



# Teaching scared: pre-service teacher appraisals of racial stress, socialization and classroom management self-efficacy

Keisha L. Bentley-Edwards<sup>1</sup> · Howard C. Stevenson Jr.<sup>2</sup> · Duane E. Thomas<sup>3</sup> · Valerie N. Adams-Bass<sup>4</sup> · Chonika Coleman-King<sup>5</sup>

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## Abstract

The fears of pre-service teachers, particularly Teach for America (TFA) teachers, about working in urban classroom settings are framed as racial stress. Racial stress is the threat of well-being when one is unprepared to negotiate a race-related interpersonal encounter. Currently, there exist no measures on racial stress, socialization, and coping for teachers of African American and Latino students. Findings reveal that newly developed and reliable measures of teacher appraisal of racial/ethnic stressful interactions, socialization and coping are related to classroom management self-efficacy and school collegial racial conversations. These findings have implications for racial stress management as key to developing high quality teacher-student relationships.

**Keywords** Teacher stress · Racial stress · Pre-service teachers · Teach for America · Classroom management

## 1 1. Introduction

Given the racial achievement gap, high stakes testing, reports on disparate disciplinary practices, it is no wonder that being an urban school teacher or school administrator was identified by the American Stress Institute as two of the most stressful

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✉ Keisha L. Bentley-Edwards  
Keisha.Bentley.Edwards@Duke.edu

<sup>1</sup> Samuel DuBois Cook Center On Social Equity, School of Medicine, Duke University, Durham, USA

<sup>2</sup> University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA

<sup>3</sup> Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA

<sup>4</sup> University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA

<sup>5</sup> University of Florida, Gainesville, USA

occupations (Sorenson 2007), a trend that can be found globally (Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2017). The real and imagined fears of pre-service teachers preparing to enter urban classrooms include stress about misunderstanding the school culture and language, receiving hostile reactions from colleagues and parents, being seen as incompetent, being physically and emotionally victimized, and managing defiant youth and primarily being perceived as racially incompetent (Dworkin et al. 1988; Stevenson 2014; Veltri 2010).

While many studies measure the experience of preservice teaching effectiveness stress (Klassen et al. 2013; Onchwari 2010), few measure the racial dynamics surrounding that stress. Proximal and daily interactions between teachers of Black or Latino students are racialized simply because of the presence of racial/ethnic competence anxiety—meaning that stereotyped ideas and anxiety may precede actual encounters. White teachers are particularly susceptible to this type of racial stress (Bartoli et al. 2015; Michael 2014; Stevenson 2014; Swartz 2003). Racialized experiences are encounters that might ignite racially stressful or relieving thoughts, feelings, and actions. This study seeks to extend researchers' understandings of racial influences on non-racial aspects of teaching by (1) developing measures of racial stress, socialization, and conversation and (2) investigating whether racial risk and protective factors are related to classroom management self-efficacy for preservice teachers of Black and Latinx students in urban classrooms.

## 1.1 Student teacher racial discordance

In the 2017–2018 school year, 80% of traditional public school teachers in the U.S. identified as White, and 15% and 27% of public school students identify as Black and Latinx, respectively (NCES 2020). Upon a closer look at major metropolitan school districts, you find larger racial mismatches between the teacher and student population such as Philadelphia where teachers are 70% White and the students are 80% Black, Latinx or Asian and in New York City where teachers are 61% White and students are 83% Black, Latinx or Asian (Disare 2018; Liu 2018). Adding further stress, Teach for America (TFA) teachers are entering schools that are typically very different racially and socioeconomically than those in which they were educated, and expected to perform well based on 5 weeks of intensive training on the Academic Impact Model (Brewer 2014; Hootnick 2014; Veltri 2010, 2012). Heightened awareness of racial disparities in academic and disciplinary outcomes, as well as systemic issues more broadly can add to the racial tensions between teachers and the students they serve. Although this study focuses on the United States, systemic racial inequalities are not limited to this country, and are the impetus for social enterprise models of teacher education and improving educational equity globally (Freidrich et al. 2015; Kavanaugh & Dunn 2013; Stevens & Dworkin 2019).

We acknowledge that classroom tensions based on other social power imbalances (such as gender-identity, sexuality, immigration/refugee status and able-bodiedness) warrant avid investigation that is beyond the scope of this study. Given the racial disparities in academic achievement and disciplinary practices, identifying how racial stress informs perceived classroom efficacy is imperative.

## 2 The racial stress of building trust in student relationships

Racial stress is the threat of well-being when an individual feels unprepared and too overwhelmed to negotiate a race-related interpersonal encounter (Harrell 2000). Racial literacy is the ability to read, recast, and resolve racially stressful encounters (Stevenson 2014). Stress attributed to teacher handling of racial politics in schools is rarely studied. Studying teachers' racial stress may help to explain how preservice teachers' perceptions and coping approaches to student success and failure can contribute to systemic inequities (Johnson & Avelar La Salle 2010). TFA is based on the Academic Impact Model, which places student outcomes solely on the quality of teacher practice. This teacher as change agent of academic achievement disparities is also the basis for similar global programs such as Teach for All and TeachFirst. This heightened teacher accountability has been attributed to quicker than typical teacher burnout and disillusionment for TFA teachers (Brewer 2014). Hammen and deMayo (1982) found that urban school teachers who oversee classrooms of color may undergo unaddressed stress which may extend to depressive symptoms. Racial differences in the perception of school racial climate, school membership, discipline management, racial identity or racial coping such as how teachers differ in their management of racial tensions, all affect achievement (Mattison & Aber 2007). Moreover, Dworkin et al. (1988) found that teachers of color reported being less stressed and victimized by students than White teachers in urban classrooms.

Quality teacher-student relationships (Akiba 2011; Pianta 1999), predict student classroom social and academic success as well as teacher competence (Bergin & Bergin 2009; Hughes et al. 2005; Minor et al. 2002; O'Connor & McCartney 2007; Wubbels 2005). The development of trusting student-teacher relationships for students of color can be undermined by conscious and unconscious racial conflicts (McAllister & Irvine 2016; Stevenson 2014; Weinstein et al. 2003). It is important to know how pre-service teachers successfully negotiate racially stressful conflicts in the classroom and establish productive relationships with students from marginalized racial/ethnic groups (Allen 2015; Stevenson 2014; Crawford-Garrett 2017).

### 2.1 Lack of racial literacy training in teacher preparation

It is understandable that teacher-Black/Latino student relationships would be frightening for new teachers at first, particularly for those with limited exposure to meaningful cross-racial contexts (Allen 2015; Castro 2010; Welter 2011). While reliable and consistent criteria for the evaluation of teaching competence have been questioned for all teachers (Pianta 2011), American schools of education do not train or evaluate how well teachers navigate the politics of racial stress and coping in the classroom (Karp & Harris 2011; Ladson-Billings 2001). Prospective teachers are afforded little to no practice of negotiating race and cross-cultural relations conflict assessment, facilitation, resolution skills in their training programs (Bennett 2016; Gudykunst & Kim 1984; McAllister & Irvine 2016). While the practicum experience shows promise in changing pre-service

teacher negative perceptions of teaching in urban classrooms (Milner et al. 2003), they can lead to the exacerbation of negative stereotypes of the settings and the students.

## 2.2 Teacher racial bias

Given that the teacher workforce is mostly White and the training of cultural competence is sparse (Parker & Hood 1995; Sleeter 2001), teacher-Black/Latino student relationships may be burdened by a host of unconscious biases. African American students report less satisfactory and more biased relationships with their teachers compared to White students (Hinojosa 2008; Marcus et al. 1991; McKown & Weinstein 2002; Zirkel 2004) while teachers rate less positively their relationships with Black students as compared to White and Hispanic students (Hughes et al. 2005). Results are mixed on whether the race of the teacher matters in teacher-student relationships.

There are racial bias differences in how teachers react to and discipline Black students and how Black students respond academically to Black teachers (Banks & Banks 1993; Dee 2004; Hinojosa 2008; Michael et al. 2017). Black students are more likely than any other group to disproportionately receive unfair and harsh punitive actions by school officials for lesser infractions (Gregory et al. 2010; Hinojosa 2008; Skiba et al. 2002, 2010) and this phenomenon begins in preschool (Gilliam 2008). Downey and Pribesh (2016) found white teacher bias to be more powerful than student oppositional culture to explain why white teachers evaluate Black students more harshly. Cultural mis-match hypothesis explains white teacher racial bias as misinterpretations of Black cultural style in language and mannerisms (Alexander et al. 1999; Bentley-Edwards et al. 2013; Neal et al. 2016). Non-Black preschool teachers perceived Black students engaged in pretend play to be less prepared for school, less accepted by peers, and more conflictual in the teacher-child relationship (Yates & Marcelo 2014). Okonofua and Eberhardt (2015) found that teachers regardless of teacher race are harsher in their discipline of Black students compared to other students. Conversely, research on teacher bias against Black students does not focus solely on hostile intentions (Ferguson 1998; Hughes et al. 2005; Zirkel 2004) and may reflect teachers' disproportionate affirmation of White students (Casteel 1998, 2000; Zirkel 2005).

Racially competent teachers show empathy skills during relationship building by not avoiding racially intense classroom topics and by accurately interpreting the emotional cues of Black and Latino students. Before youth can be motivated to learn, they must first feel emotionally supported by school personnel who are prepared to protect them from racial micro-aggressions (Arrington et al. 2003; Sue et al. 2007; Sue et al. 2009). As such, racial politics in classrooms influence student learning due to the lack of teacher preparation and unconscious teacher bias in managing these politics. If teachers are overwhelmed by not knowing what to do in addressing racial conflicts in the classroom, how well can they develop meaningful relationships with students of color?

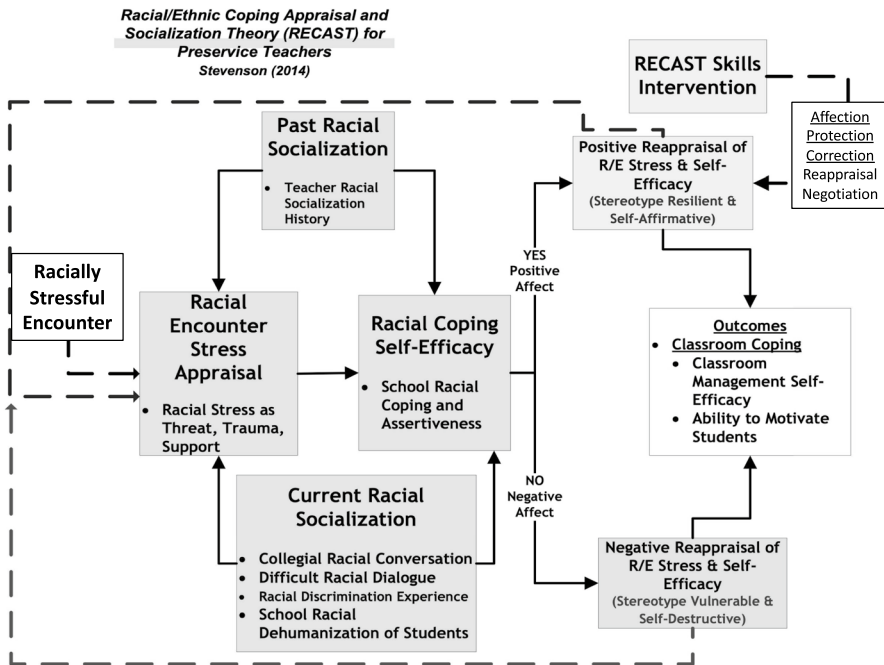
### 3 Measurement of teacher self-efficacy and classroom management in racialized classrooms

Teacher self-efficacy is the belief that one can teach well and is a predictable and reliable measure of positive teaching outcomes and student learning (Ross et al. 1996; Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy 2001). This is especially true for student teachers learning to master the skills of teaching (Hoy & Woolfolk 1990; Labaree 2010). While teacher self-efficacy is central to everything a teacher does, including classroom management (Wolters & Daugherty 2007), it remains too broad a construct to capture the politics of teaching African American and Latino students.

Currently there are no measures of teacher self-efficacy with regard to racial conflict resolution in the classroom. Teacher stress measures have focused on the strain of classroom and time management, socioemotional manifestations of stress, relationships with fellow teachers, teacher esteem needs (Boyle et al. 1995; Fimian & Fastenau 1990), teaching science (Halim et al. 2006) and the unique challenges of teaching special needs students (Fimian et al. 1991). Without measurement of stress specific to racial encounters in classroom interactions, researchers will not be able to identify specific racialized solutions for teachers.

### 4 Theoretical rationale for recasting racial stress and socialization in teaching efficacy

Several theoretical assumptions in this paper drive the selection of measure components which include RECAST theory (Racial/Ethnic Coping Appraisal and Socialization theory- Stevenson 2014, see Fig. 1) that relies upon stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman 1984) and phenomeno-ecological (Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory; Spencer 2005) models. According to RECAST Theory, a teacher's racial encounter stress appraisal would be initiated if, for example, a white student asks her Black classmate to be her personal slave during a history lesson. How the teacher appraises this encounter will depend on their current and past experiences of racial socialization, as well as their racial coping self-efficacy. This racial coping self-efficacy determine their feelings of competence to manage their own and the classes feelings of stress around race and racism. Depending on their level of racial coping and self-efficacy, a positive or negative reappraisal will occur that will directly inform classroom management and student motivation. In this case, a positive reappraisal will activate RECAST skills intervention strategies that will allow correction to the student making the racist statements, while also affirming the Black student's experience and resilience. If a negative reappraisal occurs, the teacher may choose to ignore the comment, or focus on the tone of the Black student's response to the comment, this will also inform classroom management and student motivation.



**Fig. 1** Using RECAST theory to understand racial stress & socialization in teaching efficacy

RECAST theory posits that (1) the racial threat of stressors differ by context, exposure, and meaning-making of racial politics among individuals; (2) racial and academic stress influences and reveals teachers' racial coping self-efficacy and stress-reduction competence; (3) the stress of learning how to teach is different from the racial stress of teaching students from African American and Latino backgrounds; (4) racial stress appraisal and reduction do not occur competently without repeated practice; and (5) racial socialization and practicing racial literacy skills can minimize the threat of these stressors (Stevenson 2014). The benefit of explicitly teaching racial coping skills is that individuals learn to reappraise racial stressors as less threatening; thus leading to more productive results (Anderson & Stevenson 2019; Bentley-Edwards & Stevenson 2016; Karp & Harris 2011).

In contrast, RECAST theory proposes that teacher humiliation, low self-efficacy, and incompetence at managing racial stress can lead to the development of negative affect and avoidant coping styles including (1) inappropriate use of excessive discipline, (2) resistance and failure to seek help, or (3) become emotionally disengaged in student relationships.

## 5 Current study

This study was designed to analyze the relationship between racial and non-racial aspects of teacher efficacy and effectiveness, specifically for TFA pre-service teachers. Although focused on the racial and classroom dynamics in American classrooms, the concepts and findings can be modified for interpretation of racial and cultural tensions in other countries. With the rise of global programs that are reiterations of TFA such as Teach for All, Teach First and Teach for India, many of the critiques around teacher preparedness and training to work with culturally diverse students from low-resource schools abound (Anderson 2013; Blumenreich & Gupta 2015; Crawford-Garrett 2017; Exley 2014; Vellanki 2014). Therefore, the anxieties of the TFA pre-service teachers in this study may yield relevant findings for teachers in other contexts as well.

In this study, perceived classroom management self-efficacy and the ability to motivate students are the targeted non-racial teacher quality variables. This study has three parts; (1) determining the psychometric properties of the School/Teacher Racial Encounter Stress Scale (STRESS) and the Classroom Management Self-Efficacy subscale of the Teacher Interpersonal Self-Efficacy Scale (Brouwers & Tomic 2001); (2) examining the relationship between racialized experiences and perceived teacher classroom self-efficacy; and (3) hypothesis testing whether school racial socialization factors predict non-racial teaching self-efficacy better than racial stress appraisal factors alone. It is our hypothesis that pre-service teachers who experience racial stress as a threat, who are exposed to less family of origin racial socialization, and who find discomfort in collegial racial conversations will report less self-efficacy in classroom management and in their ability to motivate students.

## 6 Methods

### 6.1 Participants

The TFA teachers in this training site are placed in schools in one of the largest school districts in the country and its surrounding areas. Most have been placed in charter schools, particularly those that recently took over leadership of the lowest performing schools. It is not uncommon for schools participating in this TFA site to have student populations that are over 90% Black and/or Latino and more than 95% identified as economically disadvantaged.

Three cohorts of participants across three years from a pre-service university-based Teach For America training program ( $n = 222$ ) are used in this study. Each cohort was administered a different set of school climate and coping measures. The only measures administered across all three cohorts included the STRESS (School-Teacher Racial Encounter Stress Scale) and the Teacher Classroom Management scales, with cohort 1 receiving only these two measures. The combined

sample yielded enough participants (12 students per item for both measures) to conduct a valid factor analytic study since no measure in the study included more than 15 items (Costello & Osborne 2005). Since Cohorts 2 and 3 differed from each other in their use of different measures of racial coping, only Cohort 2's measures will be used to answer the second research question of this study.

Cohort 2 participants ( $n=132$ ) were administered several measures on teacher perceptions of school climate, racial stress and socialization, student behavior, and classroom management. These participants were assigned to teach urban school classrooms usually lasting for one year to two years. They received five weeks of training in curriculum development, child and adolescent development, and cultural diversity awareness. Since participants from Cohort 1 were only administered the two measures of interest, the only demographic information shared will be that of the second sample. Of the 132 students, 66% were female. The racial makeup of the group was predominantly White (69.5%), followed by Black (13.3%), Asian (5.5%) and Latino, Biracial, and Other (all 3.9%). The preservice teachers ranged in age from 21–32 years old, with the majority being 22 years old. The participants were preparing to teach in elementary schools (21.2%), middle schools (7.6%) and high schools (31.8%). However, a large portion (39.4%) either did not know or did not report the grade they would be teaching.

## 6.2 Procedures

The current study was a part of a larger study that was approved by the University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board. Prior approval for inclusion of the study materials were obtained from the administrators of the pre-service training program, and each cohort of participants provided consent.

The goal of our study is to investigate the racial appraisals and experiences of pre-service Teach For America teachers in urban schools with large African American and Latino populations. To achieve this goal, a two-part study was necessary. The first part involves the validation of the School/Teacher Racial Encounter Stress Scale (STRESS) utilizing an exploratory factor analytic strategy with a combined sample of TFA teacher data pooled across three cohorts over three years. We also conducted a separate exploratory factor analysis to determine the factor structure of Perceived Self-Efficacy-Classroom Management (CMSE). Once the psychometric properties of these two measures were established, we investigated the racialized experiences of pre-service teachers, and its relationship with classroom management self-efficacy in the second part to answer the second research question. The measures in this study varied between agreement, difficulty, and frequency response formats. All of the measures that ask respondents about the frequency of the incident use the following response options (never, 1–3 times per year, 4–7 times per year, 8–12 times per year, and 1–2+ times per month).

To answer the third research question, two separate 2-step hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted for the teacher self-efficacy outcomes of classroom management and ability to motivate students. In the first step, racial stress appraisal



factors were entered into the equation and in the second step, family and school racial socialization variables were entered.

### 6.3 Measures

The measures were theoretically categorized according to recast theory as (1) past racial legacy socialization, (2) current school racial socialization stressors and mediators, (3) racial stress appraisal and engagement self-efficacy, and (4) non-racial coping self-efficacy outcome measures (see Fig. 1, Stevenson 2014).

**Past family racial socialization** Family Racial Socialization Scale (FRS; Coleman & Stevenson 2013). This is a 5-item scale that asks respondents to rate how frequently their family had discussions with them about racial discrimination, pride, or negative stories about their racial group as well as how to deal with racial discrimination ( $\alpha = 0.69$ ). Examples include “*Growing up, my family talked to me about racial discrimination.*”

**Current school racial socialization** *Teacher Racial Discrimination Experience (RDE)* is a 2-item scale that asks teachers how frequently they have experienced racial mistreatment at their school from in-group and out-group persons ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ). The two items are “*I have been mistreated by members of other races*” and “*I have been mistreated by members of my own race.*” *School Racial Coping (SRC)* is a 5-item scale that asks teachers how frequently they manage various racial interactions and stereotypes in the school ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ). Examples of items include racial assertiveness (“*I have spoken up for my race when my group is being challenged at the school where I teach*”) and racial inhibition (“*I have had to swallow my anger about racial conflict in my school where I teach*”). The *Teacher-Colleague Racial Conversation Scale (TCRC)* is a 5-item scale that asks teachers how frequently they engage in racial dialogue with colleagues on matters of racial knowledge and discrimination ( $\alpha = 0.78$ ). An example of an item include “*My fellow teachers talk about racial discrimination.*” The *Difficulty with Racial Dialogue Scale (DRD)* is a four item, five point Likert scale (“Very Easy” to “Very Hard”) that asks teachers how easy or hard it is to talk about racial conflicts with friends, White colleagues, colleagues of color, and principal at school ( $\alpha = 0.60$ ). The *Racial Dehumanization of Students Scale (RDS)* consists of 4 items with a five point Likert response format (strongly disagree to strongly agree), and asks teachers to assess the school’s perception of Black and Latino students as less smart, receiving more discipline, more difficult to engage, and more scary ( $\alpha = 0.75$ ) than other students. One item is “*Other teachers in my school are afraid of many of the Black and Latino students.*”

**Racial stress appraisal and engagement** The *School/Teacher Racial Encounter Stress Scale (STRESS)* consists of 15 items with a five-point Likert scale (Never to always) response format that is a modified version of the Stress Appraisal Measure for Adolescents (Rowley et al. 2005). The items were revised to include content that focused on teacher concerns about racial conflicts in student–teacher relationships and in classroom authority. To further validate the racial stress construct, we analyzed whether participants’ in-the-moment stressfulness of responding to race questions would register as a negative correlate to teacher racial stress in the classroom.

Following the first several questions of the survey (within the first 5 min) and at the end (usually 20 min later), participants were asked, “How stressful was it to answer these questions?” Teachers who scored higher on the initial stressfulness question than on the final question were identified as having *Momentary Racial Survey Stress (MRSS)* while those who scored higher on the final question were identified as having *Consistent Racial Survey Stress (CRSS)*. Our reasoning is that the MRSS teachers would manage the emotionally stressful nature of the questions by the end of the study whereas the CRSS teachers would remain overwhelmed as they responded to more questions. Additionally, each teacher was given a *total racial survey stress score* by summing across the two questions.

**Non-racial coping self-efficacy: motivating students and classroom management** *Teacher Ability to Motivate Students Scale* (TAMS; Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2010). This scale included four items on teachers’ motivation ability taken from the Norwegian Teacher Self-Efficacy Motivation subscale ( $\alpha = 0.93$ ). One example includes “I can get all students in class to work hard with their schoolwork.” The *Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Subscale to Teacher Interpersonal Self-Efficacy Scale* (Brouwers & Tomic 2001) is designed to measure teachers’ confidence in their abilities to (a) manage student classroom behavior, (b) engage collegial support, and (c) engage support from school principals. The original scale used three interpersonal self-efficacy activities, but for the purpose of this study, only the Perceived Self-Efficacy in Classroom Management subscale (14 items, CMSE) was used. The items were measured on a 6-point Likert-type scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree).

## 7 Results

### 7.1 Measure validation

The STRESS and Perceived Self-Efficacy in Classroom Management (PSE-CM) scales were subjected to exploratory factor analysis procedures. For the STRESS, a principal axis factor extraction method was conducted using an oblimin rotation and squared multiple correlations to find communality estimates from the 222 participants. The STRESS data was not normally distributed, thus, a principal axis factor extraction strategy guards against inflated variance values in the factors (Costello & Osborne 2005). We felt confident in using EFA for our initial 15 item measure based on the commonly used 5 participants per item guidelines for conducting exploratory factor analysis (Fabrigar et al. 1999). We applied the following rules to the factors (Costello & Osborne 2005): each factor needed to have items with loadings equal to or greater than 0.32; items must have loaded exclusively on one factor; yield adequate internal consistency for the items; and make intuitive sense based on stress and coping research (Lazarus & Folkman 1984; Stevenson 2014). We then used an optimized scaling approach (DeVellis 2003), which requires researchers to strike a balance between reliability and factor construct fit with scale length. Given that item 14 did not load effectively on any factor, the 15-item measure was reduced to 14 items;  $\alpha = 0.56$ ;  $M = 1.83$  (see Table 1). The initial interpretation of the factor

**Table 1** Factor analysis loadings for the school/teacher racial encounter stress scale (STRESS)

STRESS measure	Factors and Loadings				
				M	sd
	Support $\alpha = .82$	Threat $\alpha = .71$	Trauma $\alpha = .75$		
0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4					
Not at all a great amount					
Tris11. I have resources available to me to overcome racial stress when a student and I don't get along	<b>.839</b>	-.091	-.018	2.90	.93
Tris8. There is help available to me when my students think I might be racially biased	<b>.785</b>	.090	-.029	2.71	1.03
Tris3. There is someone I can turn to for help when I experience conflicts with my students of color	<b>.773</b>	-.062	.081	2.94	1.01
Tris1r. I have the ability to overcome stress regarding teaching about racial matters	.480	<b>-.412</b>	-.192	.96	.73
Tris4. I would rather not have to deal with the stress of teaching about racial topics	.043	<b>.708</b>	-.150	.91	1.00
Tris2. I perceive teaching about racial matters in class as threatening	-.093	<b>.669</b>	.070	.89	.79
Tris5r. I have what it takes to beat the stress of teaching about racial matters	.422	<b>-.525</b>	-.156	.83	.86
Tris12r. I have the skills necessary to overcome racial stress in my classroom	.503	<b>-.508</b>	-.112	1.07	.80
Tris6. I feel anxious when my students and I don't get along due to racial misunderstandings	.113	<b>.503</b>	.343	1.98	1.05
Tris9r. Most racially stressful events in my classroom end positively	.059	<b>-.396</b>	.183	1.49	.86
Tris15. My students challenge my authority as a teacher because of my race	-.047	<b>.381</b>	.149	1.06	.95
Tris10. The racially stressful events in my classroom affect me when I am away from school	.029	-.009	<b>.819</b>	2.01	1.10
Tris7. Stressful events around race in school impact me greatly	.079	.006	<b>.766</b>	2.02	1.02
Tris13. Racial stress within my relationships with students at school has a negative impact on me	-.063	.326	<b>.686</b>	1.58	.99

Bold represents the factor groupings

n = 222 Principal axis factoring; rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization. Pattern factor loadings above

solution was based on the model that Rowley et al. (2005) developed based on stress and coping theory. In stress and coping theory (Lazarus & Folkman 1984), individuals can judge or respond to a stressful situation as a threat, a challenge, or with resources to manage the stress. Teachers were rated on these subscales based on how high they scored on racially stressful situations designated as threats, challenges, or access to resources.

In contrast, the loadings for these samples provided less support for teachers perceiving racial conflicts as a *challenge*. Additionally, the reliability of the support factor was enhanced when 4 of the items were reverse-coded and then loaded strongest with the designated threat items. This suggests that the teachers in this sample perceived the opposite meaning of the original challenge items. That is, they saw classroom racial conflicts as threatening not challenging. Items like “I have the ability to overcome stress regarding teaching about racial matters” received such low frequency of endorsement that it more readily reflected, “I *may not* have the ability to overcome stress regarding teaching about racial matters.”

The three reliable subscales include *Teacher Racial Threat Appraisal* (8 items;  $\alpha=0.71$ ;  $M=1.16$ ,  $sd=0.05$ ), *Teacher Racial Trauma Appraisal* (3 items;  $\alpha=0.75$ ;  $M=2.08$ ,  $sd=0.80$ ), and *Teacher Racial Support Appraisal* (3 items;  $\alpha=0.82$ ;  $M=2.87$ ,  $sd=0.88$ ). The three-factor solution accounted for 48.35% of the variance. Table 1 provides the STRESS items and factor loadings.

Validating teachers’ racial stress appraisal involves differentiating the three constructs of racial threat, trauma, and support appraisals. Factor correlations revealed that while no significant correlation between support and trauma was found ( $r=-0.01$ , ns), teachers’ racial threat appraisals in the classroom with students are moderately and inversely related to racial support appraisals ( $r=-0.37$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), positively but weakly related to racial trauma appraisals ( $r=0.22$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). All three appraisals are distinguished from each other given this correlational matrix as measuring different phenomena.

For the PSE-CM, we followed similar factor analytic procedures as the STRESS measure with the exception of using a principal component analysis extraction because the data were relatively normally distributed. The exploratory factor analysis revealed a 3-factor solution with 14 items;  $\alpha=0.88$ ,  $M=4.21$  with total explained variance of 60.81% (see Table 2). The first factor, *Defiant Student Engagement*, (9 items,  $\alpha=0.89$ ,  $M=4.01$ ) included items related to a teacher’s sense that they can appropriately manage resistant or insubordinate students. An example of a Defiant Student Engagement item is “I can keep defiant students involved in my lessons.” The second factor, *Setting Rules and Classroom Expectations*, (4 items,  $\alpha=0.89$ ,  $M=4.10$ ), involves a teacher’s belief that they are effectively communicating and reinforcing class guidelines. For example, “I am always able to make my expectations clear to students.” For clarity, the one item factor was dropped. Given the high correlation between Setting Rules and Classroom Expectations and Defiant Student Engagement ( $r=0.66$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) factors, they were combined into the Teacher Classroom Management Self-Efficacy subscale.

Based on the properties revealed using exploratory factor analysis, exemplary to moderate reliability (Robinson et al. 1991), and appropriate between-factor correlations, the STRESS and the CMSE were determined to be psychometrically

**Table 2** Factor analysis loadings of the teacher classroom management scale

Teacher classroom management scale-factor analysis			
0——1——2——3——4	Factors*		
Not at all a great amount	1	2	3
Tcm2- I am able to respond adequately to defiant students	<b>.81</b>		
Tcm1- I can keep defiant students involved in my lessons	<b>.80</b>		
Tcm3- I can keep a few problem students from ruining an entire class	<b>.75</b>		
Tcm4- I can manage my class very well	<b>.72</b>		
Tcm7- I can get through to most difficult students	<b>.62</b>		
Tcm6- If a student disrupts lesson, I'm able to redirect him quickly	<b>.62</b>		
Tcm11- If students stop working, I can put them back on track	<b>.60</b>		
Tcm5- I can take measures to keep activities running efficiently	<b>.50</b>		
Tcm8- There are very few students that I cannot handle			
Tcm10- I am able to begin the year so students will behave well		<b>.74</b>	
Tcm12- I can communicate I'm serious about getting appropriate behavior		<b>.74</b>	
Tcm9- I am able to begin the year so students will learn to behave well		<b>.74</b>	
Tcm13- I know what rules are appropriate for my students		<b>.63</b>	
Tcm14- I am not always able to execute several activities at once			<b>-.85</b>

Bold represents the factor groupings

\*Factor 1- Controlling Defiant Students; Factor 2- Setting Classroom Rules and Expectations; Factor 3 was dropped for clarity. Principal component analysis; rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization; Pattern factor loadings are above

sound. For the three cohort sample, correlations between STRESS factors and the CMSE support the hypothesis that racial stress is related to CMSE, in that racial threat ( $r = -0.51$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), racial trauma ( $r = -0.24$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and racial support ( $r = 0.33$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) were significant in expected directions. These measures will be utilized accordingly for the second part of this study.

## 7.2 Understanding racialized experiences and classroom efficacy of cohort 2

*Demographic Findings.* No significant age or gender differences emerged in this Cohort 2 sample of pre-service teachers' measures developed within this study. The racialized experiences at home and school were perceived differently based on the racial background of the teacher. The racial distribution of teachers were unbalanced, with White teachers representing more than half of the teachers, and other ethnicities/races (Black, Latino, Asian, Biracial, and Other) consisted of much smaller groups if examined independently-reducing power and interpretability. Therefore, we evaluated racial differences based on White-, Ethnic Minority-, and "Other"-designated teachers.

White teachers compared to Ethnic minority teachers reported significantly higher scores on Racial Threat Appraisal,  $F(1,120) = 7.92$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and Racial

Trauma Appraisal  $F(1,120)=3.32$ ,  $p<0.05$ , and higher scores on Racial Support Appraisal that approached significance  $F(1,105)=2.78$ ,  $p<0.07$ . When examining classroom management efficacy, ethnic minority teachers scored significantly higher than white teachers  $F(1,112)=3.94$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The ethnic minority teachers also believed that the climate at their schools accepted deficit based stereotypes of its Black and Latino students as reflected in higher RDS scores than the White teachers,  $F(1,99)=11.27$ ,  $p<0.001$ . Finally, the ethnic minority teachers also received more FRS messages  $F(1,117)=122.92$ ,  $p<0.001$ , more racial coping incidents,  $F(1,120)=8.32$ ,  $p<0.01$ , and more incidents of racial discrimination,  $F(1,120)=86.82$ ,  $p<0.001$ , than their White colleagues. There were no racial differences in frequency of difficult racial conversations, collegial dialogues, racial test-taking stressfulness, or in their ability to motivate students.

Fifty-four percent of the teachers in the sample reported never speaking up for their race at the school they are teaching, while 23% reported speaking up 1–3 times per year; 11% reported speaking up 4–7 times per year; 6% reported speaking up 8–12 times per year; and 6% reported speaking up 1–2 times per month. However, when looking at responses across racial lines, 70% of White teachers have never spoken up to defend their race, as opposed to 21% of the ethnic minority teachers. Forty-two percent of the teachers in the sample reported never swallowing their anger during a racial conflict at a school where they are teaching, while 29% reported swallowing anger 1–3 times per year; 18% reported swallowing anger 4–7 times per year; 2% reported swallowing anger 8–12 times per year; and 9% reported swallowing anger 1–2 times per month. A similar racial pattern was revealed for this question in that 21% of the ethnic minority teachers felt that they swallowed their anger around racial conflict 1–2 times monthly, only 4% of the White teachers had this experience.

### 7.3 Hypothesis testing

**STRESS and classroom management efficacy** The relationship between STRESS factors demonstrated expected findings, such that (1) no significant correlation between support and trauma was found ( $r=-0.08$ , ns), (2) teachers' racial threat appraisals in the classroom with students are moderately and inversely related to racial support appraisals ( $r=-0.49$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), and (3) positively but weakly related to racial trauma appraisals ( $r=0.29$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Further validation of the STRESS for cohort 2 showed that those teachers with Consistent Racial Survey Stress scored significantly lower than teachers with Momentary Racial Survey Stress in racial encounter *support* [ $M=7.32$ ,  $sd=2.13$  vs  $M=8.46$ ,  $sd=2.11$ ,  $F(1,109)=7.87$ ,  $p<0.01$ ] and higher in racial encounter *threat* [ $M=11.23$ ,  $sd=3.80$  vs  $M=8.96$ ,  $sd=4.10$ ,  $F(1,109)=7.45$ ,  $p<0.01$ ].

We hypothesized that teachers' racial stress appraisal would be related to classroom management self-efficacy. For cohort 2, this hypothesis was supported as racial threat ( $r=-0.51$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), racial trauma ( $r=-0.24$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and racial support ( $r=0.33$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) were significantly related to classroom management self-efficacy in expected directions.

**Table 3** Inter-correlations of racial socialization variables

Racial socialization variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Family racial socialization	1				
2. Collegial racial conversation	.14	1			
3. Racial discrimination exp	.75**	.14	1		
4. Difficulty with racial dialogue	.05	-.08	.02	1	
5. School racial dehumanization	.33**	-.09	.40**	.05	1
6. School racial coping	.43**	.57**	.46**	-.06	.29**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Family and school racial socialization and racial stress appraisal. Table 3 provides the correlations between the STRESS factors of threat, trauma and support and racial socialization variables. All of the inter-correlations of family and school racial socialization variables were positive. Table 3 shows that FRS was significantly related to frequency of racial discrimination, school racial coping, and student racial dehumanization. School racial coping accounted for most of the remaining positive correlations with frequency of racial conversations with colleagues, racial discrimination frequency, and student racial dehumanization beliefs.

Table 4 shows that with respect to racial stress appraisal, teachers who scored high on classroom conflict as racially threatening also reported less family of origin racial socialization and school racial discrimination and greater difficulty with racial dialogues at school. Teachers who scored high on classroom conflict as racially traumatic also reported greater difficulty with racial dialogues at school, but unrelated to any other family and school racial socialization variables. Finally, no significant relationships with racial politics variables were found for teachers scoring high in perceiving classroom conflicts as moments for seeking support.

**Racial and non-racial teacher/school self-efficacy factors of CMSE and TAMS** Table 4 reveals that teachers who score high in FRS, RDE, and SRC also

**Table 4** Correlations of racial socialization variables with racial stress appraisal and classroom management self-efficacy variables

	Racial threat	Racial trauma	Racial support	Teacher CMSE	Teacher AMS
Family racial socialization	-.27**	-.04	.09	.19*	.21*
Collegial racial conversation	-.15	.16	.14	.08	-.00
Racial discrimination	-.29**	-.03	.07	.22**	.23**
Difficulty with racial dialogue	.52**	.22*	-.09	-.34**	-.23**
School racial dehumanization	-.05	.02	-.09	.12	.09
School racial coping	-.18	.11	-.07	.23**	.19*

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

scored high in CMSE and TAMS while those who have difficulty with racial dialogue at school scored low in CMSE and TAMS. The more uncomfortable teachers are in discussing race, the less likely they will perceive that they can manage their students or manage their classrooms with confidence.

**Predicting ability to motivate students and classroom management self-efficacy** To answer the third question, teacher TAMS and CMSE were regressed on racial stress appraisal and family/school racial socialization factors (see Table 5). In predicting CMSE, only one variable within the first block, discomfort with school racial dialogue [ $\beta = -0.30$ ,  $F(3,130) = -3.92$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ], was significant. The overall model revealed significant variance contribution (Partial  $R^2 = 0.11$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $F(3,130) = 3.80$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Teachers who find it hard to engage in racial dialogues with white colleagues, colleagues of color, parents and students are less likely to feel confident in managing diverse classrooms. In the second block, where racial stress appraisal variables were added, none of the racial socialization variables were found to be significant while racial encounter support ( $\beta = 0.17$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and racial encounter threat ( $\beta = -0.22$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) were found to be significant. The racial stress appraisal factors contributed to explain an overall 22% of the variance of CMSE ( $R^2$  change = 0.12,  $F(1,130) = 6.55$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The more teachers experience classroom racial encounters with students of color as having support and the less they experience these encounters as threatening, the more strongly they believe they can structure their classrooms and successfully engage the normal limit-testing of Black and Brown students.

In predicting TAMS, the overall model for the first block of racial socialization variables revealed significant coefficients for one variable, discomfort with school racial dialogue [ $\beta = -0.22$ ,  $F(3,130) = -2.61$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ]. This finding explained

**Table 5** Hierarchical multiple regression on classroom management and ability to motivate students

Variables	Classroom management self-efficacy				Ability to motivate students			
	Step 1		Step 2		Step 1		Step 2	
	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
FRS	.04		-.02		.09		.04	
CRC	-.04		-.07		-.12		-.09	
RDE	.12		.07		.12		.07	
DRD	-.30**		-.15		-.22**		-.04	
RDS	.03		.05		-.03		-.02	
SRC	.15		.19		.15		.16	
Support	—		.17*		—		-.09	
Threat	—		-.22*		—		-.28**	
Trauma	—		-.13		—		-.24**	
Model $R^2$	.11**		.22**		.08**		.18**	

FRS Family Racial Socialization, CRC Collegial Racial Conversation, RDE Racial Discrimination Experiences, DRD Difficulty with Racial Dialogue, RDS Racial Dehumanization of Students, SRC School Racial Coping

\* $p < 0.05$  level (2-tailed). \*\* $p < 0.01$  level (2-tailed)



the significant variance contribution (Partial  $R^2=0.08$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $F(3,130)=2.78$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Teachers who find it hard to engage racial dialogues with white colleagues, colleagues of color, parents and students are less likely to feel confident in their ability to motivate students. In the second block, where racial stress appraisal variables were added, none of the racial socialization variables were found to be significant while racial encounter threat [ $\beta=-0.28$ ,  $F(3,130)=-2.59$ ,  $p<0.01$ ] and racial encounter trauma [ $\beta=-0.24$ ,  $F(3,130)=-2.82$ ,  $p<0.01$ ] were found to be significant. The racial stress appraisal factors contributed to explain an overall 18% of the variance of TAMS ( $R^2$  change=0.12,  $F(1,130)=6.55$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). In summary, the more teachers view classroom encounters with students of color as racially threatening and traumatic, the less they believe they can motivate students to succeed academically.

## 8 Discussion

Despite a growing interest in the complexity of teaching students of color, little measurement research has been conducted on the stress of these dynamics. Developing measures that reflect direct experiences with racial stress can be useful in understanding how teachers interpret professional practice within racialized educational contexts. This study demonstrated that valid and reliable measurement of teacher racial stress appraisal was developed and found to be significantly more predictive of perceived classroom management self-efficacy and ability to motivate students than family and school context racial socialization experiences alone. It was also found that the momentary or consistent stress of filling out surveys about racial conflicts in classrooms could differentiate teachers' racial encounter and threat scores.

The measures identified here range from subtle to explicit statements about racial experiences and perceptions teachers are likely to have with and about school colleagues and students, and fit within the components of recast theory (Bentley-Edwards & Stevenson 2016; Stevenson 2014). Between the two measures of interest, only the STRESS factor analysis identified more than one factor. This study found that there is diversity in racial stress appraisals among White and ethnic minority teachers. White teachers rank lower in family racial socialization and in perceiving their school sites as contexts that micro-invalidate the intellectual potential and teachability of Black and Latino students. Teachers of color may perceive racial hostility and thus negotiate vulnerability and resilience to these stressors as do students and parents. Ironically, this racial stress exposure makes them better prepared to support youth and their parents to develop racial literacy skills, manage frustration and hurdle racial barriers.

In relationship to racial stress appraisals, teachers exhibit different reactions to managing classrooms. It appears that TFA teachers' attitudes about racial matters are significantly related to their perceptions of teaching responsibilities that are not ostensibly racial. Classroom management is a fundamental skill for the most qualified and effective teachers. This study contributes to the literature on teacher quality by suggesting that competent teachers are not necessarily competent in all teaching

matters, namely racial competency, unless specifically trained in this area (Stevenson 2014).

This study also suggests that appraisals of racial stress prompt greater vigilance towards classroom competence. Given that the teachers in this study would be teaching in urban, predominantly Black communities, it may be that when teachers are able to identify that their apprehension or stress has racialized roots, they are better prepared to manage classroom conflict with these students. Conversely, pre-service teachers of color who show greater exposure and experience in both racially conflictual situations and in socialization and thus don't perceive conflicts in classrooms of students of color as threatening as their White peers. Exposure to racial politics through socialization appears to be a protective factor for non-racial teacher competencies when students in the classrooms are predominantly Black and Latino.

Teacher lack of or plenty of awareness of racially discriminatory conflicts, practice with or inability to speak to and resolve racial conflicts in the classroom, and congruence or mismatch of racial socialization, rejection, and engagement coping may partially explain previous research on White teacher bias, racial matching benefits, and Black student distrust (Dee 2004; Douglas et al. 2008; Oates 2003). For some White teachers, indirect conversations about race are common, especially those that utilize code words or allusions to race. For example, some teachers would prefer to discuss socioeconomic class without addressing the societal structures that interconnect race and class dynamics. Or, some teachers may feel more comfortable describing their students or schools as urban, rather than stating that their schools primarily serve Black and Latino students in large cities. Rarely are students from Manhattan's Upper East Side independent schools referred to as urban – despite being nestled in the largest city in the United States. We argue that direct conversations about race or even personal racial awareness, for most White teachers are not salient until confronted with impossible to ignore circumstances, such as teaching in a predominantly Black or Latino school.

Therefore, it may mean that racially literate teachers are better prepared to build trustful relationships with students of color. Black students who experience this trust and safety try harder, work harder, and learn more. Given the overwhelming percentage of White teachers, these findings may be helpful in teacher training where little attention to racial literacy skills development exists (Ladson-Billings 2001). While increasing the diversity in school curriculum builds racial knowledge, it does not equate to meaningful skills in effectively and specifically navigating conflicts when learning to teach students of color (Michael 2014; Sleeter 2001). A National Academy of Science report (2004) on urban schools recommended that teacher education programs develop specific training on relationship building with diverse learners.

To take on this challenge, training pre-service teachers and their supervisors might focus on increasing self-reflection, self-confrontation, self-efficacy, self-control, and self-expression methods regarding racial literacy with students, colleagues, and leadership at their schools of practice (Stevenson 2014). While journaling of the experience is a common practice in teacher training, unless there is specific guided practice on assessing racial stress and targeting the resolution of racial encounters, one's fear of racial conflict may increase rather than dissipate. Two, role-playing and practice of specific situations in which teachers are overwhelmed may reduce

racial stress as long as teachers can rehearse alternative response strategies to those situations. Third, undergraduate and graduate schools of education must recognize that they are contexts of racial/ethnic socialization whether they are intentional in their training and courses to address classroom racial politics or not (Karp & Harris 2011). Providing TFA students with teaching strategies to navigate classroom management without navigating racial tension may prove fruitless if the classrooms are heavily populated with students of color (Brewer 2014). Knowing that student teachers across race may vary in their appraisal of racial threat in their teaching may be helpful in structuring training activities to address this type of diversity.

Despite the widespread belief that older generations hold more prejudicial attitudes towards persons of color than younger generations, this study suggests that young teachers may still struggle with what to say or do with respect to racial tension in their roles (Castro 2010). To be effective in urban classrooms made up of primarily Black and Brown students, teacher education and professional development must focus on the quality of navigation of racial stress and literacy within the classroom rather than the race status of the teachers.

It has been argued that TFA teachers, as well as their global counterparts, Teach for All, Teach for India or Teach First, is based upon a leadership and accountability model using ambitious and often naïve high achievers to tackle the social justice issue of educational equity (Blumenreich & Gupta 2015; Crawford-Garrett 2017; Friedrich et al. 2015; Hootnick 2014; Sawchuk 2016; Veltri 2012). A core foundation in TFA, as well as these programs abroad, is that a teacher's mindset, beliefs and skills directly inform what happens in the classroom and its related outcomes (Brewer 2014). Crawford-Garrett (2017) found that teachers in the Teach First New Zealand program were overwhelmed by the personal challenge of eliminating educational disparities between White and Maori or Pasifika New Zealanders. It is possible that the individual pressure to improve academic outcomes found in their training, an approach shared by TFA, created dissonance and difficulty in distinguishing systemic barriers to achievement based on colonization and racism as opposed to what they perceived as individual student lack of commitment to learning. As such, delving into these teachers' mindset, beliefs and skills about race are key to improving practice and pedagogy in racially diverse schools. It should also be noted that building racial stress and coping skills is limited by systemic inequalities that must also be identified and addressed.

## 8.1 Limitations and future directions

Several limitations to this research include the use of teacher self-efficacy versus real-world effective teaching activities to demonstrate the link between racial and non-racial teaching experiences and the lack of observations of teachers' performance in the classroom. Verification of students' actual experiences of effective and ineffective classroom management is a necessary step in adding construct validity to the measures developed in this study. That is, "Are teachers who are racially stressed or who score low in classroom management self-efficacy poor in setting class rules and expectations or supervising defiant students observed as lacking in classroom

management by independent experts?” Still, the “pre-emptive” attitudes of pre-service teachers are defined so because often their training is limited and these attitudes are often influenced by stereotypical notions of race that influence actual practice (Castro 2010; Ladson-Billings 2001). Given high stakes testing and preconceived notions of STEM underperformance by Black and Latino students, there may be differences in outcomes in perceived classroom self-efficacy that was not included in this study. Future research should investigate the relationships between teacher subject and grade level with racial stress and classroom efficacy. The lack of training preparation is a particularly salient element of the TFA experience (Veltri 2010). Future work will have to test out the theory components with larger sample sizes and with traditional pre-service rather than TFA pre-service teachers (Bentley-Edwards et al. 2013).

## 9 Conclusion

The implications of this work point to the potential for measurement and training that modifies the specific racial stress appraisals of teachers, whether they are traditional teachers, TFA, Teach for All or Teach First teachers. Given the participants in this study, we focus quite a bit on TFA pre-service teachers, and American contexts. We argue that even for teachers that receive formal teacher education training, these educators may also experience racial stress and lack racial coping self-efficacy, and that these issues extend beyond the US borders. Through the development of reliable measures of school-based racial stress and coping, classroom management self-efficacy is related to how pre-service teachers appraise racial stressfulness of teaching in urban classrooms where students of color are the majority. If “teaching scared” can be addressed, teacher classroom management can improve which can lead to expectations that trusting teacher-Black/Latino student relationships will become the rule, rather than serendipitous.

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**Keisha L. Bentley-Edwards** Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Medicine and the Associate Director of Research at the Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity at Duke University. Her interdisciplinary research focuses on how racism, gender and culture influence health, social and educational outcomes.

**Howard C. Stevenson Jr.** Ph.D. is the Constance Clayton Professor of Urban Education, Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the Executive Director of the Racial Empowerment Collaborative. His research focuses on helping families develop and use assertive coping strategies during racial microaggressions. Key to this racial healing work is using culture to reduce in-the-moment threat reactions and increase access to memory, mobility, and voice.



**Duane E. Thomas** Ph.D. is a training and technical assistance specialist for the Mid-Atlantic PBIS Network at Sheppard Pratt Health System and a research affiliate at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. He is also a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice. His research focuses on risk and cultural protective factors impacting the socioemotional and academic functioning of urban Black children and youth and the development of culturally responsive approaches to school violence prevention involving academic-community partnerships.

**Valerie N. Adams-Bass** Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Education in the Department of Human Services at the University of Virginia. Her research examines the relationships of racial socialization and racial identity with the developmental processes, social and academic outcomes of Black children and youth.

**Chonika Coleman-King** Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in the School of Teaching and Learning at the University of Florida. Her teaching and research center issues related to race, class, gender, and immigrant status and their impact on teaching and learning. Consequently, Dr. Coleman-King's work takes up the development of culturally responsive and anti-racist teachers, experiential learning, urban education, and the experiences of Black immigrant and Black American youth in U.S. schools.