs are embedded, to be race-focused. Overall, these three exemplars of race-reimaging have at least two things in common that may be useful for future scholars to adopt when attempting to race-reimage other constructs or theories.

First, in these examples, the scholars foregrounded a variety of social-cultural-historical theories as they centered race in their inquiry (e.g., critical consciousness, TribalCrit, and cultural continuity and communalism). Second, both the participants selected as well as the researched methods they used honored the POC who participated. As indicated earlier, simply including race as a demographic descriptor and indicating "we have a diverse sample" are not sufficient. In these examples, where the interest of the scholars was in particular POC (i.e., Black, Latinx, and Indigenous), those groups were foregrounded, and there was no effort to use the White control group. In addition, all three studies included the use of mixed methods to share the voices of their participants (i.e., counterstories). Although mixed-method approaches were used in these three studies, doing so is not required. Allowing the participants' voices to emerge via qualitative methods or through the critical use of quantitative methods such as QuantCrit (Crawford, et al., 2019; Garcia, et al., 2018) are viable options.

Contributions of Race-Focused and Race-Reimaged Constructs to the Field

As aforementioned, we have been long disillusioned by the racist history of psychology and the lack of race-related research or deficit-oriented research within the field of educational psychology. Because of this, our initial focus was on how to better include issues of race within educational psychology research. We did not focus much on teaching and professional practice. Yet our theories have the potential to have a significant impact on research, teaching, and professional practice in the field of educational psychology.

Changing the Research Landscape

In an influential article on attribution theory and African Americans, Graham, (1991) called for more culturally relevant research in the field of educational psychology. Specifically, she challenged the field to focus on the specific experiences of the population of interest. As an example, she told researchers that when they are studying African Americans, their work should be guided by the following question: "How is it particularly relevant to the Black experience?" (Graham, 1991, p. 28). Since this challenge to the field, only a small percentage of articles have been

published in the top educational psychology journals that center on the experiences of POC, including African Americans, or on issues involving racism (Kumar & DeCuir-Gunby, 2023; López, 2022; Strunk & Andrzejewski, 2023). When reviewing *Educational Psychologist*, a major journal in the field, from 1983–2022, Kumar and DeCuir-Gunby (2023) only found 31 articles that focused on issues of race and ethnicity, including our article (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014). Only 12 articles focusing on issues of race and racism were published after our 2014 article, and half of those articles mentioned our approaches (e.g., DeCuir-Gunby, 2020; Gray et al, (2018); Kumar et al, (2018); López, 2022; Urdan and Bruchmann (2018); Usher (2018)). Additionally, our article has been cited in various other journals in articles focusing on racial issues as well as those examining a variety of issues in educational psychology and education in general. In general, we have seen a push for more diversity-oriented research in our top journals, particularly the *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *Educational Psychologist, Educational Psychology Review*, and *Contemporary Educational Psychology*. Diversity-oriented research has even become a major priority for APA, as indicated by the development of new journal article reporting standards for race, ethnicity, and culture (JARS-REC) (see American Psychological Association, 2023). Hopefully, our article has helped to expand the work of Graham, (1991) and usher in a paradigm shift in the field.

Broadening the Ways We Teach to Include Race

Since publishing our 2014 article, we have seen an increase in the field regarding the need to talk more about race and racism in educational psychology courses. More educational psychology faculty are including readings about race and racism in their syllabi. Many faculty are including our article as a part of those readings. There are active debates regarding the role that race and racism play in the teaching of educational psychology and the training of students, including discussions regarding ways to best train doctoral students to use more culturally relevant or racial methodologies (e.g., QuantCrit). For example, one scholar focused his dissertation on teaching an introduction to educational psychology course from a race-reimaged perspective (see Wornoff, 2019). Also, the new *Handbook of Educational Psychology (fourth edition)*, frequently used in educational psychology courses, has several race and diversity-related chapters, including a chapter on critical race theory (DeCuir-Gunby, 2024; Schutz & Muis 2024).

Increased Conversations about Race in the Profession

Another area where we have seen the influence of our article has been in professional practice, specifically within our professional organizations. The American Psychological Association (division 15), the American Educational Research Association (division C), and the American Educational Research Association Motivation SIG have become more race-conscious in their programming and decision-making. All three groups have sponsored conference sessions regarding race and racism in the field and are actively becoming more inclusive within their respective

organizations. For example, division 15 recently created the Race and Diversity committee to address equity issues within the division, division C has hosted several special sessions at the AERA annual conference on racial issues, and the Motivation SIG frequently sponsors webinars on race-related topics. There was also an AERA-sponsored small conference, the Anti-Racist Program of Research in Educational Psychology Conference (https://sites.psu.edu/edpsyc/), hosted by Penn State that featured several sessions on race-reimaging. Again, our metatheoretical approach has had some influence on the changing conference programs and the governance of our educational psychology professional societies and their activities.

The Challenges in Using Race-Focused and Race-Reimaged Constructs

Our general goal was to provide tools for researchers to help frame and situate their work within racialized contexts. We did not provide a guide for how to conduct such research for a few key reasons. There were already many race-focused constructs in existence in other academic fields. We postulated that educational psychologists just needed to do the work and determine how to best incorporate such constructs into their research. Also, we thought providing a guide for how to race-reimage a construct would be too prescriptive, limiting researchers to follow a strict set of rules. However, choosing not to delineate some guidelines or a template may have created some challenges when working with a metatheory. Metatheories provide a framework for how to think about research and approach research inquiry. Since 2014, through our work as well as through the work of others, we now realize that the field could benefit from some clarity regarding guidelines for engaging in race-reimaging and differentiating between race-focused and race-reimaged work.

The first challenge pertains to what we mean by race. Although race is sometimes conflated with ethnicity, we view race (the categorization of members based upon shared physical traits, which determines societal power) and ethnicity (the categorization of members based on shared regional heritage and background) as different concepts. However, a racial group can be comprised of members from various ethnic groups. For example, a person can be racially Black but ethnically Jamaican or Ethiopian. The race-focused and race-reimaging approaches were designed to focus on race or ethnicity to understand the experiences of oppressed and marginalized groups or to critique issues of power among racially/ethnically dominant groups.

The next challenge that we have attempted to address is specifying how to differentiate the components of metatheory and what we mean by race-focused and race-reimaged constructs. What is a race-focused construct? What constitutes race-reimaging? A race-focused construct emerges from a critically focused theory that centers on race or ethnicity and is used to better understand people, policies, or systems. At the core of race-focused constructs is race or ethnicity. For instance, *racial socialization*, a race-focused construct, examines how Black parents help their children to have a strong critical sense of self as well as understand systemic racism (Hughes et al, 2006). The construct of racial socialization is based on race and is used to better understand racial experiences.

Race-reimaging, on the other hand, is the process of reconceptualizing a perceived race-less construct to consider race. More specifically, the goal of a race-reimaged study is to reimagine a traditional educational psychology construct in a more critical, social-cultural-historical relevant manner to understand the perspectives of a racialized group or to engage in a race-based critique. With both race-focused and race-reimaged approaches, race is taken into consideration during all stages of the research process.

The third, and most difficult challenge, that we have encountered involves the process of race-reimaging. Most of the uncertainty centers around these questions: How does the merging of a critical social-cultural-historical/racial theory with a traditional educational psychology theory occur? How much change needs to be made to the original educational psychology theory for it to be considered race-reimaging? For race-reimaging to occur, the critical social-cultural-historical/racial theory and the educational psychology theory need to be merged. This involves viewing every component of the original educational theory from a racial lens, including the perspectives of a racial/ethnic group and/or critiques based on race. Also, the researcher must consider the social-cultural-historical contexts when merging the theories. Race-reimaging is not just about the theory that is being used. It is also about reframing the research study to incorporate race throughout all aspects of the study. This includes using critical literature to inform the study, choosing a research design that is congruent with a race-centered focus, developing race-centered research questions, and engaging in participant selection, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation that focuses on race. Also, it is important to disseminate your research findings in a manner that highlights the emphasis on race. It is about using the race-reimaged theory to better understand and/or interrogate how race influences the experiences of the people, policies, and systems that are being investigated.

The last challenge involves the relationship between race-focused and race-reimaging. Although race-focused and race-reimaged approaches can be used separately in educational psychology research, it is intended for approaches to be used together. Frequently, researchers examine a race-focused construct in addition to one or more educational psychology constructs. Because of this, we see that using both race-focused and race-reimaged approaches in conjunction should be a common approach. It is important to note that the relationship between race-focused and race-reimaged approaches is unique; they are inextricably linked. As a construct becomes race-reimaged, as its components and conceptualizations change, and as more evidence is collected, it will no longer be the original construct. It will instead develop into a race-focused construct. The process and goal of race-reimaging are, in essence, the creation of race-focused constructs. For example, if a researcher has the goal of race-reimaging the construct of emotion regulation, she will conduct a series of investigations exploring *racialized emotion regulation* of racially marginalized students. After she has demonstrated a consistent pattern of findings or research trends, the construct of emotion regulation will have been race-reimaged to a race-focused construct of racialized emotion regulation.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Now that we have discussed the evolution of race-focused and reimaged approaches, in closing, it is important to address the "where do we go from here" question. To do so, we reflected on a few areas and thoughts about what comes next. We begin with our thoughts regarding where the field should go in terms of race-focusing and race-reimaging. Then, we discuss the teaching of race in educational psychology courses.

Race-Focusing

Many race-focused constructs could be better integrated into educational psychologist thinking. Although numerous constructs can be discussed, for lack of space, we will only focus on a few constructs that we think would be beneficial to the field. The first race-focused construct is racialized emotions. Educational psychologists have an interest in emotions. Yet, to date, educational psychologists have not explicated the role of racialized emotions in teaching and learning. Bonilla-Silva (2019), using Green (2013), defined racialized emotions as "emotions related to race that people experience when they engage in interracial interaction" (p. 961). Thus, given the current school and education racial climate, this is an area in dire need of inquiry. In other words, how can we expand the current theoretical frameworks of emotion to address racialized emotions?

Relatedly, racialized emotions need to be contextualized as they relate to and influence the potential for racial coping and psychological well-being (Anderson et al., 2019). Specifically, how do students and their families deal with and attempt to cope with racism within school environments? As cited earlier in this article, there have been inquiries looking at belonging from a race-reimaged perspective (Fong et al., 2019; Gray, et al., 2018). For example, it would benefit the field to expand the approach to examining belonging to include thoughts and approaches to racial coping and psychological well-being.

In addition, we need to further examine the role of race-neutral beliefs and identity. Both racialized emotions and racial coping are exacerbated by race-neutral beliefs that are rooted in White supremacist ideologies and embedded in the history, structure, and enactment of education (Bonilla-Silva, 2019, Bonilla-Silva 2022). As such, the impact of those beliefs and their magnifications on the experiences of POC within educational contexts by educational psychologists need further exploration. These beliefs are either implicitly or explicitly influential to all aspects of the education of all children and their families. We need to look no further than recent efforts by state officials in Arkansas, Florida, and Texas, as well as many others, to "white-wash" U.S. history to make it more palatable for those who want to ignore or refute the role that racism plays in society.

Race-Reimaging

In terms of race-reimaging and additional areas to explore, we would suggest that any area of inquiry where race/ethnicity is only used as a demographic variable or where race/ethnicity categories are used to make comparisons among race and ethnicity would be a place for additional race-reimaging. Or to put it a different way, if the only place the words "race" or "ethnicity" are seen is in the description of the participants, there is work to do. Needless to say, educational psychology is replete with constructs that could benefit from race-reimaging including epistemic beliefs, self-, co-, shared-regulating, and classroom management, among many others.

In terms of how to go about the process of race-reimaging, from what we have seen so far, the first step is to continue to engage in race-focused readings to continue to enhance critical consciousness. Throughout the article, we have identified several different race-focused approaches. We tend to rely on CRT, but there are many other race-focused theories, depending on researchers' particular areas of interest (e.g., Bonilla-Silva, 2019, Bonilla-Silva 2022; Brayboy, 2005; Freire, 1970; Smedley et al., 2005 and others, see reference section). This is important in that the first step in the process of race-reimaging is making the connection, through critical consciousness, to race-focused theories.

As previously described, there is a relationship between the processes of race-reimaging and race-focusing. The ultimate goal of race-reimaging a construct or theory is to transform that particular construct or theory into a race-focused theory/construct. To do so, in designing a study, race has to be taken into consideration at all stages. Remember, the approach should focus on more than just the demographics of the participants and any potential differences. In other words, if you are interested in Black lesbian STEM students, then study Black lesbian STEM students using race-focused theories from social-cultural-historical perspectives.

Teaching Courses in Educational Psychology

Although it is important to emphasize race-focusing and re-imaging within research, educational psychologists should also consider taking this approach in other arenas such as teaching. There has been a tendency in textbooks and syllabi to talk about diversity as an afterthought. For example, it is common to discuss motivation theory and research in our textbooks and our courses along with a discussion of diversity. However, in many cases, the topics are addressed by talking about and reading our theories about motivation first, and then, at the end of the chapter or the course, there is a small, disconnected section or discussion on "diversity" (i.e., the textbook equivalent of the "back of the bus"). Despite an effort to include inquiry and thinking about social justice, oftentimes, we end up marginalizing the inquiry and thinking we are trying to promote. As such, we encourage educational psychologists to

avoid this trap by doing the critical consciousness work necessary to engage in race-focused scholarship and work to reimage our textbooks and readings to facilitate the teaching, learning, development, and motivation of all our students. Race and other issues of diversity should be foregrounded throughout our textbooks. In addition, race-focused readings should be included throughout our courses.

Conclusion

Here, we have talked about the nature of race-focusing and race-reimaging approaches in educational psychology. In this article, we reflected on what has occurred in the decade since we published DeCuir-Gunby and Schutz (2014). From our perspective, it has been an interesting journey. In many respects, it has been a bit humbling in that this was not an article that presented theories or results that confirmed or slightly added to any traditional educational psychology approaches or findings. It was, and still is, a call to change how educational psychologists think about, approach, and do research. In other words, what we proposed was to change the "business as usual" mentality of the field. It would have been easy for scholars to pass it by and move on to articles that tended to confirm their current approaches to inquiry. However, a small but growing number of scholars heeded the call, and slowly, articles turned into special issues and conference sessions on the topic. Now, we have a growing movement to engage in more race-centered research in educational psychology. We sincerely thank those who have joined us on this journey.

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