TABOO

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Introduction

Is It Almost 2021 Yet?

Kenneth Varner, David Carlson, & Andromeda Hightower

Well, fuck 2020. That's the best we can come up with for how we are feeling as public intellectuals concerned about not only the general state of the world, but with particular manifestations of isolation, fear, and uncertainty. The 2nd decade of the 21st century has been a certain type of 'roarin 20's,' but not a year filled with much hope. The United States government, led by who is arguably the ineptest head of state in the history of the world, mishandled, mislead, and misfired with response to COVID-19. By the time this issue is out well over 200,000 U.S. citizens will be dead from causes linked to the outbreak of COVID-19, but our very pathway to protection and healing has been politicized. At the time of writing this introduction we are closing in on a bizarre election where the choices include two nearly octogenarians whose combined age is well over 150. The choices seem bleak in many ways not because anyone is uncertain (from either side) what they plan to do relative to voting, but because we seemed to have learned little from the messages sent in the 2016 cycle. *Taboo* started the Trump presidency with a special issue examining the disastrous implications of what the U.S. did and we find ourselves, four years later, seemingly in a worse spot. Most of the world looks with great perplexity about the state of the world and the U.S.' relationship to the chaos being felt worldwide. Putin, Bolsonaro, Xing, and Trump—a cross-conti-

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nental compilation axis of evil, have some things in common, including a desire for totalitarian control and manipulation of people for their own personal aims which appear centered on concentrating power.

But none of what has been mentioned thus far specifically gets the ways in which people at more individualized levels are struggling. As this issue was being finished U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg passed away. The mourning being experienced and expressed worldwide is telling not only for what a wonderful and purpose-driven judge that she was, but for the implications of what her absence on the court represented. The U.S. Senate led by puppet master Mitch McConnell blocked President Obama's Supreme Court nominee Merritt Garland from receiving a hearing or vote under the premise that 'so close' to an election (and in the case of replacing Scalia it was not close to the election at all) it would not be appropriate to take action. Most shuttered at that thought but ultimately were forced to accept a new way of doing business. Now, less than 45 days before the election, with Trump in the hospital from his own COVID-19-related illness, McConnell and other Senate hypocrits from the right are jamming the process to a warp speed to try and have a vote to replace Ginsberg before the election. This from the same Senate Republicans who blocked Barack Obama's nominee under the premise that in an election year the people should decide through their vote for president the direction of the count. Our heads shake even writing this. For the first time in many of our adult lives existential questions of safety centered in identity are real and present dangers: a person of color's right to vote, a woman's choice how to manage her body, and a couple's desire to love are all now more likely to be under direct attack in a post-Ginsburg court.

And, what do we do now? What is (or are) the pathway/s forward? As the editorial team of this journal we believe that it is time, more now than ever, to speak tRUTH to power through whatever venues we have. This issue does the work that *Taboo* always does, which is to try to speak plainly to issues that most either do not want to engage or whose engagement re-centers traditional, dominant, or safe perspectives. Our sense is that the 2020s are telling us to engage harder, more directly, and without fear of perspectives difficult to engage. With that in mind we are going to let the authors' own words explain what is happening in this issue. We will list here the name and authors of each of the pieces along with their abstract. The abstracts, of course, also appear at the start of each article, but we decided they were important for you all to see here to help you make choices about what and how you might read this issue. The authors of this issue take up identity (including race, sexuality, ability, and profession), communication, pathways to professional preparation, and authorship as primary foci, and we appreciate the ways in which these pieces connect despite the authors not knowing each other.

Are (we) going Deep Enough?:
A Narrative Literature Review Addressing Critical Race Theory,
Racial Space Theory, and Black Identity Development

Kala Burrell-Craft

A narrative literature review was conducted to examine how researchers address the concept of intersectionality using critical race theory, racial space theory, and Black identity development. A Boolean search revealed 18 articles met criteria for consideration. Multiple reviews occurred to isolate the articles that contained all the search criteria and multiple reviews occurred that selected the Boolean phrase or phrases that the researcher was searching for. Thirteen of the 18 articles met one or more search criteria and were included in the review, however, no articles matched 100 percent for inclusion. Thus, indicating we are not going deep enough in our research of Blackness and its complexities and intersectionalities.

If These Emails Could Talk:
The Pitfalls of Hastily Implementing a Teacher Mentoring Program

Matt Albert

Comprehensive mentoring is one way to curb teacher turnover and increase new-teacher efficacy. However, implementing an effective mentoring program poses a significant challenge that schools often struggle to surmount. This article begins with a hypothetical email chain among various teachers and administrators within a high school. The chain details the failed implementation of a mentoring program for new teachers. After the email chain, this article examines the roles of administrators and mentors in creating a successful mentoring program. The article takes previous studies on mentoring and shows how they link to specific events in the email chain. Next, this article examines a possible solution to the increased professional demands placed on mentor-teachers. As with the previous section, references to the email chain are compared with research findings. In conclusion, this article closes with brief recommendations for further research on mentor training.

The Rise of GYO-TOCs as Pop-Ups:
Lessons in Racial Resistance from the Abriendo Caminos/Opening Pathways for Students of Color into the Teaching Profession: Giving Back to the Community through Teaching Project

Norma A. Marrun & Christine Clark

Efforts to diversify the teaching workforce have been a constant in the aftermath of the *Brown v Board of Education* decision in 1954 that resulted in the massive whitening of the teaching profession. Diversification efforts, even when buoyed by state and federal policy and funding, have been largely unsuccessful.

This article examines, using Critical Race Theory, interest convergence, neoliberalism, and critical multicultural education as analytical lenses, the limiting pressures for Teacher of Color pipeline initiatives, like the *Abriendo Caminos* project, to conform to neoliberal "Grow Your Own" models that ensure the persistence of white dominance in the teacher ranks.

Writing the Rainbow:
Facilitating Undergraduate Teacher Candidates' LGBTQIA+ Allyship
Through Multimodal Writing

Judith Dunkerly-Bean, Julia Morris, & Valerie Taylor

This yearlong qualitative descriptive case study conducted by an interdisciplinary team of education faculty with pre-service elementary teacher candidates sought to disrupt heteronormativity and to increase candidates' awareness and preparedness for inclusivity with future LGBTQIA+ elementary students. Central to our findings was that in researching and authoring multimodal texts addressing topics and concerns faced by the LGBTQIA+ community for their future classrooms, there was a shift in the perceptions and preparedness of the candidates toward working with children identifying as LGBTQIA+. However, we also encountered resistance and/or apathy that led us to develop an analytical framework for disrupting teacher candidate cisgender heteronormativity and facilitating their progression toward allyship.

The Cultural Inability of Me:
A Conceptual Framework for Accommodating the Roadblock in the Mirror

Benterah C. Morton, Kaitlin M. Jackson , & Melvin J. Jackson

Teacher education programs focus heavily on content knowledge and pedagogical skills, but less often acknowledges the teacher's identity and ability to meet the cultural needs of their students. Teachers lacking the ability to understand their own and their students' racial, cultural, and ethnic needs may encounter challenges in the classroom that can result in academic, behavioral, and social-emotional implications for students. This article presents a framework for continually examining the self to uncover beliefs that are unknown to others and us that directly impact our decision-making, thoughts, and actions and ultimately our leadership and teaching.

My Chameleon Life

Anjali J. Forber-Pratt

The field of autoethnography has been greatly influenced by Bochner and Ellis whose work showcases the importance of rich, stand-alone stories that instantaneously capture the reader and bring you into the moment as if you are a

fly on the wall with beautiful reflections. Stories allow us to organize and share our experiences as they connect to the political, social, historical constructs in which we live. Stories allow us to interrogate the very world in which we live in, where we have come from, where we are at today. In the case of this article my auto-ethnograhic 'I' connects my personal story to the cultures of disability, race and privilege, followed by a deeper reflection to generate new knowledge and meaning. This piece hopes to serve as a methodological example of what it can be in addition to fostering discussion across and about multiple intersectionalities.

Microaggressions and the Marginalization of First-Generation Faculty: Professional Assimilation and Competency Development

Amber L. Bechard & Janee Both Gragg

In very recent years, as institutions of higher education have been focusing substantial efforts and resources on empowering first-generation students, first-generation faculty are increasingly called upon to mentor and support these students. Given their own developmental experiences and struggles, such faculty often enthusiastically embrace this labor. Yet such faculty have received little to no professional training or institutional mentoring as first-generation undergraduate or graduate students or, most importantly for our purposes here, as first-generation faculty. Indeed, little has been written about first-generation students who have become faculty members in the often-elitist academy. This article explores the authors' experiences of marginalization as first-generation faculty, using personal narratives marked by microaggressions that highlight implicit bias related to (1) professional assimilation and (2) competency development. Contextual considerations are discussed as is the pressing need for future research on and mentoring programs for first-generation faculty.

The Undulations of Writing for Publication

Mellinee Lesley

Through autobiographical narrative inquiry, I explore a string of untold stories from my life about publishing academic writing. Using the self as data, the retelling of these stories examines what it means to cultivate a writing identity and more specifically what it means to write for publication. Through a critical literacy lens, I problematize the traditions of publishing and consider the ramifications for mentoring doctoral students into this realm of academic life. Thus, this reflexive essay is a sorting through of nearly thirty years of chasing academic publications. This writing is a way to both make my thinking visible and tell a story of my becoming an academic writer through the shaping forces of audience, blind peer review, and conflicting opinions.

Consequences of Stereotype Threat and Imposter Syndrome:
The Personal Journey from STEM-practitioner to STEM-educator for Four
Women of Color

Kristina Henry Collins, Erica F. Price, Lisa Hanson, & Dianne Neaves

This article highlights the STEM journey of four women of color that matriculated at four different types of universities (R1, PWI; HBCU; private, religious-based PWI; and an international HSI university) for their undergraduate STEM degrees. The ethnographical narratives shared by each, informed lessons learned about stereotype threat, imposter phenomenon, and the chilly environment that is present within male dominated STEM fields. The authors offer recommendations to reduce the consequences of these issues to include deliberate STEM identity development and STEM mentoring. Framed by the CLIC (content learning and identity construction) theoretical framework and Collins' (2018) Black student STEM Identity model (BSSI), vertical mentoring and service-learning best practices are discussed along with initial results of a pilot study designed to address these issues.

Collective Creativity:
Pedagogies of Collaborative Authorship in a Hollywood Writers' Room
and its Implications for the Teaching of Writing

Joseph D. Sweet & David Lee Carlson

In this article, we conduct a case study of collaborative authorship that takes place in the writing of the Amazon Prime series, *Transparent*. To do this, we rely on extensive interviews with three of the show's writers, and one editor to investigate what can be learned by tracing the collaborative efforts that begin in the writers' room, and extend through every aspect of the show's production. This inquiry intends to open possibilities for the ways in which collaborative authorship practices of Hollywood writers' rooms and television production can inform writing pedagogy, and professional writing practices, particularly for collaborative, creative writing. Ultimately, the authors suggest practices currently being enacted by these professional writers that school communities, teachers of writing, and professional writing groups can adopt.

As always, we end our introduction in solidarity,

Kenny, David, & Andromeda

Are (We) Going Deep Enough?

A Narrative Literature Review Addressing Critical Race Theory, Racial Space Theory, and Black Identity Development

Kala Burrell-Craft

Abstract

A narrative literature review was conducted to examine how researchers address the concept of intersectionality using critical race theory, racial space theory, and Black identity development. A Boolean search revealed 18 articles met criteria for consideration. Multiple reviews occurred to isolate the articles that contained all the search criteria and multiple reviews occurred that selected the Boolean phrase or phrases that the researcher was searching for. Thirteen of the 18 articles met one or more search criteria and were included in the review, however, no articles matched 100 percent for inclusion. Thus, indicating we are not going deep enough in our research of Blackness and its complexities and intersectionalities.

Introduction

Rhetorical questions: How Black is too Black? Is there a such thing as not Black enough? What about Blackish? Is there really a Black card? Country bumpkin Black or city slick Black? Are all you people see is Black? Why does everything have to be about race? Sell out! All you people look alike. There are levels to my Blackness. How can you be Black and not like people who look like you? Why is it that being around too many Black people makes you feel uncomfortable? Slavery was complicated…so are its ramifications. This critical narrative literature review reveals that intersectionality as it relates to blackness is still missing in the literature. This is significant because many of us are complex individuals and the world consists of complex issues. It is an injustice to see just

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a piece of a person or problem. Research needs to explore more frequently and in depth the essence of the truth it is seeking. We ARE NOT going deep enough.

Helms (1984) discussed the complexity of racial identity research, the challenge it presents to the researcher, and referenced issues pertaining to theoretical formulation, reliability, environmental influences, and the research participants. According to Helms, Black identity development is influenced by environmental factors such as discrimination and racism. Helms (1990) chronologized the events that influenced the racial identity of Black Americans into four eras: the implementation of slavery; the institutionalization of slavery; the past slavery experience (1895-1975); and the aftermath of the Black consciousness movement of the 1960s (p. 9). Additionally, family, peers, and local communities/environments can influence racial identity.

To unpack the classification of environmental influences of racial identity development, Helms (1990b) cited the following: (a) any individual can be potentially influenced by members of his/her own racial group as well as other groups with whom he or she comes in contact; (b) social environments are a result, at least in part, of the racial identity characteristics of the people in the environment; (c) individuals exist in many environments, not all of which are equally potent on racial identity development; and (d) environments like individuals are changeable (p. 9-32). From Freud to Erikson to Helms and Cross, researchers have attempted to isolate identity development and compare it to levels of student mastery, Black students attending predominately White institutions, and what creates a "healthy identity or personality" (Erikson, 1959, p. 51). Although I am interested in identity development, I am most interested in Black identity development and how it intersects with space and place through a critical race theory lens. Through a narrative review of the literature, I sought to answer the following question:

> How have researchers addressed the intersectionality of Black identity development with space and place through a critical race theory lens?

Theoretical Frameworks

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) has become an increasingly permanent fixture in the toolkit of education researchers seeking to critically examine educational opportunities, school climate, representation, and pedagogy. CRT is a form of race-based oppositional scholarship (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy, 2005; Calmore, 1992; Liu, 2009; Love, 2004) and challenges Eurocentric values, such as White being normalized in the United States. CRT research can be traced back to the Critical Legal Studies movement, which gave rise to CRT (Crenshaw, 2011; Tate, 1997). In the 1980s a noted group of legal scholars, including Derrick A. Bell, Jr., Charles Lawrence, Richard Delgado, Lani Guinier, and Kimber-

le' Crenshaw, questioned the role of law in maintaining and further constructing racially based social and economic oppression (Lynn & Adams, 2002; Taylor, 1998, 2009). These early critical race scholars sought to challenge prevailing racial injustices while committing themselves to interrogating racism's continued presence in U.S. jurisprudence and stalled advancement of civil rights legislation (Manning & Muñoz, 2011; Stanley, 2006; Yosso, 2002). Contemporary critical legal scholarship, therefore, builds upon an already robust literature base (Bell, 1980; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). In education, critical scholars have often looked to CRT's foundational legal scholarship, ethnic studies, and the pioneering work of Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) and Solorzano (1998), who introduced the study of CRT to K-12 and higher education, respectively. As a theoretical framework, CRT examines the "unequal and unjust distribution of power and resources along political, economic, racial, and gendered lines" (Taylor, 2009, p. 1). It is a movement comprising scholars committed to challenging and disrupting racism and its associated social, legal, political, and educational consequences (Patton, Ranero, & Everett, 2011). As previous critical race academics (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Parker & Lynn, 2002) have observed, the task of applying a CRT framework to educational scholarship is complex and multifaceted.

Key Principles

There are seven tenets of CRT: (1) interest convergence (Bell, 1992); (2) Whiteness as property (Harris, 1995); (3) counter-storytelling (Delgado, 1989); (4) critique of liberalism (Gotanda, 1991); (5) intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991); (6) racial realism (Bell, 1992); and (7) social change (Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2002; Love, 2004). Each tenet provides a deeper examination of the role of CRT in education.

Interest Convergence

Interest convergence occurs when racial equality is achieved to benefit the interests of Whites (Bell, 1995) and underscores racial equality as the byproduct of maintaining the interests of Whites. Relative to White interests, the positioning of racial equality continues to situate people of color as the non-dominant group while Whites are situated as the dominant group. Interest convergence will not occur in instances where racial equality does not benefit the dominant group since racial equality is tied to the desires of the dominant group. In educational settings, interest convergence is achieved when schools and universities believe that inclusive policies and practices will best serve the interests of the established system.

Whiteness as Property

Harris (1993) introduced the term Whiteness as property when she articulated her grandmother's story of passing as White after leaving the Deep South. Her grandmother's story affirmed her belief of Whiteness as prized property. Harris' premise was that the "assumptions, privileges, and benefits" (p. 1713) associated with identifying as White are valuable assets that White people seek to protect.

Experiential Knowledge and Counter-storytelling

The CRT tenet counter-storytelling seeks to give voice to marginalized groups whose stories often go untold (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). In the United States, counter-stories chronicle the experiences of people of color against the pervasive dominant narratives constructed by Whites. These stories run counter to the dominant narratives that are told, or taken for granted, by the dominant group about life experiences including the life experiences of people of color. The narratives of the dominant group are used to frame the message of dominant and non-dominant groups into the message of a single story (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Counter-stories depict the ways in which people of color experience social, political, and institutional systems and often differ from dominant group counterparts. In an educational context, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) contended authentic voices of Black people through stories are needed to gain useful information about their experiences in these settings. Ladson-Billings (2005) cautioned the use of counter-stories as a standalone tenet of CRT since stories themselves are likely to be misunderstood or misinterpreted without being properly unpacked (Fasching-Varner, 2009), and may unconsciously move scholars not embedded within CRT away from the foundational scholarship (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005).

Critique of Liberalism

Critique of liberalism challenges the concepts of objectivity, meritocracy, color blindness, race neutrality, equal opportunity, and incremental change (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2005; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Critique of liberalism challenges the notion of color blindness which fails to consider the permanence of racism. DeCuit and Dixson (2004) suggested that embracing color blindness ignores "that inequity, inopportunity, and oppression are historical artifacts that will not easily be remedied by ignoring race in the contemporary society" (p. 29).

Intersectionality

Crenshaw (1991) introduced intersectionality in her work exploring how Black women experienced oppression based not only on their raced experiences, but also through gendered and classed experiences. Critical race scholars recog-

nize that racial identity and this form of oppression (racism) intersect with other subordinated identities (such as gender, class, religion, ability/disability, sexual orientation, etc.) and forms of oppression (for example, sexism, homophobia, ableism, etc.) to influence Black people's lived experiences (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2005; Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

Racial Realism

Racial realism (Bell, 1995; Parks & Jones, 2008) provides an alternative approach to the quest for equality among marginalized groups. The Civil Rights Movement and other movements for equal rights have historically demanded judicial decisions, programs, services, and treatment equal to what Whites received. Advocates of racial realism (Bell, 1995; Parks & Jones, 2008) call for an understanding, however, that the power dynamic between Whites and other marginalized groups will never result in equality for both groups, as the dominant group will never voluntarily relinquish its superior status. Instead, racial realists call for an understanding of the marginalized groups' subordinate status as a mechanism to challenge oppressive practices and treatment (Bell, 1992, 1995). The acceptance of racial realism as a construct seeks to situate the presence of systemic racism and power dynamics as pervasive and will never be totally eradicated. It is an understanding of racism and power dynamics from this vantage point that provides an opportunity for resistance and social change.

Commitment to Social Justice

Critical race scholars are committed to the establishment of a socially just U. S. society and educational system and maintain a praxis of activism as a component of their scholarship (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2005). CRT accounts for race and racism's role in education and works toward the eradication of racism as part of a larger goal of opposing or eliminating other forms of subordination based on gender, class, sexual orientation, language, religion, and national origin (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Application of Critical Race Theory

CRT has evolved into a methodological approach to study complex phenomena involving race, racism, and power in and across disciplines in education (Parker & Lynn, 2002). Critical race theory allows researchers the opportunity to examine the experiences of Black people within educational spaces. This approach is critical since schools work as institutionalized microcosms of the society at large (Sullivan & A'Vant, 2009). CRT provides a way to theorize, examine, and challenge the ways that race and racism covertly and overtly impact the social structures, practices, and discourses that occur within educational setting (Yosso,

2005). CRT insists that researchers take into context the distinctive realities and lived experiences of Black people. Critical race theorists purport that without the voice of Black people contextualizing their daily lived experiences with oppression, a clear and critical understanding of their struggles with race and racism both in and out of the educational system would not be possible (Yull, 2014).

Racial Space Theory

Over the past decade, a growing number of scholars have begun to explore how spatial analysis of racial processes 'teaches us things about race we cannot know by other means' (Knowles, 2003, p. 78). Empirical studies scattered across the disciplinary landscape contribute to what could be considered a growing body of research into the links between race and space (e.g. Anderson, 1995; Feld & Basso, 1996; Pulido, 2000; Delaney 2002; Razack, 2002; Knowles, 2003; Bullard, 2007; Lipsitz, 2007; Woods & McKittrick, 2007; Nelson, 2008; Bullard & Wright, 2009).

Extending the exploration of the Black experience in school by examining both the impact of race and its various changes over time and space has provided a core basis for the theory of racial space (Neely & Samura, 2011). Neely and Samura's (2011) theory builds on the analysis of CRT by including the lens of space. This work builds on the theoretical underpinnings of Knowles (2003) who suggested, "the social constructions of space illuminates the social constructions of race and vice versa" (p. 78).

Key Principles

Neely and Samura's (2011) theory of racial space outlines four ways that racial and spatial processes intersect: (1) Both race and space are contested; (2) Race and space are fluid and historical; (3) Race and space are interactional and relational; and (4) Race and space are defined by inequality and difference (p. 1938).

Application of Racial Space Theory

Neely and Samura (2011) suggested that examining race and racism within any milieu must be conducted within a sociohistorical context because the way in which race and racism have been defined and experienced by people changes over time and space. Knowles (2003) stated racism is encountered and reworked in place and over time. Embedded in spaces of domination are layers of racialized social histories and experiences, lived and remembered archives that provide the grist for community building, organizing, and action. Neely and Samura (2011) suggested that within any locale the lived experiences of Black people in the U.S. have been influenced by social structures, spatial arrangements, and institutions, which over time change as historical conditions have changed and disappeared.

Spatial perspective on race may provide a useful lens for understanding racism and provide language for explaining its persistence in educational settings.

Racial Identity Development Theory

Racial and ethnic identity are integral parts of the overall framework of both individual and collective identity. Literary and theoretical manifestations of racial identity are discussed not in biological terms (which may imply a racist perspective) but as a social construction, which "refers to a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common heritage with a particular racial group" (Helms, 1993, p. 3). Chávez and Guido-DiBrito (1999) stated for minority populations in the United States, "racial and ethnic identity are manifested by two conflicting social and cultural influences. First, through the cultural traditions and values in which they were born and raised. Second, and in contrast, through negative societal treatment and messaging received from others who do not share that same identity" (p. 39). They stated that the consistent messages that minority populations receive in the U.S. make it clear that people with minority status are less than desirable within mainstream society.

Given the dominant/ subordinate relationship of Whites and Blacks in this society, however, it is not surprising that this developmental process will unfold in different ways (Tatum, 1992). For purposes of this study, Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (1971, 1978) model of Black identity development is described. It is assumed that a positive sense of one's self as a member of one's group (which is not based on any assumed superiority) is important for psychological health (Tatum, 1992). According to Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (1971, 1978, 1991) model of Black racial identity development, there are five stages in the process, identified as Preencounter, Encounter, Immersion/Emersion, Internalization, and Internalization-Commitment.

Key Principles

In the first stage of Preencounter, the African American has absorbed many of the beliefs and values of the dominant White culture, including the notion that "White is right" and "Black is wrong." Though the internalization of negative Black stereotypes may be outside of his or her conscious awareness, the individual seeks to assimilate and be accepted by Whites, and actively or passively distances him/herself from other Blacks. To maintain psychological comfort at this stage of development, Helms (1990) wrote that:

> The person must maintain the fiction that race, and racial indoctrination have nothing to do with how he or she lives life. It is probably the case that the Preencounter person is bombarded on a regular basis with information that he or she cannot really be a member of the 'in racial group but relies on denial to selectively screen such information from awareness (p. 23).

Movement into the Encounter phase is typically precipitated by an event or series of events that force the individual to acknowledge the impact of racism in one's life. When faced with the reality that he or she cannot truly be White, the individual is forced to focus on his or her identity as a member of a group targeted by racism. The Immersion/Emersion stage is characterized by the simultaneous desire to surround oneself with visible symbols of one's racial identity and an active avoidance of symbols of Whiteness. As Parham (1989) described, "At this stage, everything of value in life must be Black or relevant to Blackness. This stage is also characterized by a tendency to denigrate white people, simultaneously glorifying Black people... " (p. 190). As individuals enter the Immersion stage, they actively seek out opportunities to explore aspects of their own history and culture with the support of peers from their own racial background. Typically, White-focused anger dissipates during this phase because so much of the person's energy is directed toward his or her own group- and self-exploration.

The result of this exploration is an emerging security in a newly defined and affirmed sense of self. The emergence from this stage marks the beginning of Internalization. Secure in one's own sense of racial identity, there is less need to assert the "Blacker than thou" attitude often characteristic of the Immersion stage (Parham, 1989). In general, "pro-Black attitudes become more expansive, open, and less defensive" (Cross, 1971, p. 24). While still maintaining connections with Black peers, the internalized individual is willing to establish meaningful relationships with Whites who acknowledge and are respectful of his or her self-definition. The individual is also ready to build coalitions with members of other oppressed groups. Cross (1991) suggested that there are few psychological differences between the fourth stage, Internalization, and the fifth stage, Internalization-Commitment. Those at the fifth stage, however, have found ways to translate their "personal sense of Blackness into a plan of action or a general sense of commitment" to the concerns of Blacks as a group, which is sustained over time (Cross, 1991, p. 220). Whether at the fourth or fifth stage, the process of Internalization allows the individual, anchored in a positive sense of racial identity, to both proactively perceive and transcend race. Blackness becomes "the point of departure for discovering the universe of ideas, cultures and experiences beyond Blackness in place of mistaking Blackness as the universe itself" (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991, p. 330).

Application of Black Identity Development Theory

Cross (1991) commented that researchers studying Black identity development seek "to clarify and expand the discourse on Blackness by paying attention to the variability and diversity of Blackness" (p. 223). Cross and other identity development theorists have developed useful tools for researchers examining Black identity development theory in hopes of measuring stages of identity and

social attitude development. Tatum (1992) stated that although the process of racial identity development is often presented in linear form, it is probably more accurate to think of it in a spiral form. Often a person may move from one stage to the next, only to revisit an earlier stage as the result of new encounter experiences (Parham, 1989), though the later experience of the stage may be different from the original experience. The image that students often find helpful in understanding this concept of recycling through the stages is that of a spiral staircase. As a person ascends a spiral staircase, she may stop and look down at a spot below. When she reaches the next level, she may look down and see the same spot, but the vantage point has changed (Tatum, 1992).

Method

According to Petticrew and Roberts (2008), a narrative literature review, "refers to a systematic review that synthesizes the individual studies…systematically extracting, checking, and narratively summarizing information on their methods and results" (p. 39). The narrative literature review serves as a comprehensive yet critical and objective analysis of a topic and the discussion and current knowledge that embodies it. Narrative literature reviews are an essential part of the research process and help to establish a theoretical framework for your research. By reviewing the literature, patterns, and trends in the literature will evolve allowing researchers to identify gaps or inconsistencies in a body of knowledge. Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2016, p. 24-25) defined theoretical literature review as a narrative literature review that examines how theory shapes or frames research.

Data Collection

Selection of Articles

Based on the multiple parameters that framed this study, the following criteria was used to select articles for this review:

Study content included a focus on the combined theories of critical race, Black identity development, racial space theory, and intersectionality. Rural space and urban space were added to see what literature existed that would also encompass these search criteria. Intersectionality was removed from the search criteria to see what articles that produced.

Studies included peer reviewed articles, non-peer reviewed articles, and dissertations. Dissertations were considered because of the complexity and intersectionality of the researched theories.

Studies in the last 20 years were considered due to the limited literature that was found, but only studies in the last 10 years were used for this review.

All of the databases in EBSCOhost were used to search for articles and dissertations that met the above-mentioned criteria. Using the Boolean indicator "and", the following search terms were entered into databases: *critical race theory, Black identity development,* and *racial space theory.* Later *rural education* and *intersectionality* were added to see how many articles would meet the selected criteria. The Boolean indicator "not" was applied for isolating articles that focused on *higher education* and *predominately White institutions*. The term *intersectionality* was later removed due to "no results found".

Initial search results yielded 18 articles. After a careful review of the 18 articles, the results yielded no articles that fully mirrored what I sought to research. I found helpful information in general about my research topics and was able to include 13 of the 18 articles for this literature review.

Data Analysis

Based on the work of Jones et al. (2006), constant comparative analysis engages the researcher in a process of collecting and analyzing the data simultaneously at "all stages of the data collection and interpretation process, and results in the identification of codes" (p. 44). Open coding was used to identify concepts and categories. This process solidified and clustered the data into major themes that were presented in the research findings (see Table 1). Codes were based on the tenets of CRT, Black identity development stages, identity development char-

Table 1
Themes

	%	*n*
Critical Race Theory Tenets		
Racial realism	53	7
Counternarratives	38	5
Intersectionality	30	4
Whiteness as property	53	7
Commitment to social justice	23	3
Microaggressions	23	3
Identity Development Themes		
Isolation/invisibility	23	3
Double consciousness/positionality	23	3
Struggle with Blackness (insider and/or outsider)	30	4
Navigating spaces	61	8
Lived experiences/own voices	85	11
Racial Space Themes		
Urban	15	2
Predominately White	23	3
Historically Black	8	1
Equitable/humanizing learning spaces	62	8

Note. Thirteen total articles

acteristics, race, and place/space. Each article was graphed and coded accordingly and the themed for inclusion or exclusion in this review. If authors used counter-stories to operationalize the tenets of CRT, this strategy was coded as well.

Findings

Critical race theory

Critical race theory was the framework in all of the studies. Of the seven tenets of CRT, the articles utilized five; racial realism and Whiteness as property were the tenets most discussed. The theme of racism was presented in seven of the articles as a permanent fixture in American society (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Racism has become so normalized that it is nearly unrecognizable, especially by those who benefit from it (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2009). As highlighted in the research articles, those who are regularly impacted by racism are aware of its debilitating effects because of personal experiences (Taylor et al., 2009). Bell (1995) argued that the understanding of racism as a permanent position "frees us to imagine and implement racial strategies that can bring fulfillment and triumph" (p. 306).

Counternarratives were included in five of the studies as an effective way to share the lived experiences of the participants. The counterstories of marginalized groups and the recognition of racism as an inherent part of society can help facilitate change, which in turn will improve the experiences of people of Color (Matsuda, 1995; Smith-Maddox & Solórano, 2002; Yosso, 2005). Microaggressions is not a tenet of CRT, but a result of racism was specifically mentioned in three articles. Solórzano et al., (2000) wrote that microaggressions are unconscious, shocking, and subtle forms of racism. While it is argued that racial realism no longer exists in the post-Obama era, the Trump America upswing is a backlash of the era that preceded it. Microaggressions and resulting racial battle fatigue support the belief that racial realism is still relevant (Hurtado, 1992; Steele, 1997; Clark, Fasching-Varner, & Brimhall-Vargas, 2012).

Intersectionality was a targeted inclusion in four articles as the authors argued that race, sex, and class were integral components of their studies and could not be separated and studied in isolation. Kumasi (2011) defined intersectionality as "the belief that individuals often have overlapping interests and traits based not only on their racial identity but also their class position, gender, and so forth" (pp. 216-217). Kumasi also indicated that critical race scholars are critical of any analysis that focuses solely on race and fails to consider other marginalized and oppressed identities.

Whiteness as property assigns a property value to being White, which has implications for underrepresented populations navigating spaces created for the dominant group (Harris, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) as seen by its inclusion in 7 of the 13 articles. Whiteness as a concept is based on power relations (Harris, 1993). Ladson-Billings (1998) positioned critical race theory as

an important intellectual and social tool for "deconstruction, reconstruction, and construction: deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power" (p. 9).

Critical race scholars are committed to the establishment of a socially just society. This commitment to social justice was articulated in three articles. The three studies spoke of using their findings to examine and reimagine other possibilities that would have a positive impact on future practices. CRT accounts for race and racism's role in education and works toward the eradication of racism part of a larger goal of opposing other forms of subordination (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Critical race scholars work toward the elimination of racism and the empowerment of groups that are oppressed and marginalized (Jones et al., 2014).

Identity Development Themes

Identity development was a reoccurring theme in all 13 articles. Eleven articles captured the participants' voices and lived experiences in their research methods through interviews, surveys, and classes (safe spaces). Feelings of isolation or invisibility were discussed in three articles and three other articles discussed their double consciousness or positionality of their role. The participants were aware of their identity as it related to the position they were in at the time of the study. In four articles, participants spoke directly to their struggle with Blackness both as an insider with other Blacks or as an outsider in groups with Whites. Eight of the 13 articles alluded to "spaces" in the form of navigating them, creating them, or dismantling their current form.

Racial Space Themes

Racial space themes as discussed by many researchers like Neely & Samura (2011) and Knowles (2003) were non-existent in the 13 articles. There was no intersectionality in terms of viewing racial identity development with race/space or even place. In two articles the researcher discussed that the study was focused in an urban space, three articles focused on predominately White institutional spaces, and one study was centered on a historically Black college/university space. Racial space theory was developed by Neely and Samura (2011) and built on the analysis of CRT by including the lens of space. Eight of the 13 articles discussed the importance of equitable/ humanizing learning spaces for people of Color to grow, learn, and develop. While I did not find what I was looking for in the research, that is a reason for me to continue my research and explore this area of intersectionality.

Discussion and Implications

The research shows multiples connections to race, student achievement, and space; however, limited research has examined all the factors from an intersectionality viewpoint and tie it into the development of one's identity development. Current examinations of the Black educational experience are undermined by the suggestions of a post-racial society and the discourse of colorblindness (Neville & Awad, 2014). CRT, social identity development, and racial identity development were common themes and discussions across the literature that was reviewed, but none of the articles addressed the intersectionality of these themes in relation to space/place. In the literature review, I utilized qualitative methodological approaches of counter-storytelling, interviews, surveys, and a few correlational studies. Based on the limitations of the literature, more work needs to be done in applying research in more holistic ways that would encompass a person's whole experience and not a section of it.

The study of a person's identity development poses a possible limitation to some forms of studying identity development, as Helms (1990b) stated identity development takes time. Addressing systematic inequalities and inequities as they relate to race can be exhausting and frustrating if they fail at inspiring systematic reform, posing another threat to pursuing research that is framed by CRT but intersects with racial identity development and racial space theory. My research builds upon the isolated and disjointed studies that currently exist and that fail to look at the intersectionality of educational space, place, and experience and how that relates to a person's identity development. Cross (1991) summed up my logic and research when he stated that theorists and researchers on nigrescence seek "to clarify and expand the discourse of Blackness by paying attention to the variability and diversity of Blackness" (p. 223). While literature exists isolating variables like predominately White institution versus historically Black college and universities, higher education specific studies, code-meshing or code switching, and White space/Black places, the variables that are captured in that literature are snapshots in a larger picture. I propose that more comparative studies look at this intersectionality, as well as more generational and intergenerational studies.

To fully and critically examine the effects of race on Black people in the U.S., going forward my research will apply all of the above theories in this literature review to give other researchers and readers the 4-D experience of educational research. Research needs more voices, more faces, more experiences, and more stories to capture, reach, and teach others to inspire systematic reform. My research going forward will be framed as critically race-spaced identity theory. Intersecting the theories would still allow critical race scholars to challenge racism empirically (as a central axis of oppression in daily reality), personally (as a vital component in how CRT scholars view themselves and their experiences of the world), and politically (as a point of group coherence and activism). Critically race-spaced

identity theory would encompass the full experience, the then and now, to better understand and explain the how and why of Black actions, thoughts, and mindset.

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If These Emails Could Talk

The Pitfalls of Hastily Implementing a Teacher Mentoring Program

Matt Albert

Abstract

Comprehensive mentoring is one way to curb teacher turnover and increase new-teacher efficacy. However, implementing an effective mentoring program poses a significant challenge that schools often struggle to surmount. This article begins with a hypothetical email chain among various teachers and administrators within a high school. The chain details the failed implementation of a mentoring program for new teachers. After the email chain, this paper examines the roles of administrators and mentors in creating a successful mentoring program. The article takes previous studies on mentoring and shows how they link to specific events in the email chain. Next, this article examines a possible solution to the increased professional demands placed on mentor-teachers. As with the previous section, references to the email chain are compared with research findings. In conclusion, this article closes with brief recommendations for further research on mentor training.

Keywords: teacher mentoring, teacher mentoring and retention, mentor teacher training, teacher turnover, new teacher turnover, training trainers

A Note Before Reading

This article is unorthodox. The issues that comprise the focus of this article are too complex to be addressed in a traditional format. A traditional format would diminish the urgency of these issues. Therefore, I offer a brief introduction on what to expect while reading this piece. The first part of this article is an email chain

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that displays the hasty implementation of a new-teacher mentoring program in a hypothetical high school in the southwestern United States. However, this school could easily be any other high school in the country because the issues are so common. Table 1 lists the roles of all participants in the chain.

The contents of these emails are not actual emails that have been written by actual people. They are simulations of real conversations that often take place in various high schools around the country. These dialogues are also informed by my own experiences of participating both as a mentor and a mentee in four different mentoring programs at four different high schools. Over the last ten years, those experiences have afforded me numerous opportunities to observe conversations similar to the ones I depict here.

As you read, you will find colored bubbles in the margins. These bubbles are meant to depict the subtext of what is really being said by the participants. You will get the full effect of this format if you read the subtext immediately after the relevant lines in the emails. Colors will alternate to help you keep track of which comment to read at the proper time.

The final part of this article analyzes the struggles schools face when trying to implement effective mentoring programs. This section also emphasizes why certain moments in the email chain happen the way they do. Several of the con-

Table 1
Roles in the Email Chain

Name	*Role in School*
Ms. P. Anna	Principal—Cares deeply about the future of the school and about retaining new teachers. Highly experienced.
Mr. F. Laurence	Assistant Principal—A well-meaning administrator whose shortsightedness sets up his faculty for struggle. New to the position.
Mr. S. Holmes	Mentor Teacher #1—A skilled classroom instructor whom many colleagues rely on for assistance. He is happy to oblige but is often stressed out by the pressure placed on him and comes off as intimidating.
Ms. A. Bundren	Mentor Teacher #2—An overworked classroom instructor who is committed to the success of the school but is often exhausted from the demands placed on her. She makes sure she is compensated for her time.
Mr. B. Scrivener	Mentor Teacher #3—A questionable choice for this position. Selected due to years of experience.
Mr. E. Hemingway	New ELA Teacher—mentee to Mr. Holmes.
Ms. I. Newton	New Math Teacher—mentee to Ms. Bundren.
Ms. G. Leibniz	New Math Teacher—mentee to Ms. Bundren.
Mr. A. Michelson	New Science Teacher—mentee to Mr. Scrivener.
Mr. E. Morley	New Science Teacher—mentee to Mr. Scrivener.

versations and occurrences can be tied directly to what the research already says. Consequently, the article also considers implications for future research.

Occasionally, there will be moments when I need to stop the article and speak to you directly in the endnotes. These moments are noted in red bubbles. Think of these fourth-wall moments as opportunities to gain some additional context if you do not work in a high school. These moments also serve as periodic reminders that countless teachers in this country live out these experiences every single day along with me. At times, policy makers will pay lip service to the idea that teachers are stakeholders in education. However, they frequently find a way to exclude teachers from the conversations about the policies that affect teachers the most. Our stories matter but are not being heard. The health of our profession depends on us telling our stories because we cannot wait for others to do it for us. We also cannot depend on others to invite us to the conversation.

Now that the parameters have been laid out, it is time to double-click on our inbox.

From:	F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]
Sent:	Tuesday, September 24, 2019 6:37 PM
To:	s.holmes@yourschool.org;
	a.bundren@yourschool.org;
	b.scrivener@yourschool.org

Subject: Congratulations, Mentor-Teachers!

Dear Colleagues,

As you may be aware, a core initiative in our School Improvement Plan (SIP) is being formed due to the results of our most recent faculty survey—the implementation of a faculty mentoring program. Based on your performance in the classroom and your identification by other teachers as a potentially helpful colleague, the administration would like to offer you the invitation to be a faculty mentor. Research has shown that mentoring is vital to the success of new teachers and helps curb the turnover rate in all schools.

Mentor roles and responsibilities include the following:[1]

- Support new teachers in classroom management
- Offer guidance to new teachers in instructional planning

"Your evaluation was among the highest in the faculty, you appear to be effective, you have at least five more years of experience than the next person in line, and you are still working here."

"voluntell you"

"Probably, anyway."

PAUSE here. See me in the endnotes.

- Serve on the Mentoring Committee
- Schedule regular meetings with mentees to offer support

Please reply back with your decision no later than three days from now. We would like to begin the program next Monday. Participation is not mandatory; however, given the relatively low number of experienced colleagues in the building, we feel that you are the best person for this position.

> "Because I just got around to getting this initiative done even though I was supposed to get this thing started over the summer. Oops."

Once again, on behalf of the administration, congratulations!

> "Refuse at your own risk."

Sincerely,

F. Laurence
Assistant Principal, Your School High School
(XXX) XXX-XXXX ext. XXXX
asst.principal@yourschool.org
"It's a great day to be a [mascot starting with "g"]!"
"Inspirational quote from a random philosopher like Kierkegaard or Weber or Heidegger that's been cited correctly but taken way out of context because it sounds good at the end of an email signature."

> "There are, at most, three people in the building qualified to serve in this capacity."

> "No, really! Congratulations!"

From:	F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]
Sent:	Tuesday, September 24, 2019 6:45 PM
To:	e.hemingway@yourschool.org; i.newton@yourschool.org; g.leibniz@yourschool.org; a.michelson@yourschool.org; e.morley@yourschool.org
Subject:	Mentoring Program

Dear Colleagues,

As part of your introduction to working with us at Your School High School this year, we are pleased to offer you the services of a mentor-teacher. Research has shown that mentoring is vital to the suc-

> "Still probably true."

cess of new teachers and helps curb the turnover rate in all schools.

Starting next week, we will assign you a mentor-teacher that you can go to for extra support as you progress through the first three years of your career.

We would like to begin the program next Monday. Participation is not mandatory; however, we feel that this is a good opportunity for everyone involved.

"If you say 'no', then your LinkedIn profile will almost assuredly have a new entry one year from now."

Sincerely,

F. Laurence
[signature truncated]

From: s.holmes@yourschool.org
Sent: Wednesday, September 25, 2019 6:02 AM
To: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]

Subject: Re: Congratulations, Mentor Teacher!

Hi F.L.,

"Finally. Someone realizes I know what I'm talking about!"

Thank you very much for the invitation to become a mentor-teacher! I would be delighted to help out any of my colleagues in this capacity. I'm happy to do whatever I can to offer my assistance where needed.

"I'm not sure what those bulleted tasks mean, but they seem simple enough. I'm sure there will be some professional development along the way. Flexibility is my middle name."

Thanks,

--S.H.
English Language Arts, Your School High School
me@yourschool.org
"Quote picked for a signature nine years ago that has not changed but eventually will."

From: a.bundren@yourschool.org
Sent: Wednesday, September 25, 2019 12:56 PM
To: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]

Subject: Re: Congratulations, Mentor Teacher!

Sounds good. I'm in. Are you going to give us any training on how to do this?

> "I have no idea what you're asking me to do, but I'm going to put this in my portfolio."

From: b.scrivener@yourschool.org
Sent: Friday, September 27, 2019 7:31 AM
To: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]
Subject: Re: Congratulations, Mentor Teacher!

Okay.

> "No."

From: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]
Sent: Friday, September 27, 2019 12:05 PM
To: s.holmes@yourschool.org;
        a.bundren@yourschool.org;
        b.scrivener@yourschool.org

Subject: Mentee Assignments

Dear Colleagues,

Thanks for taking part in the program. Your mentees have been assigned by content area. As you may already know, we have five new teachers this year. Your mentees are listed below:

> "Thank you for saving my rear end."

Holmes—Mr. Hemingway
Bundren—Ms. Newton and Ms. Leibniz
Scrivener—Mr. Michelson and Mr. Morley

Please plan on attending a meeting after school on Monday along with your mentees so that we can explain the expectations of the program.

Thanks,

--F.L.
[signature truncated]

From: a.bundren@yourschool.org
Sent: Friday, September 27, 2019 12:15 PM
To: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.
org]

Subject: Re: Mentee Assignments

Thanks, F. Before I forget, does this program require a considerable amount of extra time on my part? If so, will I be compensated for it? Also, are we going to be trained?

"If you say 'no' after giving me double the number of mentees, then I quit."

--A.B.

From: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]
Sent: Friday, September 27, 2019 12:25 PM
To: a.bundren@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: Mentee Assignments

I think it does, but I will double-check for you. We'll do training throughout the year. For now, just be supportive.

"If it means you'll quit otherwise, then yes, it comes with a stipend."

--F.L.

"We probably won't be doing any, actually, because no one has time for it."

"I really hope it does pay, considering I just clicked 'send'."

From: s.holmes@yourschool.org
Sent: Friday, September 27, 2019 1:08 PM
To: E. Hemingway
                 [e.hemingway@yourschool.org]

Subject: Mentoring

Hi E,

Assistant Principal just informed me that I'll be your mentor this year. I'm looking forward to working with you and providing you any support that will be helpful. From what I can tell, you seem to be off to a good start this year. If you have any questions before Monday's meeting, please feel free to reach out or just talk to me at lunch.

Thanks,

--S.H.

From: e.hemingway@yourschool.org
Sent: Friday, September 27, 2019 1:30 PM
To: s.holmes@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: Mentoring

Hi,

I'm looking forward to it! I could sure use the help because these kids are killing me right now! They can't spell, they can't use commas correctly, they can't even capitalize letters! AHHH!

I have some questions for you:
How do you get the kids to stop talking?
How do you put grades in the gradebook?
What novels should I teach this year?
Am I always going to be this tired?
Where should I send the kids who can't behave?

I'll think of more at some point.

--E

From: s.holmes@yourschool.org
Sent: Friday, September 27, 2019 1:52 PM
To: Mr. Hemingway
                 [e.hemingway@yourschool.org]

Subject: Re: Mentoring

Hi E.,

I have answers for those questions, but it'll take too
long to explain over email. How about we chat on
Monday after the meeting?

Thanks,

--S.H.

"Okay, so we're
starting completely
from scratch here.
Got it"

From: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]
Sent: Wednesday, October 2, 2019 6:15 AM
To: **[Mentor and Mentee Cohort]**

Subject: First Observation Cycle

Dear Mentors and Mentees,

Just a friendly reminder to schedule your first
observation cycle sometime in the next week. For
this cycle, each of you should observe each other's
class once. Don't forget to schedule an additional
session where you can debrief your findings as
well.

Assistant Principal #1

From: a.bundren@yourschool.org
Sent: Wednesday, October 2, 2019 8:06 AM
To: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]
Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

Hi,

I want to schedule a session with my mentees, but they both have their prep period at the same time I do. I also have to coach every day after school this semester. What should we do?

--A.B.

"Surely the AP won't ask me to take a personal day to do my own job."

From: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]
Sent: Wednesday, October 2, 2019 8:45 AM
To: a.bundren@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

A,

Good question. See if you can get someone else to do the observation for you and then share the notes for your debriefing. You could also call for a sub that day.

--F.L.

"Not my problem."

"Just make it happen."

From: a.bundren@yourschool.org
Sent: Wednesday, October 2, 2019 9:03 AM
To: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]

Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

If I call in for a sub, will it count against my personal days? I feel like it shouldn't because you're asking me to do something that's impossible with the schedule I've been assigned.

--A.B.

"Surely, you can't be serious."

From: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]
Sent: Wednesday, October 2, 2019 10:21 AM
To: a.bundren@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

This day would count against your personal days.
We don't have enough money to call in subs every
time for cycles. Unfortunately, we don't have much
of a choice.

--F.L.

"I am serious, and don't call me 'Shirley.'"

"Look, I was just told to get this thing started. Why can't you just make it happen? Research says this works, so let's just do it already."

From: a.bundren@yourschool.org
Sent: Wednesday, October 2, 2019 11:13 AM
To: s.holmes@yourschool.org;
              b.scrivener@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

Hi All,

I can't do my observation cycle because my men-
tees' prep periods and my prep period are the same
period. F.L. suggested one of you observe my men-
tees and then give me the data so that I can debrief
at some point. Not sure when that's going to happen
because I coach every day, but anyway, any takers?
I promise to make it up to you.

"Please believe me."

Thanks,

--A.B.

From: b.scrivener@yourschool.org
Sent: Wednesday, October 2, 2019 12:07 PM
To: s.holmes@yourschool.org;
               a.bundren@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

Hey,

I would but I'm having a hard time getting my mentees to respond. It's like they don't check their email. What's up with that? What about you, S.?

--B.S.

From: s.holmes@yourschool.org
Sent: Wednesday, October 2, 2019 12:18 PM
To: a.bundren@yourschool.org;
               b.scrivener@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

Hi All,

I can take it. I'll email you an attachment with the data once I get in there. I think it'll work because all three of them don't have the same prep period I do. I'll observe Mr. Hemingway on Tuesday, Ms. Newton on Wednesday, and Ms. Leibniz on Thursday. I'll then debrief Hemingway next Tuesday because it's my only free afternoon that week after you factor in coaching. Have you figured out when they'll visit you to observe your room?

Thanks,

--S.H.

"I get it. Admin didn't set you up well here."

"But you owe me."

"You really owe me."

"Remember, I do some coaching, too."

"You're probably asking me to let them observe me, too, right?"

From: s.holmes@yourschool.org
Sent: Tuesday, October 8, 2019 9:00 AM
To: e.hemingway@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

Hi E,

Thanks for letting me come to your classroom today. I unfortunately won't be able to meet with you in person until next week because of coaching and other observations that I'm doing. For Friday's observation when you visit me, I'm going to ask Ms. Newton and Ms. Leibniz to join you so that all three of you can watch the same lesson. In the meantime, I have some questions for you before I give you feedback:

--How do you think the lesson went?
--Do you feel like you hit your objective? If so, how do you know?
--What are some patterns of behavior in your students that you want to correct?

Thanks,

--S.

From: s.holmes@yourschool.org
Sent: Thursday, October 10, 2019 1:12 PM
To: i.newton@yourschool.org;
g.leibniz@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

Hi I and G,

Thanks for letting me come to your classrooms this week. I'm going to type my observations and send them to A.B. for your debriefing. In the meantime, I look forward to seeing you in my room tomorrow along with E!

Thanks,

--S.

"I am trying to honor your time. I truly am."

"Because when we debrief, I want to keep the focus on you and not on me."

From: b.scrivener@yourschool.org
Sent: Friday, October 11, 2019 1:03 PM
To: a.michalson@yourschool.org;
e.murley@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

Hey, are you all getting my emails? I need to ob-
serve you.

--B.

"Can I just be done
with this mentoring
thing already? This
isn't working."

From: s.holmes@yourschool.org
Sent: Friday, October 11, 2019 2:20 PM
To: e.hemingway@yourschool.org;
i.newton@yourschool.org;
g.leibniz@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

Hi All,

Thanks for stopping by today! I'm glad you were
able to see my kids discuss Edna Pontellier's
decision to leave her husband and children through
a feminist lens. I hope it was helpful for you. Any
questions for me?

Thanks,

--S.

"So you just watched
my Honors kids pull
off their best
discussion of the year.
The looks on your
faces as you left the
room suggested you
were intimidated by
what you saw. I
probably need to do
some damage
control."

"Damage control
sequence initiated."

From: e.hemingway@yourschool.org
Sent: Friday, October 11, 2019 9:20 PM
To: s.holmes@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

Hey S,

So………..how did you do that? Should I start teaching the feminist lens on Monday? What is that, btw?

--E

"I have no idea what I just watched."

"Because my kids currently don't know what a verb is."

"I wasn't an English major, which is why I mask a ton of insecurity when I teach English class."

From: s.holmes@yourschool.org
Sent: Saturday, October 12, 2019 5:10 AM
To: e.hemingway@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

Hi E,

Let's chat more about it after school on Monday.

Enjoy your weekend!

Thanks,

--S

"I woke up to this email, and I have no idea how to even begin to answer it."

From:　　s.holmes@yourschool.org
Sent:　　Wednesday, October 23, 2019 11:46 AM
To:　　　F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]

Subject:　　Thoughts on the Program So Far

Hi F.,

With the first observation cycle now completed, I have some questions about where to go next as well as a few observations that you might find interesting:

--A.B. and I worked out the messy schedule. I'm going to shoulder most of the load for A's mentees, and A will sit in when possible. I think it's doable.

--The new teachers are really spooked right now. I sat in on one parent-teacher conference last week because Ms. Leibniz was terrified of what the parent was going to do. The conference ended up turning out fine aside from me having to redirect the discussion when the parents suggested G was causing mental anguish for their child by giving him a B on his essay, thereby hurting his college chances. Another colleague broke down in tears when they tried to replicate a discussion tactic I used and it bombed in their own class. Still another colleague tells me he's up until 1 AM every evening lesson planning. Judging by his texts each night, I think he's suffering from paralysis via analysis.

--B's mentees have started coming to me here and there for extra help because they say he isn't returning emails. I don't mind helping out the new teachers because we have to get everyone up to speed. I will say, though, that working with five new mentees is getting to be difficult. It's hard enough to devote my attention to my original mentee when I have four others coming to me with desperate cries for help. On top of that, I have no fewer than six other colleagues stopping by my room every day to ask for help on the Arts Integration project for Semester 1. My students are starting to get frustrated with the frequent phone calls from colleagues

"How could you ask A.B. to be a mentor when you knew what their coaching schedule was?"

"It's not."

"In case you've forgotten, these confrontational conferences happen frequently and only to female teachers in our building. If you won't say it, I will—our parents at this school are misogynistic."

"Why did you pick one of the most technologically-incompetent teachers in the building for this role when the position requires electronic correspondence?"

to my classroom because it disrupts our discussions. Again, I like my colleagues, but there needs to be some problem-solving here. Teachers need to step up and start being teachers.

--I've been accepted to graduate school for next semester. My plan is to work full-time and attend school half-time. I expect to remain fully committed to my mentee.

Thanks,

--S

"I have no one to turn to in this building when I get stressed. I'm viewed as the mentor, so I'm expected to have all the answers and not get fazed by any of this. You and I both know that's unrealistic. I have decided that you will be my outlet for venting."

"Please make this stop yesterday."

"I love what I do, but we have to look at making some changes."

From: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]
Sent: Wednesday, October 23, 2019 3:42 PM
To: s.holmes@yourschool.or

Subject: Re: Thoughts on the Program So Far

S.,

Thanks for your input. I will pass this on to Principal and see what we can do. In the meantime, just keep trying to be there for the new teachers. They need your positivity and enthusiasm right now. I'll see what I can do to take some of this off of your plate. You are extremely valuable to us, and we want you to be able to fulfill your primary responsibilities as a classroom teacher.

--F.

"We'll be able to fix this over the summer, but probably not any time soon."

"It doesn't matter to me who's there for them as long as someone is. Maybe you should talk to your colleagues about staying true to their responsibilities."

"Don't get your hopes up."

From: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]
Sent: Wednesday, October 23, 2019 4:10 PM
To: P. Anna [p.anna@yourschool.org]

Subject: Mentoring Issues

Okay, so we may have some issues with the mentoring. A.B. is too busy to do anything and B.S. hasn't heard back from their mentees. I don't think B has even done an observation yet. Meanwhile, S.H. is observing everybody and taking away time from their own mentee to work with everyone else. What do we do? I thought we picked the right people because they all have the most experience.

"Shouldn't more experience teaching automatically mean they're good mentors?"

--F

From: P. Anna [p.anna@yourschool.org]
Sent: Thursday, October 24, 2019 6:28 AM
To: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]

Subject: Re: Mentoring Issues

Thanks. I'll try to come up with something to give them more support. They'll have to just deal with it until then. Do we know more about why A and B aren't meeting with their mentees more often? This is why we assigned everyone by department. What if we put together a PD session for our mentors to help them have conversations with their mentees?

Thanks,

--P

From: b.scrivener@yourschool.org
Sent: Monday, November 4, 2019 12:23 PM
To: a.michalsen@yourschool.org;
e.murlay@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

Hey, are you all getting my emails? I still need to observe you.

--B.S.

From: e.hemingway@yourschool.org
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2019 10:11 AM
To: s.holmes@yourschool.org

Subject: I'm happy!

Hi S,

I had something really cool happen today. I've been using your suggestions from our last meeting on how to manage the start of class. For the last 2 weeks, I've tried them out. The kids are actually following instructions and we're getting things done on time. I think it's getting better for me! Thanks for your help! I'd love for you to come and see it sometime in case you have any extra advice.

--E

From: s.holmes@yourschool.org
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2019 4:03 PM
To: e.hemingway@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: I'm happy!

That's great news! I'm so glad to hear that things are starting to get more comfortable. Yes, I can stop by at some point next week. I have a meeting with administration this week and won't be available for my prep (I think they're mad at me). Keep me posted on the good news and keep going!

"Maybe, this is worth it after all."

--S

From: s.holmes@yourschool.org
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2019 4:15 PM
To: i.newton@yourschool.org;
            g.leibniz@yourschool.org

Subject: Checking In

Hi I and G,

I just want to reach out since our last session and see how things are going. Have you been able to talk to A.B. about those questions you had for me?

Thanks,

--S

From: i.newton@yourschool.org
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2019 8:59 PM
To: s.holmes@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: Checking In

S,

I did but it didn't go well. All A.B. said was, "Just watch another teacher and do what they do." I tried that. I went next door and watched Ms. Skinner. Her kids weren't behaved, but they seem to like her. I talked to her and she said that this job doesn't have to be that hard.[2] As long as the kids like you and you know what makes them happy, you won't have any issues. Is that true? What about my content standards?

--I

PAUSE here. See me in the endnotes.

From: g.leibniz@yourschool.org
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2019 9:36 PM
To: s.holmes@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: Checking In

Hi,

I haven't had much contact because A.B. is always coaching when I'm free. I feel bad asking A for help, but I really need it right now. Whenever I go to her, I feel like I'm taking up someone else's time. On top of that, Ms. Newton and I aren't getting along either. Whenever I come up with an idea to try during a lesson, she'll rephrase it and pretend like she thought of it first. So frustrating.

Do you have any advice on lesson planning? How do I know how long I should take on a given activity? I'm grateful for any help you can give me.

--G

From: s.holmes@yourschool.org
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2019 11:22 PM
To: i.newton@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: Checking In

I,

Thanks for letting me know about all of this. Please continue trying to set up a time with C2, but I'm willing to meet with you in the meantime if that's not possible.

I understand where Skinner is coming from and I appreciate you seeking out other teachers, but I do have a different take on it based on my experience. The short answer to your question is that classroom management is only partly about making the kids agreeable to whatever you're doing. If they like you a lot, but you don't push them, they'll walk all over you when you expect them to raise their standard of work.

In other words, hold high standards, provide support to guide students through difficult parts of the curriculum, and be there to cheer them on when they make progress of any kind. They will run through a wall for you if you take an interest in them and make them see that you are in this struggle together with them.

I hope that helps a bit.

--S

"I feel like I should have expected this email at some point."

"There is no professional way for me to say that you went to one of the worst teachers in the building, bought their snake oil, and are now on the verge of making questionable decisions that will make the rest of your first year significantly difficult. I know you have no way of knowing that said teacher has abysmal data in terms of growth and refuses to write lesson plans. In that room, it is all about the teacher and never about the kids. I realize it is not your job to know that. So, for now, please just trust me as I tell you to run. Run away from that room as fast as possible."

From: s.holmes@yourschool.org
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2019 11:35 PM
To: g.leibniz@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: Checking In

G,

It's going to be okay. Remember that this job is one where if you make a small amount of progress, it still feels like a huge step. Let's work on that small step right now:

When you're new to lesson planning, think about how you can articulate a clear, concrete goal at the start of every lesson. You should be able to say to the students something like, "By the end of this lesson, you will be able to do X." From that point forward, everything you put into that lesson needs to get them closer to that goal. So, ask yourself, "What things need to happen to get them from where they're starting to the stated objective?" If you write that progression down, it'll stick in your mind and you'll be able to deliver your instruction in a more meaningful way because you've thought through the plan before getting in front of the class.

For now, let's work just on that—stating a clear objective and devising 3, 4, or 5 steps to get them to the goal. Feel free to send me your next lesson plan so that I can take a look at it.

Thanks,

--S

"I hope that sounds convincing. I need to get to bed ASAP. I can only imagine what AB's mentees feel like."

"Even as I look at what I just wrote, I know it is still too complex. But G seriously needs to know how to do all of this by now. I do not know how else to put it more politely to her."

From: i.newton@yourschool.org
Sent: Saturday, November 9, 2019 9:19 AM
To: s.holmes@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: Checking In

Thanks for your help! I'm going to work on ways to make that happen. I also appreciate your responding to me. Even though you're not my official mentor, can I still reach out from time to time?

--I

"My mentor has no time for me, and I want to be separated from them."

From: g.leibniz@yourschool.org
Sent: Sunday, November 10, 2019 12:41 PM
To: s.holmes@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: Checking In

That seems really difficult for me, but I'm still going to try it. I just don't get what it's supposed to look like still. This just isn't how I think about teaching. Can you take a look at what I've attached anyway?

--G

"I'm looking elsewhere for a new career right now because this job makes no sense to me."

From: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]
Sent: Monday, January 6, 2020 7:18 AM
To: **[Mentor and Mentee Cohort]**

Subject: Second Observation Cycle and Reminders

Dear Mentors and Mentees,

Welcome back from break! I hope it gave all of you some much needed rest.

As we get back into the daily routine, I'd like to send some quick friendly reminders:

- All mentors and mentees should be checking in with each other 1-2 times per week at a designated time.
- Mentors are asked to give timely feedback on any observations they conduct, preferably meeting with the mentee after school or on prep to debrief what they saw.
- Maintain high levels of enthusiasm and support for each other.

Also, it is time for us to conduct our second observation cycle of the year. Please schedule a time with each other to have the mentor visit the mentee's class and the mentee visit the mentor's class. Mentors will log their observations and share them during the debriefing session with the mentee. Administration is conducting their formal observations of probationary teachers in about 2 weeks. Therefore, please try to have this cycle completed so that mentees can get some last advice before we go in to evaluate them.

Finally, please take some time go to the link below and take our survey on how this year's mentoring program went for you:

https://bit.ly/uhohthiswillnotbegood

Have a good week,

--F.L.

"Especially you, Holmes."

"Even though we did not address the issue of time."

"Even though we did not address the issue of time."

"You're still doing everything we asked of you for this program, right? Of course you are. Why wouldn't you?"

"Even though we still have not figured out a way for any of you to make this task work with your current schedules."

"No, really. Have a good week."

From: a.bundren@yourschool.org
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2020 8:05 AM
To: s.holmes@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: Second Observation Cycle

Hi S,

I know I said I would pick up your observation after you took mine, but my schedule still won't let me visit my mentees.   I'm also coaching 4 days per week this semester. Would you be able to pick up my observation again? I promise I'll find a way to make it up to you.

Thanks,

--A.B.

From: s.holmes@yourschool.org
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2020 10:54 PM
To: a.bundren@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: Second Observation Cycle

Hi A,

<u>I will check my schedule and see what I can do.</u>

--S.H.

"You cannot be serious. You seriously want to ask me to do this again when I am already doing the rest of your job as a mentor? Do you have any idea how little your mentees trust you right now? Do you realize that the advice you gave to Ms. Newton nearly led her in a direction that would be extremely difficult to fix?"

From: b.scrivener@yourschool.org
Sent: Thursday, January 9, 2020 10:03 AM
To: a.michalsin@yourschool.org;
e.morlay@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

Hey, I need to observe you.

--B.S.

From: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2020 7:00 AM
To: **[Mentor and Mentee Cohort]**

Subject: Mentor/Mentee Survey Results

Mentors and Mentees,

Thank you for participating in this year's mentoring program. While we still have a few months left in the school year, we want to share the results of the survey we sent to all of you last month. These results will help us improve the program for next year.

- All mentees completed the survey, one mentor completed the survey
- Most mentees reported being able to meet with a mentor to get advice on their teaching
- Most mentees felt mixed support from the mentors
- All respondents expressed the problem of not having enough time to complete what was asked of them
- Most respondents preferred face-to-face contact instead of email

Thanks, everyone!

--F.L.

"We all know who that was."

"This program was a success."

"This program was still a success."

"We are going to ignore this problem until we are forced to confront it."

"This program was still a success."

From: s.holmes@yourschool.org
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2020 1:07 AM
To:

Subject:

With the school year nearly complete, I have to say something about this program. I also feel like I have to say it here because I don't have anyone to turn to in the building.

This program has been disastrous. How can we help new teachers if we aren't given the time to provide them with the support they need? Are we doing this just to say we're doing it, or are we actually trying to make a difference for new teachers and their students? Also, was this program planned out in advance? This program feels like it was thrown together without any vision whatsoever. I get it for where we experiment with smaller things like tardy policy and dress code to see if it works, but this type of program is way more critical to the success of the school. These are people's careers we're working with here, and we're driving them away from the profession. It's hard enough to keep people in the job. I don't want to be part of the problem. We need to fix this program. We need to fix it fast. If we don't, you won't just have new teachers leaving the school. You'll have experienced teachers burn out, too.

"I need to delete this before I send it by accident."

From: g.leibniz@yourschool.org
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2020 6:06 AM
To: P. Anna [p.anna@yourschool.org];
F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]

Subject: Next Year

Dear P and F,

I regret to inform you that I must resign at the end of the year. I have decided to take an offer in a different field. I truly appreciate the opportunity to work at Your School High School this year.

Sincerely,

G. Leibniz

From: a.michelson@yourschool.org
Sent: Wednesday, April 8, 2020 10:19 AM
To: P. Anna [p.anna@yourschool.org];
F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]

Subject: Not Returning Next Year

Principal and Assistant Principal,

I'm sorry but I need to leave at the end of the year. My mentor never contacted me once this entire school year and I have felt utterly lost in this job. I don't think it's for me. Thank you for giving me the chance. I wish you luck next school year.

A. Michelson

From: e.morley@yourschool.org
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2020 2:45 PM
To: P. Anna [p.anna@yourschool.org];
               F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]

Subject: Quitting

I am sorry to say that I will leave in June. I haven't felt supported by my mentor and I don't know that this job is a good fit for me. I appreciate your willingness to give me the opportunity to work with the students. I just can't keep doing this day after day. It isn't good for me.

E. Morley

From: b.scrivener@yourschool.org
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2020 12:00 PM
To: a.michalson@yourschool.org;
               e.murley@yourschool.org

Subject: Re: First Observation Cycle

Hey, do you still want me to observe you?

--B.S.

From: F. Laurence [f.laurence@yourschool.org]
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2020 5:05 PM
To: P. Anna [p.anna@yourschool.org]

Subject: Re: Mentoring Issues

This program didn't work.[3]

PAUSE here. See me in the endnotes.

Why This Program Failed

The mentoring program depicted in this article did not fail because the teachers and administrators were poor at their jobs (at least, not all of them). Instead, the systems in which teachers and administrators operate put a significant number of restrictions on potential success (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The point of this article is not to prove that faculty and administration are overstressed and falter in their performance because of said stress. Instead, the point is to put a relatable face on a problem that poses significant struggles for schools around the country—fostering the growth of new teachers while ensuring that the people in the building responsible for said growth receive the resources they need. Far too many teachers are leaving the classroom before their careers truly begin (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). Proper mentoring is largely beneficial for new teachers and can possibly curb their exits (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011). However, not enough is known about how to implement a mentoring program in a way that is effective while still being compatible with the increased professional demands on teachers and administrators in the year 2020 and beyond.

The Role of Administrators

Administrators play a critical role in the entire implementation of the mentoring program (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010; Bickmore, Bickmore, & Hart, 2005). They affect the success of a mentoring program in four clear ways: (1) selecting mentors, (2) training mentors, (3) setting up the master schedule to allow mentors to perform all their duties, and (4) fostering high morale among mentors and mentees. It should be noted that these administrative duties are not present only during the 9-month school year. They exist during the entire calendar year.

Mentor Selection

When selecting mentors, administrators first need to recognize that they are asking a select group of their faculty to take on a significant increase in professional responsibilities. Irvine (1985) gave a list of 46 potential duties to new teachers and asked them to indicate how many of them they expected their mentor teacher to perform. At the start of the school year, new teachers expected their mentors to perform 43 of the 46 tasks; by the end of the year, the expected number of tasks dropped to 10 (Irving, 1985). More recently, Huling, Resta, and Yeargain (2012) conducted a study of one school district that attempted to mitigate these demands. The district hired retired teachers solely for the purpose of mentoring 8-10 novice teachers because the current classroom teachers did not have enough time to take on the task of mentoring. Clearly, the demands placed on mentors to elevate their mentees go far beyond the basic expectations of a typical classroom teacher.

In taking on such a prodigious task, it is understandable to think that compensatory incentives might attract a higher number of willing mentor candidates (Futrell, 1988; Wagner, 1985). Both Futrell (1988) and Wagner (1985) examined how extra compensation for mentor-teachers in the state of California affected their efficacy. Both studies showed no such increase even after mentors were paid an additional $4,000. Therefore, administrators should still focus on picking the right people before figuring out how to compensate them for their time (Wagner, 1985).

It is also reasonable to predict that teachers with more experience are better candidates to become mentors because they may have more ideas on how to navigate the struggles of the job. However, Orland-Barak and Yinon (2005) showed that teachers who possess plenty of instructional experience do not necessarily translate to the best mentors on the staff. Yes, mentors need to be highly skilled in their own right when it comes to instruction, but they also need to be able to navigate professional relationships in a similarly skilled way. Reaching this level of skill takes considerable time and practice. Motivation through compensation and extra classroom experience do not automatically make skilled teachers into skilled mentors.

In the email chain from this piece, the administration makes the mistake of hiring teachers based on classroom experience alone. All three teachers are highly experienced, yet only Mr. Holmes is able to find some amount of success as he ends up making more meaningful connections with mentees than his other two colleagues. Compensation is discussed yet never finalized. The only teacher that inquires about extra pay (Bundren) probably would have encountered the same struggles regardless of stipends due to time constraints.

Mentor Training

Once mentors are selected, it is imperative that administrators train them extensively. Unfortunately, such training is hard to do during the actual school year. Options are also seemingly endless. Consequently, schools struggle with choosing the best option for how to even begin mentor training. Lunsmann, Beck, Riddle, Scott, and Adkins (2019) found that mentors held a positive view of their responsibilities after they had gone through the process of being mentored themselves. Kuzle and Biehler (2015) found collaborative training was successful for mentor teachers when conducted over a 5-month period. Bickmore (2013) found similar success after a weeklong summer seminar for new mentors. All three of these studies have one clear characteristic in common: the extensive time they require for implementation must be done outside of the typical school calendar. It is unreasonable to do any of the above approaches and still expect mentor teachers to handle a full load of classes along with their requisite fringe professional responsibilities.

If administrators are fortunate to select the proper mentors and give them appropriate training, they still must ensure mentors operate at a high level during

the actual school year. Such demands necessitate a codified professional development plan that anchors the entire mentoring program. What this codified program looks like varies widely from school to school. In addition to the previously mentioned studies, Mills, Moore, and Keane (2001) analyzed the Oakland County, Michigan, mentoring programs and found that mandated reflection logs for both the mentor and mentee led to more positive, thoughtful conversations about teaching. Kapadia, Coca, and Easton (2007) focused on schools that offered frequent trainings on the practice of literacy instruction. Both studies yielded more positive attitudes towards teaching on the part of the new teachers.

Unfortunately for the mentors and mentees in the email chain, training is addressed but never implemented like the aforementioned studies.

Master Schedule Construction and Staff Morale Maintenance

Making matters even more difficult for administrators are master schedule construction and staff morale maintenance. In a perfect world, administrators, especially principals, recognize that they are one of the most important factors to the success of new teachers. Scott, Hayden, and Plachowski (2018) stress the need for administrators to build time into the daily schedule for mentors and mentees to have meaningful interactions about the profession. They also indicate, however, that time needs to be allocated outside the master schedule for mentors and mentees to connect on a more personal level; such collegial relationships lead to increased teacher retention (Scott, Hayden, & Plachowski, 2018).

Collegial relationships between administration and new faculty need to be fostered, too. Bickmore and Bickmore (2010) repeatedly indicated the importance of principals making new teachers feel like valued professionals despite their inexperience; they showed that principals who build collegial environments keep their teachers. Similarly, Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, and Liu (2001) stressed the importance of establishing a professional culture that values the experience of strong veteran teachers while still validating the learning process for new teachers that need to find their way; these new teachers ultimately did find their way with the guidance from willing veterans who knew how to relate their own experiences as new teachers to their mentoring practices. Pogodzinski, Youngs, and Frank (2013) also attributed a collegial climate as crucial to the retention of new teachers.

For all parties in the email chain, those types of collegial relationships are noticeably absent. Unsurprisingly, some teachers choose to leave at the end of the year.

The Demands of Mentor-Teachers

It is imperative that mentors receive support as they execute a crucial role within the school. Their work as mentors affects both teacher turnover and teacher efficacy significantly. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) showed schools who do not of-

fer some form of induction and/or mentoring program experience a 41% predicted turnover rate. Ingersoll and Strong's (2011) review of induction programs found that beginning teachers who experienced some form of induction had students who produced higher scores and/or growth on standardized tests.

However, implementing a bare-bones mentoring program does not appear to produce effective instruction automatically. It also does not automatically curb teacher turnover. One issue schools continue to struggle with involves the navigation of the increased professional demands on mentor-teachers. In pairing a mentor with multiple mentees, the mentor now becomes partly responsible for the professional well-being of multiple colleagues. In a 1:1 or 1:2 setup, there needs to be a backup plan if the mentor struggles to support the mentees. Sharing the load of mentoring may be more practical. Bickmore, Bickmore, and Hart (2005) experimented with interdisciplinary teams of four and five members that shared the duties of mentoring new colleagues. These teams consisted of teachers of various experience levels working with new colleagues. In sharing the tasks of mentoring, the teams were able to offer new teachers more comprehensive guidance on basic first-year survival needs such as classroom management, the understanding of school policies, and school communication.

Five years later, Bickmore and Bickmore (2010) devised a system that mixed elements of different models by pairing mentors with mentees in the traditional manner while housing the mentor-mentee relationship within a larger interdisciplinary team. Under this system, the mentor was still primarily responsible for his/her mentees. However, the mentor received support from other experienced colleagues in providing guidance to the new teachers. This team approach allowed multiple colleagues to share the demands of mentoring.

In the email chain from this piece, no such support system exists. One mentor ends up shouldering a considerable burden as other mentors become unable to fulfill their obligations. Holmes ends up going beyond the expectations because of a desire to not see additional new teachers struggle. However, Holmes later has no recourse for both professional and emotional support.

Implications for Research

Plenty of research has already shown that mentoring works to curb teacher turnover (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Bickmore, Bickmore, & Hart, 2005; Huling, Resta, & Yeargain, 2012). However, there is a paucity of research on how schools actually train their own teachers to take on the considerably weighty role of being a mentor. It is imperative to examine previous studies on mentoring and see if the recommendations for future research are being followed. As the teacher shortage in the United States continues to worsen, it is necessary to look at how schools train their own personnel to become mentors. Furthermore, the few mentoring systems that have been shown to curb teacher turnover all operate in a way that

requires significant manipulation of a school's typical master schedule. What remains to be seen is if a school can implement a mentoring program that raises new-teacher efficacy and decreases teacher turnover while still operating within the confines of a typical master schedule.

Notes

[1] But if you want to be truly effective at this role and help your colleague become someone who makes meaningful growth and impacts student achievement positively, your responsibilities will end up including the following unbeknownst to the well-meaning A.P.:

- Using your prep period to perform classroom observations of your mentee
- Debriefing these walkthroughs during more prep periods in order to close the feedback loop in a timely manner
- Shoehorning the required meetings with your mentee somewhere into your day
- Sitting in as "protection" during a parent-teacher conference that you know is going to just devour your mentee
- Providing meaningful emotional therapy during the expected tailspins that happen to nearly every first-year teacher
- Teaching your mentee the parts of a lesson plan
- Reminding your mentee to write lesson plans
- Showing your mentee how to set up their gradebook
- Allowing your mentee to vent when they become incredulous at how many of their students misuse commas because proper comma use is clearly the key to all good writing
- Explaining to your mentee why they cannot make "Participation" 90% of the quarter grade
- Helping your mentee set a daily routine that ensures they are not pushed to exhaustion by Tuesday of each week
- Offering suggestions to your mentee on how to respond to a parent who just threatened to sue the school because your mentee justifiably did not allow a student to work solo on a group project
- Reading your mentee's responses to parents before they hit the "send" button
- Demonstrating how to fill out school-required accommodation logs so that your mentee can document their implementation of accommodations for 18 students with IEPs
- Practicing instructional delivery techniques with your mentee
- Guiding the mentee as they prepare their evaluation portfolio
- Answering their texts during the evening as they try to figure out how to plan the next day
- Convincing your mentee that they absolutely can do this job
- Reminding the mentee that it truly does get better after the first year
- Repeating all of the above tasks in an unofficial capacity with other mentees whose mentors have abandoned them after the first month of the program.

(In truth, all you really want to do is take the positive mentoring experience you had as a mentee at another school a long time ago and finally make good on an opportunity to be that life-giving force for a new colleague who at least deserves that much.)

But remember, during all of this mentoring, mentors have their own set of mandatory responsibilities that need to be achieved at their already-consistently reliable level of performance. For example, in a given week, a typical load for a highly-effective high school teacher may look something like this:

- Teaching a full load of six classes with one open period, where at least two of which are co-taught Special Education courses and at least one is an Advanced Placement course
- Coaching an academic competitive team three days per week
- Coaching a volleyball team three nights per week
- Attending competitions/games on weekends
- Counseling students who are afraid to tell their parents about their homosexuality for fear of what the family might say
- Working with the school social worker to help a student who was just kicked out of their home
- Answering emails from parents who imply that their intuition matters more than your professional training and college degree (after all, they could have been a teacher if they wanted to be but chose not to)
- Answering, printing, and framing emails from parents who think you are the real-life version of Robin Williams in Dead Poets Society and the greatest figure in their child's education
- Serving on the Graduation Committee
- Serving on the Testing Committee
- Filling out logs to prove you are implementing every accommodation from every IEP in your possession
- Writing letters of recommendation
- Planning a professional development session at the request of your principal
- Creating new material for their own classes as needed
- Lesson planning
- Grading

Something else to keep in mind, too, is that mentors will likely have their own moments throughout the year where they need to reach out for advice for their own struggles. Having lots of teaching experience brings a certain level of comfort within the position, but it does not provide immunity to being stressed out and overwhelmed. In fact, it should be almost expected that mentors will understandably be overwhelmed in this new role because they now bear some responsibility for the progress of their colleagues. They need to learn how to be effective mentors on top of honing their own craft. That is a full-time job regardless of how distilled it appears in a bulleted list. Like the craft of teaching, mentoring requires significant time and experience in order to achieve high levels of effectiveness.

[2] There is always a Mr. or Ms. Skinner in every building ready to lead a mentee astray from the path of righteousness. If you work in a school, you know exactly who this teacher is. This is the teacher who is the ultimate people-pleaser, the one with many "fresh" ideas that are deceptively couched in massive amounts of laziness. Do not underestimate the effects this teacher can have on a staff. This type of teacher is powerful enough to derail the progress of many a new colleague by giving bad advice and convincing them it is better to be liked than to be respected. Beware this teacher.

[3] This is the end of the chain. While this school year ended grimly in terms of teacher retention and may seem unique, it actually is not. Ineffective teacher mentoring is a com-

mon experience in schools every single year. To learn more about why this program failed, read on.

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The Rise of the GYO-TOCs as Pop-Ups

Lessons in Racial Resistance from the *Abriendo Caminos/Opening Pathways for Students of Color into the Teaching Profession: Giving Back to Community Through Teaching* Project

Norma A. Marrun & Christine Clark

Abstract

Efforts to diversify the teaching workforce have been a constant in the aftermath of the *Brown v Board of Education* decision in 1954 that resulted in the massive whitening of the teaching profession. Diversification efforts, even when buoyed by state and federal policy and funding, have been largely unsuccessful. This article examines, using Critical Race Theory, interest convergence, neoliberalism, and critical multicultural education as analytical lenses, the limiting pressures for Teacher of Color pipeline initiatives, like the *Abriendo Caminos* project, to conform to neoliberal "Grow Your Own" models that ensure the persistence of white dominance in the teacher ranks.

Introduction

In 1980, esteemed Critical Race Theory (CRT) scholar, Derrick Bell, published his seminal work on the concept of *interest convergence* in law, especially the manner in which interest convergence has played out in U.S. educational law, notably *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Some scholars argue that, through interest convergence, non-dominant group interests can be moved forward through strategic alignment with dominant group interests (Bickel, 1970;

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Weschler, 1961). In challenging this assertion, Bell contends, "in racial cases both before and after *Brown*, this principle of 'interest convergence'…will not authorize a judicial remedy providing effective racial equality for blacks where the remedy sought threatens the superior societal status of middle and upper class whites" (p. 523).

Other scholars, including Bell, argue that all interest convergence is a ruse to engender non-dominant group 'co-signing' of what are ultimately only ever intended to be pathways to solely advance dominant group interests (Kluger, 1975; Wasby et al., 1977). For example, "…after the enforcement of *Brown*, the majority of historically Black public schools were shut down and Black teachers lost their jobs...between 1955 and 1957 a total of 317 Black educators [just] in Oklahoma lost their jobs because...white administrators believed that Black teachers were inferior to white teachers and not qualified to teach white students… [Thus], the historical effects of *Brown* had a major impact on the systematic displacement of Black educators and has sustained the unexamined dominance of a predominantly white teaching workforce" (Marrun et al., 2020, p. 7).

Public schooling in the United States has long been a site of neoliberal political and related economic struggle situated in what Bell (1980) terms *the interest-convergence dilemma* (Gilborn, 2005; Giroux, 2012, 2018). As U.S. social institutions, public schools are both purveyors of larger societal norms and values, like racism and white supremacy, as well as locations where counterhegemonic resistance to oppression and transformative decolonializing action has taken place (Kohli, 2018; Nieto & Bode, 2018; Stovall, 2016). Dominant interests in public schooling recognize the power of schools to cultivate and influence students and their families, as well as various school personnel, as voters and consumers (Gilborn, 2005; Giroux, 2012, 2018). Non-dominant interests in public schooling are broadly focused on the opportunities that education provides for self-determination: a pathway to a freer and more stable life (Paris & Alim, 2017; Stovall, 2016; Valenzuela, 2016). Central to the advancement of these non-dominant group interests have been efforts to reclaim and expand the racial demographic diversity of the teacher workforce; to date, however, dominant group interests have led only to increased whitening of the teaching ranks (Gilborn, 2005; Sleeter, 2017; Marrun et al., 2019, 2020).

Teacher pipeline diversification initiatives first gained national momentum in the mid-to-late 1980s in response, not only to the negative impacts of *Brown*, but also to changes in teacher re/certification requirements designed to disproportionately negatively impact pre- and in-service Teachers of Color; accordingly, these diversification efforts were not durably successful (Cooper, 1986; Dilworth, 1988, 1989, 1992; Farrell, 1990; Irvine, 1988). While efforts to expand the racial profile of public school teachers continued, over the last ten years (Bristol, 2015; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; USDOE, 2016), there has been a renaissance of national attention being paid, including through seed grant offerings, to recruiting Students of Color

into the teaching profession (Dilworth, 2018; Dilworth & Coleman, 2014). This attention has led to: 1) the development and rapid proliferation of local 'Grow Your Own' (GYO) Teacher of Color (TOC) programs (Gist et al., 2019; Valenzuela, 2017); and, 2) the expansion of so-called college and career readiness curricula targeting Students of Color (Education Trust, 2020; Kostyo et al., 2018). Similar to how minority business enterprises (MBEs) seek to gain traction in the business sector through 'pop-up' shop opportunities, GYO-TOC programs seek to gain footholds in teacher recruitment and training arenas by capitalizing on periodic favorable education funding trends (Ed, 2020; Valenzuela, 2017).

MBE pop-up shops have become very popular among U.S. consumers, especially in "diverse" gentri-fied/-fying metropolitan communities, by providing "diversity-friendly" products and services (Lawson, 2018; Novellino, 2015). In so doing, these MBEs attract new consumers to the established, predominately white-owned shop spaces they pop-up in, and enable larger financial market tracking of consumption responses to their often new and unique products and services. While MBE pop-up shops create consumer excitement and build product and service buzz, they rarely become sustaining fixtures in the market economy landscape. Here, interest convergence exploits the entrepreneurial undertakings of MBEs for the principal benefit of white corporate capitalism.

Similarly, GYO-TOC programs, seek to leverage the intersection of persistent national teacher shortages, increasing public school student demographic diversity, and durably poor student learning outcomes in "high needs" school communities to engender investment in "culturally competent" approaches to teacher recruitment and training (Gist et al., 2019; Valenzuela, 2017; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). While the promise of GYO-TOC programs is to improve and expand educational and career pathways for Students of Color, Mthethwa-Sommers (2012) argues that, instead, such initiatives end up "ensuring employment for teachers from the dominant group" (p. 161). After being developed by Teachers of Color and refined through use with Students of Color, culturally-informed GYO-TOC training approaches are appropriated for use by white teacher education faculty in whitestream teacher preparation programs with predominantly white pre-service teacher education students, who, upon graduation, are deemed "'competent' to teach culturally diverse students, so they can be hired in lieu of teachers of color" in a manner strikingly similar to how *Brown* "created teaching jobs for white teachers in black schools, while preserving white schools, and the teaching jobs in them, for white teachers as well" (Mthethwa-Sommers, 2012, p. 161). In this instance, interest convergence appropriates GYO-TOC program efforts aimed at improving public education for Students of Color, and transmutes these efforts into the preservation and expansion of exclusive job security for white teachers.

From 2016-2019, the *Abriendo Caminos/Opening Pathways for Students of Color into the Teaching Profession: Giving Back to the Community through Teaching* (hereafter, *Abriendo Caminos*) project, funded by the Nevada Depart-

ment of Education (NDE), through the state's Great Teaching and Leading Fund (GTLF), sought to: (1) to recruit local Students of Color to college and into the teaching profession; (2) reduce local teacher shortages by diversifying the teacher workforce; and (3) improve the local quality of teacher preparation and teaching by closing the student-teacher demographic diversity gap and by increasing pre- and in-service teacher access to high-quality, race-conscious teacher preparation and professional development curricula through partnership building between the University of Nevada, Las Vegas' (UNLV) College of Education, the Clark County School District (CCSD), and community-based education-focused organizations. While the *Abriendo Caminos* project was never conceived of, or branded as, a GYO or a GYO-TOC program, and while it sought, deliberately, to avoid alignment with teaching-focused college and career readiness initiatives in CCSD, the project constantly battled state, university, and district efforts to homogenize the project in these directions. For example, the name of the project, *Abriendo Caminos*, was routinely mispronounced by partner school leaders who claimed it was "difficult" to pronounce and repeatedly asked that we change it; district and university fiscal services made it nearly impossible to use project funds as approved and delineated in the budget to purchase critically conscious educational materials for classroom and school use; and, though none of the project's six partner schools had a *teaching and training* Career and Technical Education (CTE) *cluster* program of study when the project started, by the time the project ended three of the six did, rendering *Abriendo Caminos'* independent recruitment efforts largely inert.

In this article, we critically re-examine the development and implementation of the *Abriendo Caminos* project, focusing attention on the efficacy of the project's strategies to build and sustain—and concomitantly fight against interest convergence threats to—a sociopolitically-located, race-conscious, community-embedded teacher recruitment and preparation initiative predicated on authentic university-school-family partnership-building. This work builds on the growing body of literature on teacher pipeline diversification initiatives, and extends this literature base by using CRT, interest convergence, neoliberalism, and critical multicultural education analytical lenses to unpack and expose the political resistance of PK-12 schools/districts and higher education teacher preparation units to the consequential implementation of race-conscious efforts to recruit, prepare, and retain Educators of Color.

The Neoliberal Roots and Wings of GYO and GYO-TOC Programs

While the shortage of PK-12 teachers and the underrepresentation of Teachers of Color in U.S schools have been persistent, pervasive, and dire crises in education for some time (García & Weiss, 2019; Will 2019), efforts to resolve both have been durably unsuccessful (Aragon, 2016; Moss, 2016). Nonetheless,

these resolution efforts have persisted, most recently culminating in the rise of GYO, including GYO-TOC, initiatives and programs across the nation, fueled by funding from a variety of sources, including federal grants, private foundations, and state development (Ed, 2020; Muñiz, 2018; Zuber, 2017). GYO-TOC programs are specifically designed to recruit Students of Color into teacher education in order to grow and retain Teachers of Color in the profession (Gist et al., 2019; Valenzuela, 2017).

GYO and GYO-TOC programs focus on building teacher workforces locally; accordingly, GYO-TOC programs are more likely to emerge in geographically diverse areas of the country (Ed, 2020; Muñiz, 2018; Zuber, 2017). Typically, GYO and GYO-TOC programs are formed as partnerships between college and university teacher education programs and PK-12 school districts to enable local student recruitment in the hopes of increasing local retention of students-turned-teachers (Gist et al., 2019; Valenzuela, 2017). Funding poured into GYO initiatives has led to the pop-up shop-like establishment of GYO-TOC programs across our nation's urban school districts (Ed, 2020; Muñiz, 2018; Zuber, 2017). Similar to the corporate cannibalization of MBE pop-up shop product and service innovations, most GYO-TOC programs are not sustained, those that are generally do not center equity, social justice, or critically consciousness points of entry into teacher training and praxis, or are coerced into watering down or abandoning these training and praxis commitments in order to hold onto conventional revenue streams often termed the non-profit industrial complex (INCITE, 2017; Samimi, 2010; Valenzuela, 2016; Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

GYO and GYO-TOC programs that espouse superficial, including colorblind, so-called solutions to teacher recruitment and retention are more likely to survive and even thrive, precisely because they are designed to make white self-interest—interest convergence—invisible in order to concomitantly continue the systemic displacement of Teachers of Color and the dominance of a predominantly white teaching workforce initiated through *Brown* (Bell, 1980; Marrun, et al., 2020; Valenzuela, 2017; Webb, et al., 2009). These GYO and GYO-TOC programs hide how schools are structured to reproduce inequities by continuing to systematically normalize white supremacy in school policies and practices, notably through the uncontested proliferation of eurocentic curricular content and banking pedagogies (Gillborn, 2005; Irizarry, 2007; Milner, 2008; Nieto & Bode, 2018; Stovall, 2016; Valenzuela, 2016).

Abriendo Caminos:
Resisting Pop-Up Buzz, Working for Change

Our *Abriendo Caminos* project team received notice that the project proposal was among those selected for full funding in early July 2016. Less than a month later, the project started to gain pop-up-like buzz. Team members started receiving

congratulatory messages from both local and national educational leaders who were interested in learning more about the project. We were flattered by the inquiries, yet puzzled by the attention since the project was *just* funded and no real work on it had begun. One highly esteemed national educational leader, who happened to be in Las Vegas area for another purpose at that time, asked for a face-to-face meeting with the senior faculty member, though not the Principal Investigator (PI), on the project. During that meeting the leader inquired as to how soon the team would be sharing details about the project's success. When the faculty member intimated that the team would need to actually enact the work of the project before it could discern whether or not it was, in fact, successful, the leader implied that the faculty member was not being very "sophisticated" about the work. When the faculty member shared the details of this conversation with a College of Education leader, the college leader expressed agreement with the national education leader—that the project team should immediately promote the project as a success. The project team resisted this advice.

Racial Representation

In working for change over the three years of the project, the project team was comprised of a multiracial group of twenty-nine social justice-oriented university faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, and staff—though these statuses changed over the life of the project (for example, some student project members became staff project members). Specifically, the team consisted of: ***six faculty*** (all women)—one Latina (the project PI from 2017-2019), two Black American, and three white; ***seven staff*** (all women)—two white (one of whom was the project PI from 2016-2017), one biracial (Black American and white), three Latina, and one South Asian; ***thirteen graduate students***—six Black American (four women, two men), four Latina, one biracial (Latina and Middle Eastern), one Middle Eastern (a woman), and one Asian Indigenous (a woman); and, ***three undergraduate students***—one Black American (a man), and two Latinx (one woman and one man); another multiracial group of twenty-three undergraduate pre-service teachers also periodically participated in project work. In sum, the *Abriendo Caminos* project team was 31% Black American, 34% Latinx, 10% Asian (South Asian, Middle Eastern, and Asian Indigenous), 7% biracial, and 17% white. However, though the faculty represented only 21% of team, they held the most formal power on the team, and 50% of the faculty were white. While the team confronted this challenge directly and indirectly through whole-team and various sub-team critical, race-conscious dialogue, *at best* it was balanced through a degree of workload equity that was achieved—while everyone on the team had meaningful input into team decision making, faculty, including white faculty, did the majority of the labor on the project and, except in one instance during the first year of the project, were not compensated for that labor.

It is also important to note that while the *Abriendo Caminos* project team strove to be racially representative of the UNLV and CCSD student bodies at focus in the project's work, it could only accomplish that goal by recruiting staff (most of whom were also students) and students to serve on the project team. During the project's trajectory, UNLV's College of Education faculty was 11% Black American, 9% Latinx, 17% Asian, 63% white (UNLV, 2016-2019, n.p.n.). White faculty in the college were well distributed across rank, and most densely concentrated among the tenured (associate) and senior (full) faculty ranks; in greatest contrast, the college's Latinx faculty were not well distributed across rank, and concentrated almost exclusively in the un-tenured (assistant) and visiting faculty ranks. This continues to be the case at UNLV and in the racial demographics of teacher education faculty nationally, which, at least in part, informs the racial demographics of pre- and in-service teachers (Haddix, 2017). Until the whiteness of teacher preparation, teaching, and the teaching profession is effectively contested through critical race-conscious racial representation and associated redistribution of power, educational outcomes for Students of Color will not change.

Racial Representation and Data Collection

For the duration of the project, various configurations of project team members collected qualitative and quantitative data through surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews with UNLV college students, with CCSD high school students, family members, teachers, other licensed and non-licensed personnel, and administrators, as well as with local Teachers of Color who identified as having left the profession of teaching. Team members also conducted informal observations, and artifact and document analysis on an on-going basis. During all three years of the project, the overarching focus of all data collection was on examining the perceptions that Students of Color and their family members held about teaching as a career, and the origins and durability of those perceptions.

The faculty racial demographics at UNLV during the data collection period was 9% Black, 12% Latinx, 11% Asian, and 63% white (NSHE, 2018, para. 1). UNLV undergraduate student racial demographics at UNLV for the same period was 8% Black, 31% Latinx, 17% Asian, 11% biracial, 3% international, 1% Indigenous/Asian Pacific Islander, and 29% white (College Factual, n.d., para. 4; UNLV, 2020a, para. 1). The racial demographics of CCSD educators during the data collection period was 24% Teachers of Color and 76% white teachers (Hansen & Quintero, 2018, para. 4), and of CCSD students during the same period was 46% Latinx, 15% Black, 7% Biracial, 6% Asian, 2% Indigenous/Asian Pacific Islander, and 24% white (NRC, 2018-2019, para. 1). It is of particular note that the CCSD educator-student racial demographic diversity gap continued to widen over the data collection period, consistent with the increasing whitening of the teacher workforce nationally (Hansen & Quintero, 2018). The impact of

the dearth of racial representation among faculty and teachers on the racialized experiences of the Students of Color at focus in this project was profound; and while calling out both the dearth and the damage it causes through the work of the project work emboldened Students of Color in their navigation around, over, under, and through whiteness, the overarching impact of the project in this regard was insufficient—so much more must be done to ensure academic excellence for Students of Color.

Year 1 research included mixed methods paper surveys of, and focus groups with, high school Students of Color and their parents, as well as UNLV college Students of Color who were not education majors. The survey included Likert scale and open-ended short answer items about students' career aspirations, students' perceptions of the teaching profession generally and for themselves, and parents' perceptions of teaching as a career generally, for their child, and for themselves. The survey also sought to discern messages that students' parents had transmitted to them about the teaching profession. Focus groups questions asked students and parents to share their perceptions about why Students of Color are not, in large numbers, pursuing careers in teaching toward discerning what, if anything, could or should be done to change those perceptions. A total of 3,400 students across the project's six partner high schools heard the survey 'pitch' in their Government courses, of whom 1042 completed the consent or the assent and parental consent process to participate in the survey. 963 high school students completed the survey, 19 of whom participated in a focus group; 36 parents of high school students completed the survey, 15 of whom participated in a focus group; and 172 college students completed the survey, 14 of whom participated in a focus group. In instances where only one participant was present for a focus group, an individual interview was conducted using the same question protocol. Focus group and individual interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Survey takers received a $10 cash stipend, and interviewees received a $25 cash stipend; stipends were paid immediately upon survey/interview completion.

Years 2 and 3 of the research included quantitative electronic surveys of high school students, parents of high school students, and high school teachers, administrators, other licensed (and unlicensed, support) personnel, as well as individual interviews with former Teachers of Color. The surveys asked about: (1) depictions of teaching and teachers seen in youth or popular culture (online, on television, in movies), and/or heard in school communities (conversations with/between students, teachers, administrators, and/or family members); (2) perceptions of the culture and climate of the school community and the associated impact on students' perceptions of teaching and/or interest in becoming a teacher; and (3) perceptions of the 'sense of welcome' Students of Color and their families feel in the school community, and/or the 'sense of trust' that Students of Color and their families have in the school's teachers and administrators. Individual interview questions asked former Teachers of Color about their perceptions of, and

experiences in, teacher preparation programs and the teaching profession, factors leading to their decision to leave the classroom, and what, if anything, might incline them to return to teaching. 124 high school students, 207 parents of high school students, 158 teachers, 22 administrators, 27 other licensed personnel, and 23 other personnel completed the survey. Individual interviews were conducted with 9 former Teachers of Color. Individual interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Again, survey takers received a $10 cash stipend, and interviewees received a $25 cash stipend. Survey stipends were paid to students and parents immediately upon survey completion. Family member and school personnel were notified via email of specific days and times when project team members would be at their school to distribute stipends. Interviewee stipends were paid immediately upon conclusion of the interview.

Project team observations focused on interactions that occurred—among and across high school students, parents and family members, pre- and in-service teachers, school and university personnel, local and state education leaders, and community-embedded educational advocates—during the project's formal and informal program activities. Formal program activities included a project kick-off event held at UNLV in the Fall of 2016, as well as weekly *#Love2TeachLV* afterschool program meetings held in our partner high schools, monthly Family Network meetings held at UNLV, twice-a-semester pre- and in-service professional development workshops held at UNLV, and annual end-of-year recognition events held at UNLV beginning in the Fall of 2016 and concluding in the Spring of 2019. Informal program activities included partner high school-based annual welcome and orientation events, wraparound services meetings, open houses, FAFSA form-completion nights, career fairs, and recognition and graduation ceremonies, as well as educational gatherings held at other Southern Nevada higher education institutions, and well as in local community centers, libraries, and social service agencies.

Project team artifact and document analysis included student 'exit-tickets' from the #Love2TeachLV meetings, Family Network project presentations and activity feedback forms, pre- and in-service teacher professional development workshop evaluations, emails from end-of-year event attendees, as well as agendas, programs, and handouts from school- and community-based activities. Because project research activity, as well as project team observations and artifact and document analyses, were summarized in project team weekly (Year 1 and 2) and monthly (Year 3) meeting minutes, and in bimonthly and final annual reports submitted reports to the Nevada Department of Education, these were also included in project team artifact and document analysis.

Racial Representation and Data Analysis

Survey and interview data were analyzed using an education-focused Criti-

cal Race Theory (CRT) framework (Ladson-Billings, 2013). This framework enabled:

> (1) examination of how interest convergence undermines the diversification of the teacher workforce;
>
> (2) exploration of the neoliberal forces operating in GYO-TOC programs;
>
> (3) interrogation of the persistence of whiteness in teacher preparation and teaching; and,
>
> (4) substantiation of the permanence of racism in education and educational institutions in the United States.

CRT-informed inductive analysis was used to build coherent theory grounded in the unique instances of experiential observations of human interaction and examinations of associated creative work (artifacts and documents) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Malagon et al. (2009) note that while:

> grounded theory was not developed as a methodology for collecting knowledge and building theory from the lived experiences of People of Color…when used in partnership with a critical race framework, the researcher can utilize grounded methodology to interpret the perspectives and voices of the narratives that remain unacknowledged, invalidated, and distorted in social science research. (p. 259)

Accordingly, as Zamudio et al. (2011) contend, using CRT in educational research enables "a kind of storytelling about what happens coupled with theoretically grounded explanations about why things happen in a certain [racialized] way" (p. 117). The following questions framed our CRT analyses of national, state, and local stories about the teaching workforce:

> (1) *who* is telling the stories about diversifying the teacher workforce, including through GYO-TOC programs?
>
> (2) who is telling *which stories*?
>
> (3) *what theoretical lenses* are being applied in the storytelling? and
>
> (4) for *what purpose* are these stories being told?

Project team members analyzed the survey and interview data, observations, artifacts, and documents for probable congruences and incongruences that cut across the development and implementation of the entirety of the project's work from a CRT perspective. Formal and informal peer debriefings enabled critical dialogue, informed by clarifying questions, about how to make sense of all the data collected (whether formally or informally); the project team was able to arrive at co-constructed meanings through which common emergent accounts and corresponding categories could be discerned (Patton, 2015).

Abriendo Caminos de Conocimiento

The overarching findings of the *Abriendo Caminos* project are organized under three interrelated themes: (1) neoliberal education reform; (2) culture as 'code' for Students of Color; and (3) challenging to change narratives about teachers and teaching. Discussion of these findings is supported by CRT research in education that lays bare how deeply engrained institutional racism is in the policies, structures, and practices that inform the preparation of teachers and that guide the organization and functioning of PK-12 schools (Kohli, 2018; Milner, 2008; Sleeter, 2017).

Neoliberal Educational Reform:
Fighting Back Against Pop-Up Branding
and Pre-Packaged Eurocentric Curriculum

The project's success in securing external funding, especially for the research part of the project, came with strings attached. As noted, from its outset, the project fought neoliberal social media buzz to promote itself as effective simply because it was funded, as well as to brand itself, and then conform its work to its branding, as a happily-neoliberally-aligned GYO-TOC program. With funding and branding pressure came the corresponding requirement that our work should be surveilled to ensure it was *making adequate progress*, not according to the project's stated qualitative metrics, but rather according to business-driven, thus quantitative, neoliberal educational reform metrics that demanded the project's programs be *scaled up* and, therefore, that program designs be *standardized*, in order for the project's efficacy to be affirmed (Webb et al., 2009).

The project's first-year survey was criticized for being unique to the project, instead of adapted from a nationally recognized survey that would enable comparison of locally-collected data with national trends as a metric of project success. The survey was also criticized for only collecting participant racial, not also gender, demographic data. While the survey design in both regards was intentional to keep the attention on the project's local and race foci, the project team was periodically cast as "unsophisticated" with respect to both its research prowess and social justice consciousness. In describing the need for race-focused research justice, the Coalition of Communities of Color (2018), articulates, "There has been…little local energy directed towards providing opportunities and space for communities…to discuss how they want to present their identities…" (p. 244).

Findings from the first-year survey and focus group/interview data were used to inform the project team's approach to implementing its programs. As a result, the project's weekly #Love2TeachLV afterschool meeting program was initially viewed with suspicion by partner school leaders who wanted to know *what does the* [pre-packaged] *curriculum look like?* These leaders stopped just short

of eye-rolling as project team members, in first describing the program, endorsed the constructivist approach being taken to build the program curricula *from the data* in order to *walk the talk* of critically co-constructing knowledge (collectively learning) about going-to-college-to-become-a-teacher *with* student program participants (Pelech & Pieper, 2010). While this is an evidence-based approach, it also threatens interest convergence and is inconvenient to neoliberalism in that process drives outcome, instead of the other way around. Further, multicultural education, culturally relevant and responsive teaching and learning, and critical pedagogy are characterized by interactive, problem-posing dialogue to ensure that students can critically analyze and challenge dominant discourses in their learning across the curriculum, in the case of this project relative to their own schooling experiences and the impact of these experiences on their perceptions of the teaching profession (Clark, 2002; Nieto & Bode, 2018).

As noted, the weekly #Love2TeachLV afterschool meeting program was developed and implemented in all six of the project's partner high schools. The program sought to create a space for high school students, their teachers, and project team members (including undergraduate pre-service teachers) to come together—as a weekly meeting cohort—to learn about the teaching profession. While the project's partner school-based collaborating teachers, like their school leaders, also initially struggled to understand the constructivist approach of the program concomitant with expressing the desire to have a scripted curriculum to follow, over time, most of the collaborating teachers came to appreciate the value of collaboratively constructing the weekly meeting curriculum to learn from and with students in teaching them about the work of teachers in ways that might inspire them into a teaching career. As the subtitle of the *Abriendo Caminos* project suggests, giving back to family and community are known to be strong factors that positively influence the high school and college persistence and graduation of Students of Color (Ceja, 2006; Yosso, 2005). Accordingly, the #Love2TeachLV program was designed to appeal to Students' of Color desire to give back to their families and communities *through teaching*.

While most partner school leaders and some collaborating teachers remained skeptical about the efficacy of the project as a whole and the #Love2TeachLV program in particular, weekly meeting cohorts in all six high schools came together to race-consciously promote and recruit students to the program year-round, as well as to co-plan (co-develop/co-implement/and co-debrief) weekly meeting curricula based on students': (1) expressed interests (i.e., *Can I serve as a classroom teacher's aide to gain teaching experience?*); (2) curricular and pedagogical questions (i.e., *Do teachers have to teach boring?*); and (3) expressed needs (i.e., *What college options do I have? What are the requirements for a teaching major?*). Based on feedback from a first-year high school participant in the #Love2TeachLV program, who, in the second year of the project, became a UNLV pre-service teacher member of the #Love2TeachLV program at his former high

school, the project team added a UNLV campus experience day to the program through which actively participating students and collaborating teachers at all six partner schools could come together at UNLV to tour the campus with Student of Color guides, receive campus and College of Education admissions information from Staff of Color, experience an Ethnic Studies class, pose questions to a panel of pre-service Teachers of Color, and enjoy lunch in informal conversation with high school and college Peers of Color. In these ways the #Love2TeachLV program sought to support its partner school communities in the cultivation of a race-conscious form of care for Students of Color, what Antrop-González and De Jesús (2006) term *critical care* in which teachers "create a culture of high academic expectations for their students, value high-quality interpersonal relationships between students and teachers, and privilege the funds of knowledge that students and their respective communities bring to school" (p. 409).

"Culture" as 'Code' for Students of Color:
The Suppression of Discourse on Whiteness, Race,
and Racism in the U.S. Education System

In "On Becoming Sociocultural Mediators," multicultural education scholar, Sonia Nieto (2017), discusses what she calls, "the slippery concept of culture, what it is and what it isn't, what it means for learning, and how teachers can become sociocultural mediators of their students" (p. 5). In carrying out both the project's research and program efforts, it became clear that the word "culture" was used, superficially, in the project's partner school communities (and the district more broadly), to describe assumed, usually celebratory, practices of Students of Color and their families; largely those practices stereotypically promoted in eurocentric mass media. The use of the term culture in this way was designed to give the impression that conversations about student identity were welcomed, as long as they stayed in this celebratory realm. As Nieto (2017) goes on to note, "Incorporating culture in teaching is not about sprinkling what I've called 'ethnic tidbits' in the curriculum; it is not about simply 'celebrating diversity, …observing some 'ethnic' holidays, or hosting 'multicultural dinners.'…Missing in much of the discourse about culture are questions of power and justice. This includes asking who has power and how it's used (p. 7). Accordingly, when project team members initiated more critical conversations about whiteness, race, and racism, it was clear that it made many teachers and school leaders very uncomfortable, some of whom responded by attempting to discourage these conversations from taking place.

Because the *Abriendo Caminos* project was funded as a race-focused project by the Nevada Department of Education from resources allocated to it by the Nevada State Legislature, the project team made the decision to foreground race-consciousness in all aspects of project execution. Relative to the project's re-

search efforts, the team chose, during the survey pitch, to explain the importance of the project's focus on diversifying the teacher pipeline by sharing the racial demographics of enrolled students in CCSD, at UNLV, and at UNLV in teaching majors in order to illustrate the race gap (see Figure 1, below).

Resistance to the racial demographics part of the pitch showed up in several ways. Some classroom teachers interrupted the pitch and attempted to explain the project research in a different way that took the focus off race. Other classroom teachers interjected questions to the effect of, *Aren't you leaving out white students?* or *Why are you only looking at minorities?*, stopping just short of intimating that the project focus was an example "reverse racism." In other instances, classroom teachers withdrew during the pitch—for example, they left the classroom, they did work on their computers, and/or they became dispositionally aloof. On one occasion, a Black American project team member's race-focused pitch was "reported" to a Latina school leader who reached out to the white senior faculty member on the project team (again, not the project PI) to discuss it; however, when the faculty member attempted to engage the "report" from a critical race conscious perspective in using facts to challenge the veracity of the report and asking questions about the possible motivation of reporter, the school leader ended the conversation. It is important to note that the pitch also included statements like "white teachers are holding it down, but they need help!" and acknowledgement that all students, including white students, could participate in the research and receive the research stipends. In most instances, students—both Students of Color and white students—were respectful and attentive during the pitch; in a few instances Students of Color caught up to research team members in school hallways after having heard the pitch to enthusiastically express appre-

Figure 1

Latinx students make up almost 50% of the CCSD student body,

but they represent only 25% of the UNLV student population,

and only approximately 15% of the students enrolled in UNLV's teacher preparation/licensure program.

% Latinx Students

of CCSD — 46%

of UNLV — 25%

of Teacher Prep at UNLV — 15%

A Leaky Teacher Pipeline
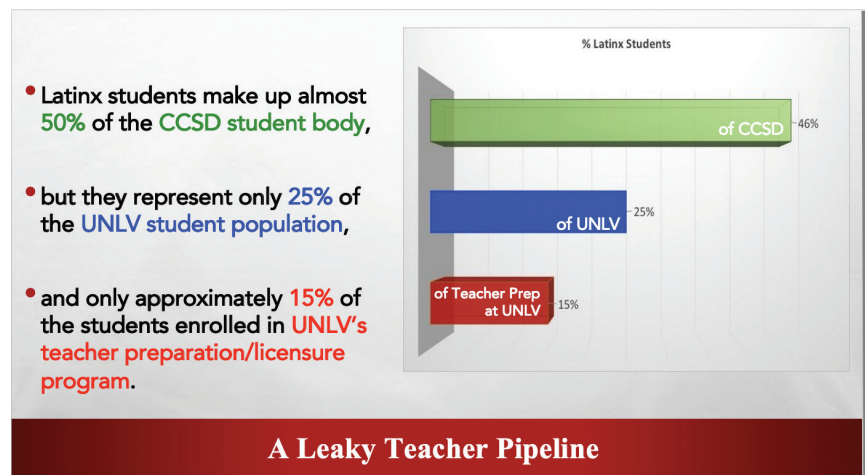
ciation for the work because of how it resonated with their school experiences. Sleeter (2017) notes that, "the continued production of teachers, large proportions of whom are not well equipped to teach racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students well, is not an aberration" (p. 157). This was clearly the experience of project team members in interacting with myriad teachers across the project's partner schools in seeking, simply, to answer to the research question: *Why aren't Students of Color pursuing teaching as a profession?*

Because of the project's buzz, one of the project team members was able to leverage a pre-existing relationship with district diversity education personnel through which the project established a professional development workshop series with nationally recognized social justice educators. The series was particularly important for several reasons. The series enabled—for a period of time—UNLV social justice educators (members of the project team) to build a collaborative relationship with CCSD diversity educators through which the series' workshops could be offered for continuing education credit, and in some case, extra-duty pay, to several hundred PK-12 teachers from the district. The credit was a powerful workshop attendance incentive for teachers, especially new teachers, needing to amass a particular number to meet annual district *professional growth plan* metrics. Further, because the workshops were held at UNLV in a College of Education facility, the series brought several hundred CCSD teachers to campus who had never previously been to the university nor had contact with the college. Most importantly, the series also enabled UNLV social justice educators to *push* CCSD diversity educators to move beyond offering compromised cultural content in their continuing education programming. In this context, the discussion of culture was sometimes linked to high-quality, critically conscious scholarship in multicultural education, but routinely erroneously conflated culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 2014), culturally responsive (Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Irizarry, 2007), and culturally sustaining pedagogies (Paris & Alim, 2017). However, in other instances, the discussion of culture was narrowly connected to *implicit bias* in training focused solely on changing attitudes about cultural *differences* and behaviors towards cultural *others* in the effort to build cultural *sensitivity,* "as if being 'sensitive' to one another could erase the disastrous results of educational inequality, not to mention the many decades, and sometimes centuries, of racism and other oppressive acts in our nation" (Nieto, 2017, p. 8).

Research on implicit bias trainings suggests that it primarily tends to surface, but not effectively discredit, widely held beliefs among white people that racism is only an intentional act committed by bad people, thus so long as individuals, like teachers, are "good" people and do not intend to perpetuate racism, then their actions, whatever they are, do not count as racism (DiAngelo, 2016; Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). A focus on bias training, instead of on antiracism education, also reflects a neoliberal organizational pre-disposition to see diversity as a risk reduction endeavor (to mitigate discrimination liability), rather than as a commitment to

educational and employment justice. Further, any good such training does "rarely last beyond a day or two, and a number of studies suggest that it can *activate bias* or spark a backlash" (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016, para. 7, emphasis added).

Focusing only uncritically on students' culture as a contradictory set of superficial and, yet, also rigid traits, makes it difficult to address racism in education, especially in school policies and practices (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). Accordingly, the nationally recognized social justice educators who comprised the series' speakers were selected—by project team members in *pushy* dialogue with district personnel—for their race-consciousness. And, beyond having each speaker conduct a traditional professional development session geared primarily for district teachers (though open to anyone to attend), most also facilitated at least one other informal or formal critical professional development conversation with the interested members of the project's community-based education-focused organizational partners. For example, one speaker facilitated a dinner conversation with project graduate and undergraduate students, two speakers also gave youth- and family-focused keynote presentations at the project's end-of-year celebrations, and three speakers spoke at youth- and youth advocate-centered sessions, as well as at a family and other community-embedded educational stakeholders' *dine and dialogue* gathering. The non-traditional events were held at local neighborhood centers, the local community college, and a partner school site. Attendees of the traditional sessions received a free copy of a book either written by, or associated with, the work of the speaker. It was important to the project team that, in addition to district teachers, university students, staff, and faculty, as well as PK-12 school students and their families, non-licensed staff and administrators, and community-based education activists have access to the speakers, and that members of all of these constituencies had opportunities to learn together and in spaces where the culture of whiteness and masternarratives of teachers as (white) saviors and as "heroes" (tied to the district's *Superman* teacher recruitment campaign, see Figure 2, below) could be decentered.

As a result, the project provided multiple opportunities for all local education stakeholders to collaboratively experience critical conversations about issues of race-conscious educational equity and justice from asset-driven, community cultural wealth, and funds of knowledge points of entry (Moll et al., 1992; Yosso, 2005). Unfortunately, not all of the series speakers were welcomed by district administrators; notably, school abolition scholar, David Stovall (2016), and critical whiteness scholar, Cheryl Matias (2016), were unwelcomed. This lack of welcome was conveyed to Dr. Stovall more indirectly. For the first time in the two years since the speaker series collaboration was established, the project team's CCSD diversity educator partners were slow to secure, and then to advertise, district approval to offer continuing education credit for attending Dr. Stovall's teacher-focused professional development session titled, *Revolution is Another Name for 'Life Fighting:' Education and the Will to Teach Fearlessly.* As

a result, turn-out for this session was low. In contrast, however, turnout for Dr. Stovall's community-based dine and dialogue session, for which no such credits were offered, was exceptionally high, further reflective of the racialized disconnects between schools and communities, and between teachers, students, and families. The lack of welcome expressed toward Dr. Matias was far more direct. Her professional development session for teachers, titled, *In a Time of Perversity: Whiteness, Emotionality, and the Need for Racially Just Education,* was met with white "offense" and concern from People of Color that support for the event would offend others. While the title of the session was accompanied by a session description (see below), that description was not read, even when project team members petitioned district leaders to read it in order to reconsider their immediate decision to withdraw all district support for the session:

> This session will engage participants in discussing emotions as they pertain to work to end racism, especially in schools. Claims that we must not "get emotional" when discussing race, are counterproductive to racial justice. For example, telling People of Color to "calm down" or telling white people to "get over guilt" in discussions of racism renders these "unwanted" emotionalities useless, in so doing it also renders *wanted* emotionalities—love, hope, desire for human connection—worthless as well. Discussion of race and racism often con-

Figure

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jures up emotions of guilt, shame, anger, defensiveness, sadness, dissonance, and discomfort. Instead of suppressing those feelings—coined emotionalities of whiteness—they must be identified, understood, and deconstructed as central to work for racial equity. This session will delve deeply into these and other emotionalities to examine where they originate and how they perpetuate racial inequalities in education and society as a whole. In so doing, participants will learn how the field of education denies itself, and, therefore, educators, proper emotional preparation to engage in prolonged educative projects for racial and social justice—most especially as teachers of children minoritized and marginalized by racism.

Had the description been read, it is unlikely the negative reaction to the session title would have remained so intense. Instead, the phrase *time of perversity* was assumed to be a reference to the Trump administration, and the word *whiteness* was interpreted to be "anti-white," and solely on the basis of these conjectures, district co-sponsorship, including continuing education credit and advertising, of the session was pulled. Interestingly, while the title clearly triggered what critical whiteness studies scholar, Robin DiAngelo (2018), calls *racial stress* or *white fragility* in district leaders, buzz that district support for the session had been pulled actually encouraged district teachers and other licensed personnel (notably many school social workers, counselors, and other mental health professionals) to attend. Some attendees were eager and enthusiastic to share feedback on their experience of the session:

> *"Thank you for hosting this event! My colleagues and I will really enjoy the conversation that her text will bring."*

> *"Thank you for the invitation and for all the effort you make in directing these teaching and understanding movements."*

> *"I enjoy attending CU or no CU. I think it's a great way to personally and professionally grow. I appreciate being invited."*

> *"Wow, this little book started a great conversation among my department during our lunch! We have a great group of theologians. Everyone examined the book and began to give their opinions about the content…! It was great! Thank you."*

In contrast to the expressed fragility of district leaders, these comments are illustrative of what researchers have termed *resiliency*, defined by Ginwright (2018) as "the capacity to adapt, navigate and bounce back from adverse and challenging life experiences" (para. 1). While attending a professional development session about racism should not rise to the level of an "adverse and challenging life experience," that it does in this instance further underscores how racists systems, like school districts, are designed and perpetuated—through interest convergence—to ally with white sensibilities, rather than with the violent lived experiences of People of Color (Bell, 1980; Matias, 2016).

Challenging to Change Narratives about Teachers and Teaching: Leveraging Family Funds of Knowledge to Transform Education for Students of Color

When CRT lenses are applied to education research they reveal the absurdity of white supremacist narratives about the lack of intelligence, "grit" and motivation, and educational and professional aspirations of Students of Color, as well as about their families lack of value for education/their education (Gillborn, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Malagon at al., 2009; Marrun et al., 2019, 2020; Milner, 2008; Sleeter, 2017; Stovall, 2016; Yosso, 2005). In the course of carrying out *Abriendo Caminos* research and program work, CRT analysis surfaced similar counternarratives. Contrary to majoritarian story claims that Students of Color are "simply" not interested in teaching, survey data revealed that narratives about the underrepresentation and negative representations of Teachers of Color in social media and popular culture negatively impacted Students' of Color interest in teaching as a career (Marrun et al., 2019). Further, analysis of both survey data and #Love2Teach LV program dialogues substantiated that Students of Color are actively discouraged from pursuing teaching as a career: Students of Color are routinely exposed to teachers' expressions of significant job dissatisfaction; Students of Color lack of meaningful opportunities to explore college and career options in school; Teachers and counselors do not provide Students of Color and their families with robust information about college and career readiness; and, Students of Color routinely receive subtle, often indirect, negative messages about their academic abilities from teachers and other school personnel.

In seeking to actively counter Students' of Color adverse school experiences, especially as these experiences impacted their interest in teaching as a career, #Love2TeachLV program cohorts developed and implemented a transformative activity. In the activity, collaborating teachers each took a corner of the classroom and small groups of student participants circulated from one teacher to the next to hear and discuss their teachers' personal, educational, and academic journey to become a teacher. The cohorts drafted questions to guide the teachers in sharing their journeys, as well as to facilitate students in engaging with their teachers' journeys. At the conclusion of the activity, when the cohorts came back together as a whole group to debrief the activity, many of the collaborating teachers shared that though they love their profession, they rarely shared that love with students, not in conversation with them about their work as a teacher, nor in their performance of teaching; too often they recognized that they expressed day-to-day frustration about teaching and were uninspiring in their teaching. Students of Color shared how they often heard their teachers talk about being underpaid and having to work a second job, or feeling overworked and devalued by society (e.g., often having to pay for their own teaching supplies). Nieto (2003) describes the challenges and obstacles that teachers face in seeking to identify the things that *keep them going*

regardless. A key finding this research is that persistently successful teachers in under-resourced schools connect with and show respect for their students and the communities from which they come. While this activity centered teachers, it also decentered their authority as teachers in asking them to share about themselves personally with their students, including memories of their own schooling experiences. The activity also afforded Students of Color the opportunity to reflect back to their teachers how they experience them—in essence, to provide critical feedback to teachers about how they carried themselves in their jobs. Through the structure of this activity, teachers learned to connect with students in a respectful way through their shared interest in the complexly challenging career of teaching.

Upon hearing how Students of Color perceived the profession of teaching because of how they were showing up as teachers, the collaborating teachers began to shift how they talked about their work as teachers and their careers in teaching in their classrooms. One collaborating teacher decided to begin each class period by sharing *one thing* she loved about teaching. After doing this for only a couple of days, the teacher could barely contain her excitement about how doing this one, small thing, completely changed her classroom climate for the better—how, because she expressed joy in teaching, her students responded by expressing joy in learning. Another collaborating teacher who had a similarly transformative experience in starting his classes with something related to his love for teaching, got administrator approval to use a portion of the $5,000 subaward (that each partner school received from the project) to purchase much needed classroom supplies (e.g., dry erase markers, hand sanitizer, bottled water) to distribute to teacher colleagues who committed to also start each of their class periods by sharing *one thing* about teaching that they loved. Shortly after starting this new practice, these teachers reported similar, highly positive responses from their students. Nieto (2013) examines the importance of teachers *Finding Joy in Teaching Students of Diverse Backgrounds*. As she articulates,

> If we expect our students to thrive and learn, it's not enough for teachers to merely survive, going day to day with tired ideas, little energy, and even less support. No, our students deserve teachers who are excited about teaching, passionate about learning, and energized to make a difference in their students' lives. (p. 155)

Echoing this sentiment, at one of the project's partner schools, a Latina assistant principal happened to attend the #Love2TeachLV program meeting when the teaching journey activity was implemented. Several months later, as a part of the project annual assessment process, the assistant principal reflected on the impact of the activity:

> For many of us, the process of sharing these stories, reinforced our love for our career; for others, it reminded them of the real reasons they had chosen this career path. *Abriendo Caminos* opened our minds, our eyes, and our memories into and toward education. (personal communication)

In focus group and individual interviews, Students of Color described the omnipresent sub-textual and implicit deficit messages that they received about their academic abilities in school, and how the assumptions inherent in these messages translated into school indifference to their educational experiences. In many instances, Students of Color recognized that they had been tracked into lower-level courses that failed to provide any meaningful opportunities for them to explore their interests and talents, much less discuss their academic and career aspirations, largely because school personnel had already concluded, too often solely on the basis of their race, that they had no such interests, talents, or aspirations (Marrun et al., 2020). As a result, students reported that they and their families rarely received any information about college, and what they did receive was vocationally oriented. The paradoxical effect of their schools' lack of concern for their futures discouraged Students of Color and their families from pursuing information about college and career options, and especially about a career in teaching. In contrast, Students of Color also noted that their mostly white peers comprised the majority of students in their schools' honors or advanced placement courses, and that in those courses college and career planning was a common, robust topic of conversation. Darling-Hammond (1998) notes that, "educational outcomes for minority children are much more a function of their unequal access to key educational resources, including skilled teachers and quality curriculum, than they are a function of race" (para. 3). Yet, as the Students of Color recognized, their unequal access was predicated on their race.

School-based career centers and fairs were other places where deficit messages about the scholastic capacities of Students of Color manifest. To begin with, in the highly racially diverse high schools with which the *Abriendo Caminos* project team partnered, not all had career centers, those that did were much more heavily decorated with promotional materials from the local community and state college, than from UNLV; additionally promotional materials from the community and state college were up-to-date, in contrast to the materials from UNLV which were at least several years old. Further, while all three higher education institutions that serve CCSD graduates offer teacher licensure program pathways, no materials describing those programs were readily available. At career fairs, military, factory, and fast food industry recruiters were ample and highly visible. Though most high school-aged youth are not interested in joining the military, "the military markets to teenagers, particularly those in poorer school districts. …nearly 20% of military [recruits] come from neighborhoods with median household incomes of $40,115 or less" (Corcione, 2019, para. 4, 16). In contrast, aside from the project team's table, there were no college recruiters, nor recruiters from college education programs.

The cumulative effect of the educationally racist deficit messages Students of Color received, coupled with colleges' demonstrated lack of interest in recruiting Students of Color, including into to teacher preparation programs of study, was

that Students of Color and their families were systematically socialized by educational institutions to opt out of education and teaching, at the same times these institutions characterized them as disinterested in higher education and a career in teaching. As noted, because many of the high school Students of Color in the project's partner schools, had already been tracked into lower-level courses, many had difficulty graduating at all, much less with an academic profile that would enable them to transition into a college or university pre-service teacher education major. Alvaré (2018) describes this phenomenon as *within school patterns* that form when "well-meaning teachers and administrators tend to hold lower academic expectations for students of color; engage in racially biased discipline patterns; employ alienating curricula; and fail to address racial issues in meaningful ways when they surface in classrooms;" as a result, these patterns "serve to maintain and perpetuate racial inequality in education" (p. 1).

In seeking to interrupt the socialization patterns, the *Abriendo Caminos* project's Family Network provided multiple avenues for the parents and other family members of PK-12 Students of Color to learn about:

(1) how high school courses and grades impact graduation and college eligibility;

(2) the process for applying to college;

(3) the specific program of study required to secure teacher licensure, as well as the process for applying for a teaching license; and

(4) the salary and benefits associated with a teaching career.

In developing these knowledge bases, Family Network members participated community-, high school-, and campus-based workshops with various educational personnel (e.g., social service agency staff; school guidance counselors; college admissions, academic advising, and career counseling staff; department of education licensure evaluators; and district human resources managers). Network members also attended district and state education gatherings (e.g., school board meetings, higher education board of regents' meetings, and state legislature sessions). In recognizing the critical impact that Families of Color have on their children's educational aspirations and career goals, various Educators of Color, including UNLV faculty and graduate students, as well as community-based youth advocates and education activists, were invited to dialogue with Network members about racial representation and the importance of having Role Models of Color in schools, as well as about critical race theory, culturally responsive teaching, how whiteness and racism operate in schools, neoliberalism and the charter school movement, the school-to-prison pipeline and school abolitionism, translanguaging, sexuality and gender identity/expression, among many other topics. Members of the Family Network also participated in personal development retreats during which they learned about self and family care and development. After participating in one of these retreats an inspired Network member

established the Network's *Walk and Learn* program which brought Families of Color to walk (exercise) together in various natural outdoor areas of Southern Nevada, while learning more about each other (relationship building) and about the importance of education and various educational pathways for all members of the family. Through critical family engagement, the Network supported Students' of Color family members to recognize "issues related to race and racism in schools" in order to inform their action "to ensure their children's academic success" (Marchand et al., 2019, p. 367). According to Marchand et al. (2019), this form of engagement "relies on critical race theory and critical consciousness theory" to surface the conceptual frameworks Families of Color use to "critically analyze issues that are present in the schools and how they subsequently engage in action" on behalf of their children (p. 367).

El Camino Real

In sum, the *Abriendo Caminos* project's work reinforced and amplified findings from critical multicultural education research that Students of Color do not explore teaching as a career option because they do not see teachers who look like them, they and their family members do not fully understand what is involved in the process to become a teacher, they are not informally encouraged or formally mentored by white teachers to think about teaching as career, and/or they and their family members believe that teaching is not financially rewarding (Marrun et al., 2019; Sleeter, 2017; Walker, 2014).

In reviewing the research on GYO and GYO-TOC programs, the voices of high school and college Students of Color and their family members are absent, particularly with respect to their perceptions about the teaching profession (Valenzuela, 2016). This research has also not meaningfully attended to *how* information about teaching as a career is shared with Communities of Color, if it is shared at all. Through the project's Family Network program, Families of Color were afforded the opportunity to, not only learn how to go-to-college-to-become a teacher, but also how, in becoming Teachers of Color, they can transform the educational experiences and, therefore, the professional futures of Students of Color. Further, through partnerships established with community-embedded Headstart centers and health education agencies, interested Family Network members got the opportunity to practice teaching in early childhood education classrooms, through the provision of home-based health promotion workshops (i.e., diet and exercise, sex education, family violence intervention and prevention, addiction recovery, diabetes management).

The literature on effective GYO and GYO-TOC programs is limited in general, and specifically with respect to examination of the relative efficacy of focusing teacher recruitment efforts on PK-12 students at the elementary, middle, or high school level, or on adults interested in changing careers (Gist et al., 2019).

Abriendo Caminos initially focused on the recruitment of high school Students of Color, but, over the life of the project, came to recognize the need to more broadly focus recruitment on Students of Color from across the PK-12 continuum, as well as on parents and family members of PK-12 Students of Color. Accordingly, #Love2TeachLV program cohorts in three of the project's partner high schools established tutoring programs at adjacent middle or elementary schools. Through these tutoring programs high schools Students of Color became Tutors of Color for elementary and middle school Students of Color—in essence the high school students became the Role Models and Teachers of Color for the elementary and middle school students that they never had in their own schooling experiences. Accordingly, through these tutoring programs, high school Students of Color were afforded teaching mentorship concomitant with the opportunity to *walk the talk* of the *Abriendo Caminos* project, by *giving back* to younger students in their community through teaching.

Through its research and programming efforts, the *Abriendo Caminos* project sought to surface and fill the noted research gaps, and to expose and summarily debunk the deficit assumptions about Students of Color and their families that pervade the white supremacist culture of teacher preparation, the teaching profession, and teaching. To truly diversify the teacher workforce, especially through GYO-TOC programs, state legislatures, colleges/schools of education, state departments of education, and school districts must move beyond paying neoliberal lip service to the interest convergence-driven benefits of a 'diverse' teacher workforce. Unless race- and antiracism-conscious educational excellence for Students of Color is centered in education policy and practice, including in the recruitment and preparation of pre-service teachers, and in the retention and on-going professional development of in-service teachers, GYO-TOC programs will simply continue to generate pop-up buzz, but fail to attract, grow, and retain a racially diverse, equity- and justice-minded teacher workforce…and Students and Families of Color will continue to be educationally and otherwise minoritized and marginalized.

Through the research efforts of the *Abriendo Caminos* project, the project team built amplified awareness of, knowledge and understanding about, and sensitivity to the educational experiences of Students of Color, as well as those of their family and community members, and how those experiences have shaped, and continue to shape, their perceptions about teaching as a career. These research findings were then used to inform the development and implementation of the project's programs through critical, culturally responsive, multicultural education. The most powerful learning from each each school community was realized through listening-centered engagement with Students and Families of Color as they shared their stories—hearing their perspectives, paying attention to their needs, taking notice of their aspirations; the most transformative outcomes emerged from partner school leaders' and collaborating teachers' willingness to listen with us and then act on the learning.

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Writing the Rainbow
Facilitating Undergraduate Teacher Candidates' LGBTQIA+ Allyship Through Multimodal Writing

Judith Dunkerly-Bean, Julia Morris, & Valerie Taylor

Abstract

This yearlong qualitative descriptive case study conducted by an interdisciplinary team of education faculty with pre-service elementary teacher candidates sought to disrupt heteronormativity and to increase candidates' awareness and preparedness for inclusivity with future LGBTQIA+ elementary students. Central to our findings was that in researching and authoring multimodal texts addressing topics and concerns faced by the LGBTQIA+ community for their future classrooms, there was a shift in the perceptions and preparedness of the candidates toward working with children identifying as LGBTQIA+. However, we also encountered resistance and/or apathy that led us to develop an analytical framework for disrupting teacher candidate cisgender heteronormativity and facilitating their progression toward allyship.

Introduction

Elementary teachers are on the front lines of addressing injustice and inequalities in schools. Yet, few primary teacher education programs specifically include LGBTQIA+ issues in their methods courses. Some may consider any LGBTQIA+ topics too advanced for elementary school children, and thus not

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pertinent to elementary teacher preparation. Indeed, many banned or challenged books for this age-range are frequently targeted for LGBTQIA+ content (Avila, 2019). In the research that informs this article, our pre-service elementary education candidates were asked to navigate the sometimes controversial nature of introducing LGBTQIA+ topics to children (Blackburn & Clark, 2011). While the vast majority of teacher education programs routinely address the societal injustices of racism, xenophobia, and (dis)ability, etc., oftentimes they resist the topic of LGBTQIA+ is excluded from the curriculum. Unfortunately, this leaves their candidates underprepared and without the resources needed to actively engage with children and/or parents identifying as LGBTQIA+, and especially with transgender individuals (Miller, 2019; Hansen, 2015).

We report here on the findings of a year-long qualitative descriptive case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2002), undertaken by an interdisciplinary team of university faculty to disrupt pre-service elementary teacher candidates' notions of heteronormativity (Marchia & Sommer, 2019; Warner, 1991) through engaging in multimodal writing and text production (Cappiello & Dawes, 2013). The multimodal approach to the integration of LGBTQIA+ diversity in classrooms proved a valuable medium by which students explored their thoughts through writing and creating. As a cultural construction, heteronormativity has been deeply embedded in society, including institutions of higher education and the public-school system (McEntarfer, 2016; Blackburn & Clark, 2011). Moreover, similarly to the ways that white teachers may use whiteness as a construction to silence, distance, and oppress students of color (Casogno, 2014; Fasching-Varner, 2012; Love, 2019), we contend here that a similar lens of cisgender heteronormativity may be utilized to silence and "other" members of the LGBTQIA+ community (Hansen, 2015). As Pallotta-Chiarolli (1999) argues:

> Prejudices such as racism, ethnocentrism, and sexism now generally sit securely within this "safe" category, although it certainly was not always the case and in the 1970s and 1980s early proponents risked all the reactions that are now reserved for the "unsafe-to-challenge" category of prejudices. 'Unsafe-to-challenge' and 'inappropriate-to- challenge' prejudices such as homophobia and heterosexism are still being denied, silenced, and ignored even as teachers espouse support for an "inclusive curriculum" and "safe schools." Homophobia presently sits in this "unsafe" category. (p. 191)

Despite parallels to other historically oppressed groups, LGBTQIA+ individuals are further marginalized when the injustice they face, as well as the organized and individual resistance against injustice, are not explicitly addressed in elementary teacher education programs.

Despite this, the use of LGBTQIA+ children's and young adult literature in the classroom (Blackburn, Clark, & Nemeth, 2015; Blackburn, 2011; Clark & Blackburn, 2009) has been increasing, as have the instances of Gay/Straight Alliances in high schools and some middle schools (GLSEN, 2016). However,

little has been enacted in teacher education programs—especially at the primary/ elementary level. We believe that providing pre-service elementary teacher candidates with the knowledge and dispositions to address issues facing LGBTQIA+ youth is imperative and represents a significant gap in the current literature.

Our candidates (*n*=73) were asked to research relevant issues and then create LGBTQIA+ picture books, infographics and other similar multimodal products that could be shared to a digital repository for use in Kindergarten - 6th grade classrooms. However, this approach was by no means straightforward or successful with every student. Instead, their reactions and engagement with the topic seemed to fall along a continuum (as evidenced in their written reflections, artifacts, classroom discussions and open-ended interviews.) In order to understand this continuum, we drew from Westheimer and Kahne (2004) citizenship model to create a framework of the stages students demonstrated ranging from apathetic and disengaged through the demonstration of active allyship in order to facilitate both our understanding of their positions and to inform practice in elementary teacher preparation.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, we utilized the theoretical lens of queered pedagogy to encourage students to read, and in our case, write, through the perspective of queer theory (Jagose, 1996; Miller, 2015; Simon, et al, 2019; Blackburn, 2011). As defined by Matthew Thomas-Reid (2018):

> Queer pedagogy draws on the lived experience of the queer, wonky, or non-normative as a lens through which to consider educational phenomena. Queer pedagogy seeks to both uncover and disrupt hidden curricula of heteronormativity as well as to develop classroom landscapes and experiences that create safety for queer participants [online].

Heather McEntarfer (2016) extends this idea by positing, "queer pedagogy asks both students and teachers to look inward. It asks us all to be open to a "reflexive and tentative journey into the unknown and unexamined 'differences and oppressors within" (Bryson & de Castell,1993, p. 300). Rob Simon and the Addressing Injustice Collective (2019) insist teachers and advocates must be, "working consciously to expect and prepare for individuals of multidimensional gender identities, sexualities, and family structures" (p. 143). This work also considers how a queer lens contextualizes childhood, and by extension, educating a child. Dryer (2019) states that "the queer contours" of childhood allows for a broadened consideration of normaly and, in fact, resist normative assesments of social and emotional growth (p. 6).

In fact, drawing upon the work of Gill-Peterson (2018), Meiners (2016), and Sheldon (2016)—who also consider queer and trans-theories of childhood—a queer lens allows for a perspective of childhood education that helps name and theorize

the curiosity and imagination of childhood in order to protect the identities youth might claim in the future. The "tyranny of adult authority" in classrooms often over powers the organic expressions of creativity and identity by children (Dryer, 2019, p. 6). By considering childhood as inherently unable to quantify or normalize, educators can empower children through their ability to play and create and form a world that does not reengage systems of oppression and, hopefully, interrupt the cycle of social reproduction.

Yet, as with much in educator preparation, if not explicitly addressed in the education program, the stereotypes, biases, and past experiences of candidates may become the default lens from which they view the world. Similarly to the ways that unchecked whiteness oppresses students of color, heteronormativity enacts hegemony. As Keenan (2012) elborates,

> The relationship between race and sexual orientation is not merely analogous. Rather, the socially constructed categories of race and sexuality are inseparable and sexual orientation—at least as it appears in current debates—is structured on racial terms. Ultimately, I suggest that racial thinking marks homosexual bodies (p. 1243).

For example, in speaking to white resistance to addressing structural inequalities, Christine Sleeter (2001) wrote, "white preservice students interpret social change as meaning almost any kind of change except changing structural inequalities" (p. 95). Perhaps mirroring the ways that white people have been conditioned to avoid talking about race to deny inherent sructural racism (Tolbert, 2019), straight, cisgender individuals are "imbued...to expect heterosexuality" (McEntarfer, 2016, p. 38) which then perpetuates a rigid, socially constructed definition of gender and sexuality that oppresses those who identify beyond the binary. While sometimes controversial in the literature, we contend that socially constructed categories of what constitutes normative were evident and markedly influenced how our candidates framed their responses to their experiences in this study. In the next section we examine the challenges and consequences imposed on children and adolescents when schools are spaces of threat rather than learning.

Invisible Rainbow:
LGBTQIA Topics in Teacher Education Programs

According to "The 2015 National School Climate Survey" by GLSEN, many LGBTQ students felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation or gender expression with 85.2% experiencing verbal harassment, 27% experiencing physical harassment, and 13% experiencing physical assault (GLSEN, 2016). Negative experiences in school led to absenteeism, lower GPAs, depression, and self-esteem issues (GLSEN, 2016). In addition, the dominance of heteronormative positions can be traced to the global issue of homophobic and transphobic bullying in violation

of human rights (UNESCO, 2012). While middle schools and high schools often have Gay/Straight Alliances and more visible resources for students, they are less frequently available in the primary/elementary grades.

Moreover, elementary teachers are often more reluctant than their middle and high school counterparts to address the identities of, and issues faced by, LGBTQIA+ children out of fear of parental or administrative pushback over the "appropriateness" of the topic, materials used, or whether it belongs in the classroom at all. Meyers (2018) found that elementary educators were also less likely to report participating in LGBTQ-inclusive efforts at their schools than secondary educators by a wide margin: 22% vs. 47%. Additionally, 20% of all participants in Meyers study reported that their students are too young to discuss LGBTQ topics in their curriculum (Meyers, 2018).

Indeed, the common statement within the age-appropriate discourse is: 'they're too young to know about sex and to understand sexuality', even as the 'heterosexual matrix' is at work within schools and before children have even entered school settings (Curran, Chiarolli & Pallotta-Chiarolli,2009; p. 166). As a result, children identifying as LGBTQIA+ in elementary schools experience being stigmatized and face greater risk of bullying, depression and self-harm—even at young ages. Although children identifying as LGBTQIA+ do so as young as in kindergarten (McEntarfer, 2016), elementary teacher education programs are woefully underprepared to address the particular needs of LGBTQIA+ children as part of their curriculum (Clark, 2010).

In our own program, well over 65% of candidates felt that they were either "under-prepared" or "not at all prepared" for LGBTQIA+ students in their classroom, closely mirroring the statistics above. This was especially true of the candidates being confident or comfortable in welcoming children who identify as transgender. Over 36% of students in initial survey data reported being either confused or struggling with how they felt about transgender individuals, while almost 3% reported they couldn't accept them at all. Given the challenges faced by transgender students, especially in liminal stages, it is critical that we prepare teachers to provide support and assistance to trans children to minimize the risks they face.

Organizations such as GLSEN (2017) among others report that transgender children and youth are especially a risk in schools. Recent data indicate that 75% of the more than150,000 transgender students in middle school and high school in the United States felt unsafe because of their gender expression. As the mother (first author) of a transgender teen, I see my own child in those statistics (Dunkerly-Bean & Ross, 2018). As a teacher educator, it is clear that more needs to be done to address this in teacher preparation programs. Indeed, Martino (2013) calls for:

> [N]ot only a special focus on transgender and nonconforming identities in teacher education curricula but also a systematic effort and critical commitment to addressing the very privileging of the hegemonic systems that constrain and curtail a more just politics of gender expression and embodiment within the context of teacher education. (p. 171)

Without inclusionary and anti-oppressive instruction in elementary teacher education programs, the colonizing effects of heteronormativity manifests, especially as it relates to cisgender assumptions of teacher candidates.

Methodology

The data reported here draws from a larger qualitative descriptive case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2002) that began as an answer to a university-wide call to improve undergraduate interdisciplinary writing across five domains ranging from identifying a topic to formulating conclusions and reflecting on learning. In our response to that call, we drew together colleagues teaching four different courses in two different colleges and departments. Participating departments included Women's Studies and Teaching and Learning. However, given that we focus here on pre-service teachers, we do not include data from the Women's Studies courses as students were not pre-service teacher candidates. Given that within the teacher preparation program we were noting a resistance to topics and materials, such as children's literature, centered on LGBTQIA+ individuals and experiences, we decided to focus our response to the writing initiative by asking two questions that would frame our approach:

> 1. How might researching LGBTQIA+ topics to create multimodal writing projects contribute to combating heteronormativity and cisgender assumptions with preservice elementary teacher candidates?

> 2. What (if any) shifts in pre-service elementary education teacher candidates' perception or beliefs about working with children and/or families identifying as LGBTQIA+ occur after engaging in this project?

Our methodology allowed for the extrapolation of information by engaging participants in open dialog in a familiar setting—in this case, college classrooms. As Creswell (2003) recommends, this approach allowed us to interact with the participants on a human level and listen to and respond to their experiences while collecting rich and textual artifacts to describe both the process and experiences of the participants.

Participants

Seventy-three pre-service candidates participated in the study over the course of two semesters. They ranged in age from 21-45, although the majority were between 21-27 and would be considered "traditional" full-time students. Of those reporting demographic data in a pre-study survey, 34 % identified as Black, 12% identified as Latinx and 54% identified as white. 100% were identified/assigned as female at birth (AFAB). However, one student identified as male, and one identified as non-binary. The vast majority identified as cisgender female.

Context and Materials

Our study took place in the College of Education at a large urban university in the Southeastern United States. The larger research team was comprised of five cisgender females, one of whom identified as a lesbian. Two members were tenured faculty members, one was an untenured senior lecturer, and two were (then) doctoral candidates in the Department of Teaching and Learning. The authors of this article taught or assisted in two different courses (Instructional Technology and PK-6 English Language Arts Methods) over two semesters (Fall 2018 and Spring 2019).

In a shift from prior approaches to these courses, we created assignments with a tripartite purpose: (1) they met the objectives of the respective courses, (2) they addressed the requirements of the grant we received to improve undergraduate interdisciplinary writing, and (3) they provided the teacher candidates with the opportunity to conduct meaningful research and produce multimodal texts that addressed topics relevant to children and/or caregivers identifying as LGBTQIA+. We drew from Cappiello & Dawes (2013) definition of multi-genre, multimodal text that includes an array of digital texts, including podcasts, videos, photographs, artistic works and performances in addition to traditional print-based texts.

Within the courses, students selected an LGBTQIA+ topic or issue of concern they wanted to focus on to promote inclusivity. We selected the Queer Critical Media Literacies Framework (Leent & Mills, 2018) to assist them in their research as it speaks to pedagogical and learning experiences across our courses. According to Leent and Mills (2018) this framework, "synthesizes key LGBTQIA+ research sources to distill and refine a set of pedagogical approaches to … critique heteronormative assumptions of texts… and multimodal and digital practices" (Leent & Mills, 2018, p. 403). Students then identified relevant knowledge and credible sources related to this topic. Each student had the opportunity to choose a topic, which digital tool(s) to use, and the artifact's final form. This approach allowed for each instructor to address the writing standards required in the grant, and our focus on LGBTQIA+ issues in complementary but course specific, ways. For example, in the English Language Arts Methods course, a student opted to use a free digital storytelling tool to write a story for young students about her own sibling's coming out as transgender using the allegory of a butterfly. In the Instructional Technology course, students created infographics about LGBTQIA+ issues, such as gender neutral bathrooms and pronoun usage.

In additon to the resources we were able to provide as faculty such as exemplar picture books and websites, we also invited community members from the local LGBT Outreach, student members from the campus GSA, as well as the first author's transgender teenaged son, Cam, to come in and talk with our candidates about their experiences. It should be noted, however, that Cam only participated

in the second semester as those students seemed especially resistant to accepting trans students. Upon hearing about this, he volunteered to come in to the class to help the candidates see that "he was just a regular kid."

Data Sources and Collection

Data for this research includes the participating students' written and digital artifacts, surveys of attitudes and dispositions about the LGBTQIA+ community, instructor lesson plans, and transcripts from focus groups with participating students collected within the two teacher education courses over the two semester period. Participants were duly consented and had the option to not participate in the study. However, all students were asked to complete the assignments as part of the regular classwork. For students who claimed to be gravely disturbed by the content of the assignment, an alternative topic related to diversity was made available in keeping with IRB requirements. Only one student took this option, and their artifacts are not included in the data.

Data Analysis

Analysis of these data utilized initial *in vivo* coding (Saldana, 2016) drawing from the participants own words and writing. The research team then utilized collaborative coding (Smagorinsky, 2008), to review, discuss the codes emerging from each class set of data together. Smagorinsky asserts, "we reach agreement on each code through collaborative discussion rather than independent corroboration" (p. 401). Codes were then organized by themes that emerged as the result of deep engagement with the data as well as from in-depth conversations to their meaning. Thematic analysis yielded a continuum framework to explain the range of reactions and texts produced by the teacher candidates that we denoted as "Dimensions of Allyship."

We created this analytic framework drawing from a model that describes three dimensions of citizenship (Westheimer, 2015; Westheimer & Kahne 2004). These researchers categorize levels of participatory citizenship across three dimensions. The personally responsible citizen uses individual action to contribute to society. For example, this individual might contribute to a local book drive. At a somewhat higher level of involvement, the participatory citizen would engage in organizing the book drive. Finally, the third level involves proactive engagement, which mirrors some of the tenets of critical literacy/pedagogy such as challenging unjust societal structures, and promoting the voices of the silenced. The justice-oriented citizen seeks to advocate and act for systemic change in the conditions that perpetuate issues of access and inequity and illiteracy in underserved populations. In perceiving parallels between citizenship and allyship, we shifted the focus to engagement with and advocacy for, LGBTQIA+ students, parents and the issues facing the community *writ large* to create this model of ally-citizenship.

Although Westheimer and Kahne do not describe these dimensions as hierarchical, we position our dimensions along a continuum ranging from disengaged/apathetic to ally/advocate (see Figure 1.) As illustrated here, the dimensions we describe create a continuum from Disengaged through Ally, and reflect codes that we believed fell within these larger themes. We will next discuss these dimensions, and their implications for candidates and teacher education faculty.

Findings

Our findings suggest that a queered pedagogy in elementary teacher education programs is needed in order to proactively combat heteronormativity in schools. Findings indicate that teacher candidates experienced shifts in their acceptance of, knowledge about, and understanding of LGBTQIA+ topics and issues during the course of the study, especially in regard to transgender individuals. For example, while over 80% of students indicated that they were openly accepting of gay, lesbian and bisexual people in initial survey data, only 59% felt the same way for transgender individuals. By the end of the study, though, nearly 79% of students indicated they were openly accepting of trans individuals. However, in answer to the question, "As a future teacher, how comfortable would you be discussing, planning activities or advocating for LGBTQIA+ issues and students with other teachers?" there was only a 16% increase in students responding that they would be either "extremely comfortable" or "moderately comfortable" doing so in their future classrooms.

While these survey findings were encouraging, we did not find them entirely reflected in the artifacts the candidates produced, or in the focus group conversations and final reflections. While some students created projects that demonstrated

Figure 1
Dimensions of Alllyship
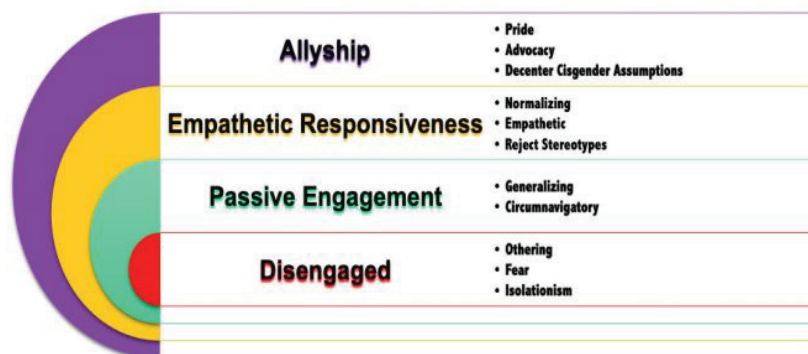
reflective thinking as their understanding of their topic shifted and became more expansive, we found that a significant percentage of students who reported that they were accepting of LGBTQIA+ children or families in a survey, still created texts that reflected apathetic or disengaged themes. We found this dichotomy to be both interesting and challenging as we worked with students to create multimodal texts that would be inclusive, but still act as a catalyst for meaningful dialogic exchange on a subject that genuinely worried many of them. We turn now to the themes that illustrate the range of candidate responses and artifacts.

Disengaged to Passive Engagement: Circumnavigating the Space

In providing examples of the candidate's artifacts and interview comments, we seek here to illustrate how we engaged in dialogic exchange (Bahktin, 1981) to push back at their resistance rather than criticize or demonize their responses. In the case of disengaged candidates, we found that their artifacts and comments centered on themes of isolationism. Many focused on sexuality rather than gender as well as "othering" (for example, students used phrases like "they" choose this lifestyle…) members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Most also expressed profound fear of negative consequences from various stakeholders for engaging with the topic. In regard to whether of not the topic should be broached in K-5 classrooms, one student wrote in a reflection:

> While race and the issues that come along with race have always been taught in the classroom, sexuality has not. This will be something new in the classroom and I think that is where my discomfort comes from. I think with time the schools and teachers will become more comfortable teaching this subject, but as of now, I would not want to go [in the classroom] and teach on this topic. (Candidate Reflection, Fall 2018).

She was not alone. Over the two semesters that this study took place, a number of students were very resistant to the thought of independently addressing LGBTQIA+ topics in the classroom, and often cited personal religious beliefs. For example, one student created a book entitled, *Harper Lester and her Boyish Ways.* In this book a young girl named Harper, dresses in what other characters in the story perceive as "boys clothes" and engages in activities that may be considered traditionally "male." However, while we acknowledge that the student was making an honest attempt to be acccepting on nonbinary individuals, everything in the book was presented as a "choice" Harper was making, rather than an innate part of her identity (see Figure 2.)

[insert Figure 2. Exemplar of a Disengaged Text approximately here]

Other approaches taken by students who we saw fitting into the disengaged or apathetic stage created texts that vaguely and opaquely addressed LGBTQIA+

issues under the guise of being generally tolerant of difference. This was frequently portrayed as a character "not quite" fitting in, or being excluded for quirky personality traits or clothing choices. One such author, reflected that she wished, "we just didn't have to talk about this." while in a classroom discussion another student flatly stated, "I'll never discriminate, but I can't condone this either. It is against my beliefs."

While she did face some backlash from her peers for this position, as critical educators, we aimed to make space for all voices. Students who were apathetic or even diametrically opposed to the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ in primary classrooms, were encouraged to participate in dialogic exchange and share their views and the conflicts they were experiencing. We saw this as an opportunity to acknowledge their position and yet, also draw parallels between civil and human rights that cannot be subject to individual viewpoints or religious beliefs. We were also able to discuss recent scholarship calling for religious schools to recognize that the discrimination directed at LGBTQIA+ youth is antithetical to Christian ethics of justice (Joldersma, 2016). Moreover, for students who were tempted to ridicule or chastise those who were disengaged, there was an opportunity to discuss anti-religious views as a bias within itself (McEntarfer, 2016).

In contrast, the students who reflected passive engagement tended to circumnavigate the issues faced by the LGBTQIA+ community by comparing their experiences to those who are discriminated against because of race or culture, but in a manner analogous to the problematic "colorblind" approach. We described this as circumnavigating the issues at hand, rather than directly addressing them. In our use here, students who were "circumnavigating" acknowledged that people

Figure 2
Exempolar of a Disengaged Text
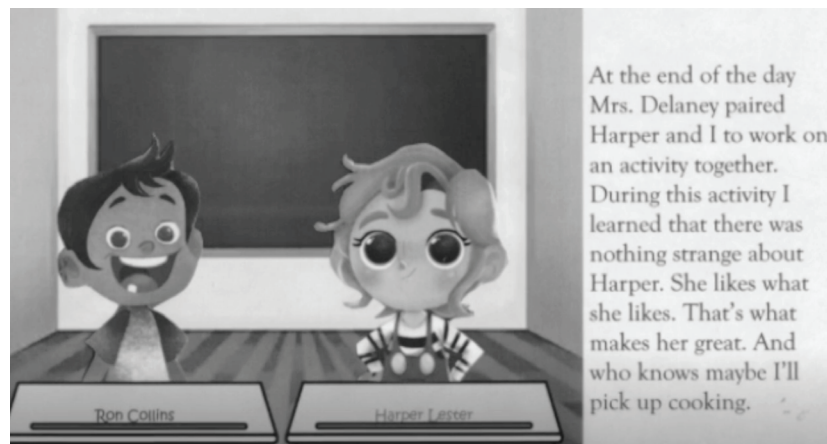
need support and that we should all accept our differences, however LGBTQIA+ difference was just one of many permutations.

These students' texts featured characters defying gender stereotypes in action and dress, or used comparisons to race and culture, or sometimes both. For example, one student created a picture book about a young African-American girl named Mia, who wanted to play football. Although her friends ridiculed her, Mia's parents offer encouragement and support. Another student used the analogy of a box of crayons to illustrate her view that all colors are important and everyone has a role to play in creating the "big picture." A third book portrayed a female cat that liked to wear a blue ribbon instead of a pink one. Her friend, the dog, at first mocks her but then complements her on her choice. However, there remains the implication that these are choice to be supported, rather than innate and integral embodiments of identity (See Figure 3).

In classroom discussions and in the focus groups, students who were in this stage would say things like, "I can't understand why people get upset—it's not that big a deal" in describing others' intolerance. However, another student, clearly frustrated, asked our LGBTQIA+ consultant, "Can't we just teach the idea of acceptance, without breaking it down into all this [LGBTQIA+] stuff?" Her question was honest, yet it belied the undercurrent of positioning that defined this group: It is enough to be accepting of all people; we don't really need to differentiate between groups. For example, one student reflected:

> As a future teacher I understand that I have to train myself not to associate things with gender. This can really limit the students' dreams and beliefs. Overall, I learned that these concepts don't have to be awkward or turned into a big deal. These are concepts that should be presented and acknowledged in a positive way—just like everything else. (Candidate Reflection, Spring 2019)

Figure 3
Exemplar of a Passive Engagement
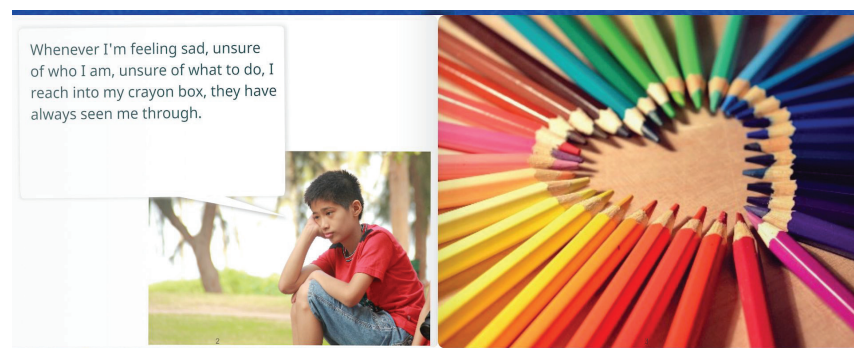
While these viewpoints provided an opportunity for dialogue as well, in many instances, these students held more steadfastly to their viewpoints and were less easily moved than the apathetic or disengaged. Much like the manner in which whiteness frequently operates as covert oppression amongst preservice teachers (Fasching-Varner, 2012), we saw that this position held a cisgender and straight perpsective as normative. The majority of these candidates simply believed that being a member of the LGBTQIA+ community was not unlike being a member of any other institutionally or colonially oppressed race or culture.

While we do not contend that the historic oppression between various groups are equivelent, we do see parrallels in the belief systems operationalized here. These candidates' artifacts and comments centered on tolerance and acceptance of different people or even nonbinary self-expression, however it was always measured against a traditional gender role, straight, cisgender identity. Of all of the stages in our framework, this group was perhaps the most challenging, as their positioning was the most resistant to engaging in allyship, as they believed tolerance alone was the goal.

Empathy to Allyship:
Decentering Heteronormativity and Cisgender Assumption

In this section, we describe the remaining two stages of our framework, that of Empathetic Responsiveness and Allyship. While these two stages somewhat resemble each other, there are some notable differences. Namely, teacher candidates exhibiting empathetic responsiveness focused on combatting stereotypes (i.e., same-sex parents, traditional gender roles). Additionally, their artifacts looked to normalize a variety of gender expressions of identity (i.e., pronoun use, non-binary appearances, etc.). For example, a student who we felt represented this point in the framework said, "I think we should definitely provide resources [about LGBTQIA+] to our kids. If we show them it's normal, then it's normal."

A student who expressed similar opinions created a book entitled, "*Pronouns for You and Me!*" which took an informational text approach to discussing pronoun use. Using cartoon figures, the author explained that pronouns should not be assumed. It also provided the reader with helpful phrases to use in the instance of misgendering a new acquaintance. Another book, *"All About Me"* addressed nonbinary identities and claimed names. Both of these texts were written in very child-friendly language and truly aimed to normalize the topic for younger children (see Figure 4).

Examples such as these seek to normalize, but stop short, of cisgender allyship. For the sake of operationalizing the definition of allyship, we draw from GLSEN who espouses that allies recognize intersectionality, use their own cisgnder privilege to combat oppression, recognize Black & Brown queerness rather than only LGBT white individuals, and finally promote greater acknowledgement of trans people (GLSEN, nd).

By contrast, those candidates whose comments and artifacts reflected allyship advocated for straight and/or cisgender people to use their privilege to actively engage in anti-discriminatory practices and to stand with the community. These texts placed teachers as front line defenders of LGBTQIA+ students and reflected a desire from the candidates to "learn more so that I can do more." The texts and conversations that were identified as fitting in this part of the continuum exemplified teachers as advocates in close alignment with the GLSEN definition as well as descriptions of what it means to be an ally or accomplice with and for Black and Indigenous People of Color (Love, 2019). For example, one student's final reflection spoke to this activist stance:

> Through creating this book I learned that being an ally takes so much more than being there for your friends who identify as gay, lesbian, bi, etc. or even standing up to people who degrade the LGBTQ+ community. While these actions are a part of being an ally, it does not make up the entirety of it. This was new information to me and it really opened my eyes to how little I do to support the LGBTQ+ community. While I do stand up to people who use derogatory terms, I do not go out of my way to stay up to date on what is going on concerning issues with the LGBTQ+ community. I ultimately learned that I need to do more to learn about the diversity I will encounter in my classes and how much of it I will experience in the classroom. (Candidate Reflection, Spring 2019)

Similarly, the texts produced challenged the reader to action and sought to do more than merely promote tolerance or inform. Infographics from the Instructional Technology course, for example, promoted the need for gender neutral bathrooms, and advocated for bisexual individuals. In the Language Arts methods class, one particular book stood out by providing a guide for children to be allies, while another challenged the reader to do more than be a curious onlooker at Pride events, and instead engage with and support the LGBTQIA+ community all year, not just during Pride Month (see Figure 5).

Figure 4
*Exemplar of Empathetic Responsiveness*
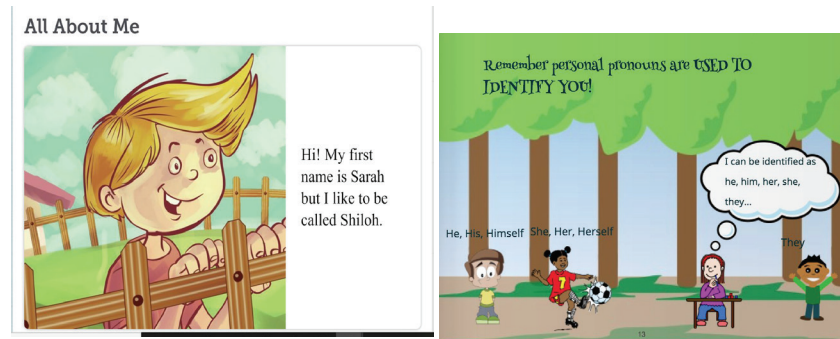
It was in these students that we observed significant shifts in perception and perspectives. While most began the study as reporting general acceptance and tolerance of LGBTQIA+ individuals in general, they enthusiastically took up the subject and went beyond acceptance to wanting to become advocates.

Discussion and Implications

We believe that the implications for the framework for elementary teacher preparation addresses a gap in the current literature by providing a model for reflection and action on the part of faculty and candidates by creating space for not only LGBTQIA+ awareness, but also allyship. However, this is not without its challenges for all involved, and will likely lead to crisis for some. Yet, as Kumashiro (2000) reminds us: "Educators should expect their students to enter crisis. And, since this crisis can lead in one of many directions such as toward liberating change, or toward more students to work through their crisis in a way that changes oppression" (p.7).

While having candidates engage in discussions with LGBTQIA+ community members, conduct research and create multimodal texts is only one point of entry, we believe it to be a meaningful one. In addition, our data reflected that candidates felt more prepared to welcome LGBTQIA+ children and families into their future classrooms, and believed themselves to be more knowledgeable and empathetic than they were at the start. However, as we have illustrated, this was not the case for all students and indicates the need for the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ topics in the elementary teacher preparation. Although individual teacher candidates themselves may well be anti-homophobic and anti-transphobic, they are not given the tools,

Figure 5
Exemplars of Allyship Texts
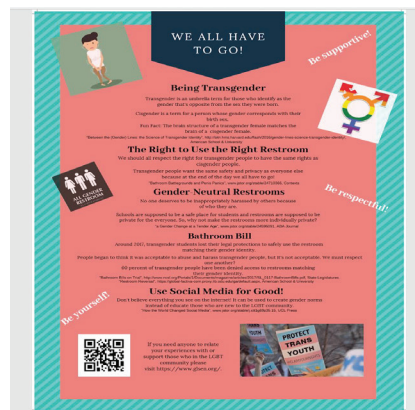
experiences or resources to extend their personal beliefs into their professional identities and practice. As McEntefer (2016) argues:

> If gendered ways of being are formed in part in schools, and if heteronormativity and homophobia are experienced in different ways by boys and girls in schools, then the men and women who show up in teacher education classrooms as teacher candidates may have been differently shaped by the very discourse we are trying to prepare them to work against. (p. 56)

What is needed then is purposeful allyship in teacher education programs. This begins with being actively cognizant of the students we teach and an open willingness to learn more as teacher educators. Establishing a culture that speaks out against injustice may change the overall atmoshere of a campus or program and have a positive impact on the well-being of those in marginalized communities (Cornell Health, 2019). However, allyship is a practice that requires sustained efforts to create change and to disrupt the status quo when met with resistance (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). Students and educators alike must be open to examining their own biases (Rife, 2019). Ultimately reflective examination can help teachers, both in-service and pre-service, disrupt predjudicial notions that inform prejudicial practice (McGregor, Fleming, & Monk, 2015).

There are multiple approaches to establishing a culture of allyship in education. Teacher education programs should provide experiences that are designed to alter or shift one's belief system (McGregor, Fleming & Monk, 2015). This may include action research and non-traditional fieldwork (Groff & Peters, 2012) in community outreach programs or learning centers. Likewise, opportunities should be available for narrative methods of critical reflection that allow for the examination of personal and professional identities (McGregor et al, 2015; Rife, 2019).

Neoliberal considerations that education is "objective" and approaches to diversity should utilize "even-handed relativistic neutrality" promote what Jones (2019) calls a "false equivalence" amongst diverse perspectives (p. 305). Thus, presenting reliable accounts and sources that are authored and promoted by LGBTQIA+ scholars and communities is essential. By engaging students in processes of identity exploration and knowledge construction they are better prepared to facilitate these undertakings for their own students.

Assignments in teacher preparation courses could begin to more consciously incorporate critical dialogue surrounding intentional allyship that can then become tangible products for curricular and pedagogical inclusion. For example, Pérez Echeverría and Scheuer (2009) describe how writing can shape knowledge and perceptions. "External representations [such as writing] are essential to construct knowledge, refine it, modify it, share and appropriate it" (p. 13). Certainly, easy/low-stake opportunities such as wriitng, can be facilitated in education methods courses to: promoting safe-space inclusion of members and allies of the LGBTQIA+ community, present texts that celebrate diverse family structures, and implement

pedagogical choices to foster identity development that may/not conform to adult-imposed heteronormative conjectures. Lownethal (2020) asserts that promoting inclusive classrooms should utilize assignments that promote previously "unheard voices" and "challenge assumptions" through GLSEN *Ready, Set, Respect* tools (2020). These curriculum tools are developed based on GLSEN partnerships with the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association for the Education of Young CHildren (NAEYC).

Beyond these practical implementations, broader and intentional implementation of allyship is required across education programs in order to promote action, rather than isolated reaction. The passivity of bystanding while social inequities continue is found to be just as harmful as the promotion of social inequities (Dryer, 2019). Thus, a more intentional approach in educator preparation is required that considers allyship an issue of human rights, rather than an isolated politically correct maneuver. There is a gap in the development of preservice education that allows for the promotion of LGBTQIA+ equity only as a *reaction* to overt discrimination, rather than the intentional *action* of allyship (Hansen, 2015). Teacher preparation programs must be accountable for communicating relevant democratic, human rights perspectives to bridge the gap in preparation for dealing with the diverse and complex education contexts their candidates will encounter.

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The Cultural Inability of Me

A Conceptual Framework for Accommodating the Roadblock in the Mirror

Benterah C. Morton, Kaitlin M. Jackson, & Melvin J. Jackson

Abstract

Teacher education programs focus heavily on content knowledge and pedagogical skills, but less often acknowledge the teacher's identity and ability to meet the cultural needs of their students. Teachers lacking the ability to understand their own and their students' racial, cultural, and ethnic needs may encounter challenges in the classroom that can result in academic, behavioral, and social-emotional implications for students. This article presents a framework for continually examining the self to uncover beliefs that are unknown to others and us that directly impact our decision-making, thoughts, and actions and ultimately our leadership and teaching.

Introduction

In an effort to focus on student progress, teacher education programs have been working to produce teacher candidates that know the subject matter and can teach it effectively, (Wenglinsky, 2000) often through the accreditation process of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and

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others. Despite the reality that these goals are being met and the content knowledge of teacher candidates is increasing steadily, there has been relatively little change in K-12 student outcomes (USDE, 2016). Many scholars have theorized why there has been little change in student achievement levels across the past few decades (Fasching-Varner & Mitchell, 2013; Fasching-Varner, Mitchell, Martin & Bennett-Haron, 2014; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). A few of the diagnoses include racial mismatch (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013), educational realism (Fasching-Varner, et al., 2014), and lack of cultural proficiencies (Gay, 1977, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995a, 2006). Building upon key works of Gay (1997), Ladson-Billings (1992, 1995a, 2006), and Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell (2003), this article develops a conceptual framework for accommodating the roadblock we see in the mirror—ourselves. It begins by exploring relevant literature leading to a detailed definition and common practical examples of the cultural inability of me (CIM), then provides three strategies for educators to use on their journey to accommodate for the cultural inability that prevents them from fully engaging with students and families from diverse cultures in educational excellence.

Review of Literature

> Without question, when the majority of students in public schools are students of color and only 18 percent of our teachers are teachers of color, we have an urgent need to act.
>
> —Education Secretary John B. King, Jr.

Demographic Trends

In 2016, the United States Department of Education (USDE) published *The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce*. This USDE report outlined the state of public schools in the United States in relation to racial diversity and serves as a foundation for developing a framework for accommodating for the cultural inability of me in education. The report begins by establishing that, "diversity is inherently valuable," and "recognizing that teachers and leaders of color will play a critical role in ensuring equity in our education system," while highlighting that, "diversity in schools, including racial diversity among teachers, can provide significant benefits to students" (p. 1). Further, the USDE report noted that 82% of public school teachers identify as White—a slight decline from 2000 when 84% identified as White.

While the trend of racial mismatch (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013) persists in P-12 teachers and students, it is also representative of P-12 principals and students: "in the 2011-12 school year, only 20 percent of public school principals were individuals of color" (USDE, 2016). Further, only 6 percent of public school superintendents in 2011 were individuals of color, which suggests that the higher the position within a school district, the less likely that the position will be held

by a person of color (Kowalski, McCord, Peterson, Young, & Ellerson, 2011). The prognosis of racial mismatch is not positive. USDE (2016) suggests that by 2024 students of color will make up 56% of the public school population yet the teacher workforce will remain predominantly White. This level of homogeneous teacher and leader workforce provides challenges to the levels and quality of standards, advocacy, and relationship building developed between educators and diverse populations of students (Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

Racial Mismatch

Racial mismatch (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013; Morton et al., 2017; Skiba, Horner, Chung, Rausch, May & Tobin, 2011; Renzulli, Parrott, & Beattie, 2011; Warren, 2015) describes the phenomenon of educators working in environments in which their race or ethnicity is inconsistent from the pupils they teach. This phenomenon is pervasive in American society and has been directly correlated with a vast number of negative impacts on students of color across the globe. The scholars referenced in this section have addressed racial mismatch as an issue rooted in a dichotomy between students of color and White educators. There is immense value in examining the interactions of White teachers with non-White students, as over 82% of public educators identify as White whereas students of color makeup 49% of the students in public education (USDE, 2016). However, there is also value in exploring the interactions of *all* teachers and their workings with students who are culturally/racially/ethnically inconsistent from them. Doing so furthers the understanding that racial "mismatch effects vary across types of mismatch" (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013, p. 14) including but not limited to cultural, socio-economic, ethnic, and religious mismatch. Likewise, the cultural inability of me affects all teachers who interact with students through racial mismatch. Furthermore, providing tools for *all* teachers to minimize the negative impacts that racial mismatch has on students expands their singular view to a more pluralistic, equity-based view.

Academic implications. One of the more examined effects of racial mismatch is lowered expectation of success for students of color from White educators (Gershenson, Holt, & Papageorge, 2016; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013) when compared to the expectations of success for White students from White educators. This type of lowered expectation often results in students of color being taught to a modified standard thus performing to the lower standard. These students are, in turn, given fewer opportunities to learn new material, fewer opportunities to answer stimulating questions, less response time, less praise, and less informative feedback. Naturally, the reduction in opportunity for learning leads to less acquisition of new knowledge for students of color, keeping them at a lower learning level.

Gershenson, Hart, Lindsay, and Papageorge (2017), viewing racial mismatch as a contributor to academic achievement gaps between students of color and their White counterparts, set out to determine if same-race teacher/student interactions

provided any long-run impacts on student achievement. They found that, "Black students who are as good as randomly assigned to a Black teacher at least once in the third, fourth, or fifth grades are more likely to aspire to college and less likely to dropout of high school," (Gershenson et al., 2017, p. 2) cutting dropout rates by 39%. These findings support previous short-range studies touting the benefits of same-race teacher/student pairings including increased scores on standardized tests (Dee, 2004), and increased attendance and decreased suspensions (Holt & Gershenson, 2015).

Behavioral implications. Racial mismatch also impacts the response educators have toward student behaviors. In some cases, students of color are penalized more harshly or more frequently than their White counterparts for similar violations (Mc-Fadden, Marsh, Prince, & Hwang, 1992; Shaw & Braden, 1990; Skiba et al., 2011) while other students are simply rated lower on behavior than their White counterparts (Downey & Pribesh, 2004). Providing harsher disciplinary action to students of color directly impacts academic instruction as well, in part due to reduced classroom instructional time (Drakeford, 2004). The disproportionality of disciplinary actions (e.g., suspensions and removal from the classroom) has been heavily studied as part of the research on the school-prison pipeline, which has been found to affect students of color in their academic, behavioral, and social/emotional growth.

Seeking to Understand Cultural Differences

It is common in settings of racial mismatch that issues of cultural competence develop into barriers to student successes and teacher triumph (Milner, 2007). To seek to understand an unfamiliar culture is to operate on a continuum of cultural competency with cultural destructiveness on one end and cultural proficiency at the other (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2003). As an individual seeks to understand an unfamiliar culture, they must employ cultural considerations in order to structure exchanges between individuals from dissimilar cultures who seek to have positive dealings with each other. For pedagogues teaching in settings of racial mismatch, working towards cultural competence and cultural proficiency is essential in realizing success for all involved stakeholders (Sy & Jackson, 2018). In contrast, *becoming* culturally competent and *attaining* cultural proficiency are processes (Benishek, Bieschke, Park, & Slattery, 2004) that are impossible to actualize for every segment of cultural diversity. However, simply engaging in reflective practices and dialogue (Milner, 2007) about interactions situated on the continuum are meaningful beginnings to working in settings of racial mismatch. Jerome Hanley (1999) defined cultural competence as, "the ability to work effectively across cultures in a way that acknowledges and respects the culture of the person or organization being served" (p.1). Understanding, promoting, and attaining cultural competence towards proficiency reinforces an educator's ability to be successful in the classroom (Sy & Jackson, 2018).

Building one's cultural competence towards proficiency is most commonly sought after by educators who belong to dominant groups that teach in classroom settings with large populations of underrepresented peoples (Landa, 2011). Cultural competence is measured on a continuum (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989; Goode & Harrison, 2004; Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2003). Hanley (1999) established a five-stage model for the continuum including: destructiveness, incapacity, blindness, pre-competence, and competence. Lindsey, Roberts, and Campbell-Jones (2013) later added a sixth stage (cultural proficiency) to the continuum in relation to pedagogues. The six stages each represent a milestone towards the goal of reaching cultural proficiency. The stages within the continuum are characterized by achieving certain levels of aptitude.

The Cultural Proficiency Continuum provides a frame of reference for all educators to use to evaluate their actions toward and interactions with others. This reflective evaluation along with continuous discussion and open conversations assists in determining one's hidden beliefs, thereby providing a tool to interrogate one's implicit bias. While this continuum appears linear, educators may find themselves in multiple categories simultaneously. Additionally, educators may move through any sequence of the continuum including skipping components on the way up or down the continuum. While the continuum is a more dated idea, it is a low-level access point to begin the process of interrogating the congruence of one's actions and beliefs.

Implicit Bias

The conscious mind receives information as input, analyzes the information, and through personal interpretation and individual experience it makes a judgement (Staats, 2016). As individuals, we develop innate preferences that guide our decision-making and influence our biases. Thoughts and preferences that individuals make with their unconscious mind are considered to be implicit thoughts. These thoughts are activated and engaged without the individual's active awareness and are influenced through personal experiences and established preferences (Kang & Lane, 2010). Implicit bias is an unconscious discriminatory preference commonly associated with the assigning of negative stereotypes or typecasting of individuals based on factors including: race, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, and other descriptors (Riegle-Crumb & Humphries, 2012).

In an educational setting, implicit bias is commonly seen through teachers entering learning spaces with preconceived unconscious beliefs regarding the educational ability of their students (Staats, 2016). These educators believe that the student is deficient in ability to learn and attribute the inability to the student's race, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, etc. (Jackson et al., 2017). Teachers who may have little to no experience working in settings of racial mismatch unconsciously allow for stereotypes about their student populations to lead their

understanding and comprehension of their abilities or inabilities (Milner, 2007). In racial contexts, implicit bias from teachers has the potential to lead to the over-disciplining of students of color because of an innate belief that these students are guilty until proven innocent. The implications of teachers' implicit bias results in students of color receiving suspensions two to three times more often than their White counterparts and even more commonly in schools with higher percentages of students of color (Drakeford, 2004). Further, students of color are more frequently subjected to harsher disciplinary measures, such as corporal punishment or zero tolerance policies, even when less harsh measures are available and offered to their White peers (Drakeford, 2004). Implicit bias among teachers and administrators handling the disciplinary actions for students of color often results in a Black student getting suspended for "appearing threatening" or "disrespect," (Drakeford, 2004) whereas a White student may receive a suspension for more serious offenses often involving drugs or weapons. The social and academic implications of over-disciplining students of color speak for themselves: reduced time in the classroom means missed instructional opportunities and potentially lower academic achievement, while increased time out of school means increased opportunities for social stigmatization due to disciplinary measures.

What is the Cultural Inability of Me?

> Teaching is a challenging profession that consistently requires its members to deny themselves and make intentional efforts to pursue equity in opportunity and success for all students. We expect teachers to willingly challenge ALL children and to do what is best academically for the students instead of doing what is easier for the teacher.
>
> <div align="right">—Morton (2016)</div>

Morton et al. (2017) first introduced the cultural inability of me (CIM), as the cultural disability of whiteness. They describe the cultural disability of whiteness this way:

> Despite good intentions, White female teachers' lack of prolonged interactions with people of color often causes them to develop misinformed cultural perspectives of racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students. The cultural disability of whiteness hinders the ability of White female teachers to engage non-White students and families in educational excellence. We believe good intentions carried out with misinformed cultural perspectives are a cultural disability of whiteness. (p. 8)

Concurrent with the cultural disability of whiteness, the cultural inability of me (CIM) describes the inability of teachers and other educators to engage students and families with different cultural experiences and values in educational excellence (Morton et al., 2017). By contrast, CIM is the diagnosis of *any* educator or person that works in an environment of racial mismatch (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013) or with pupils that are inconsistent from them in any of the many dimensions of human identity.

The CIM is a phenomenon that arguably impacts all educators and their interactions with students. Like implicit bias (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998), CIM is rooted in the stereotypes, attitudes, and self-esteem of educators. These roots have been growing in the educator, below the surface, since conception and birth. They have been, and are being nurtured by their family's culture, values, socio-economic status, religion, experiences, abilities, social connectedness, ethnicity, race, national origin, sexual orientation, language, etc. Consider a plant growing in nature: the roots begin growing downward from the seedling, seeking nutrients from the surrounding soil. As it secures itself in the soil, the seedling's shoot begins to reach up out of the soil toward the sun. Once above the surface the plant begins to interact with the surrounding environment, and begins making its own food, all the while being assured that its spreading root structure will keep it secure and stable. In this example, the educator is the seed. The soil is the cultural foundation in which the educator plants roots and adheres to for nourishment, strength, and stability. The educator, like the seed, has no say about the type of soil in which it is planted. However, both are directly influenced by the composition of their foundational soil. The plant does not directly recognize the composition of the soil in which it grows. Yet, the quality of the fruit produced by the plant is a direct result of the nutrients it extracts from the soil. Likewise, an educator's fruit is a direct result of their cultural foundation.

While CIM is tenaciously linked to implicit bias, there is contradictory scholarship that purports that unconscious prejudice has little impact on conscious behavior (French, 2017). Based on the results of the Implicit Association Test administered over several studies, this contradictory scholarship suggests that despite the evidence that people are more likely to relate "bad" words or images with people of color, there is little evidence that connects this implicit bias to observable, measurable behavior (French, 2017). One premise for this argument centers on the human tendency to explain away undesirable behaviors, despite the invisible nature of the unconscious mind. Coupled with centuries of outward, explicit racially discriminatory behaviors, this school of thought remains fueled by the lack of evidence that the unconscious mind controls conscious behaviors (French, 2017). Despite this body of scholarship, there is little room for prejudicial behavior in classrooms with the next generation at stake.

Exploring the Cultural Inability of Me

Culture-Created Inability

The culture-created inability of me regularly manifests as mental or cognitive, limiting a person's ability to engage authentically with persons with varying degrees of cultural difference. Authenticity, in this context, is more in tune with the synonym faithful, calling to its roots in loyalty, whereas, loyalty to a person's

culture, their egocentrism and ethnocentrism, creates a roadblock to interacting with persons outside the culture. These roadblocks, expressed as prejudice and bias, are present throughout the population, and are the roots of the culture-created inability. The culture-created inability therefore, is as plenteous and pervasive as there are cultures. CIM seldom manifests in ways that limit physical activity; instead, it impacts speaking, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, and communicating—all aspects of effective social interactions, and thus effective teaching. If one's ability to interact with others socially is impaired due to bias in thinking and communicating, one's ability to teach will also be impaired, as teaching requires constant social interaction.

CIM in the Classroom

A large majority of preservice and current teachers are taught the basics of curriculum, assessments, and content-related material, with relatively little emphasis on behavior management, classroom culture, and relationship building (Freeman, Simonsen, Briere & MacSuga-Gage, 2014). Without formal training on these procedures, CIM can more easily become a substantial problem in a classroom where racial mismatch exists, often unintentionally it manifests itself both implicitly and explicitly.

Implicit manifestations. Implicitly, CIM becomes problematic in the way of classroom climate, evidenced by simple acts such as smiling, nodding, making eye contact, and maintaining physical proximity to students. In some cultures, children are taught not to look into the eyes of adults, whereas other cultures find it disrespectful to avoid eye contact. CIM is seen when teachers—using their own cultural experience—mandate students to acquiesce to requests for or against eye contact that is inconsistent with the cultural understanding of the child. These small, everyday actions are extremely telling of classroom relationships between the teacher and students, teacher and families, and the classroom and larger school community. Another implicit manifestation can be seen in teacher output, ranging from teacher speech, including feedback, praise, and criticism, to responsiveness expectations (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). Additionally, teachers often give more feedback, give more varied feedback, and encourage greater responsiveness to students from whom they expect more (Jackson et al., 2017).

Explicit manifestations. Teacher engagement strategies can expose CIM in more explicit ways, such as student instructional grouping based on teacher expectations and beliefs (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010), curriculum-related tasks and materials (Lyons-Moore, 2014), and student motivation and engagement strategies (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Lyons-Moore, 2014). An example of an explicit manifestation can be seen in a teacher's interactions with students identified as English Language Learners. In this instance, the teach-

er situates the students' limited exposure to English as a cognitive deficit and assigns the students to lower ability groups. CIM is especially problematic, because its impacts directly affect student outcomes, whether or not the teacher is aware of their biases or differences in student treatment (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007).

Accommodating the Cultural Inability of Me

An Example of the Cultural Inability of Me

Imagine a second-year teacher who recently relocated from a major metropolitan Northern California city to Louisiana. With one year of experience and a degree in early childhood education, she comes from an upper-middle class, White, non-denominational family and attended private schools for elementary, middle, and high school. She is assigned to a kindergarten class in a rural school, where 99% of students identify as Black and qualify for free/reduced lunch.

With advice from her peers to spend the first few weeks building classroom culture and focusing on behavior management, she sets out to build relationships with her students and families by conducting home visits for each child. Despite her good intentions to get to know her students, a few families commented on her affect as a well-dressed, middle-class White woman. While the racial mismatch was obvious, the teacher chose to acknowledge the truth in the families' statements but also to focus on their partnership and shared goal of student progress. During the first semester, the California native became familiar with rural Louisiana vernacular, continued to focus on family relationships by making positive phone calls home, and used data and artifacts to demonstrate student progress. In a situation of such cultural and racial differences, this teacher could have had a different experience. However, her dedication to family relationships and open communication allowed her second year of teaching to result in 100% of her students ending the year on grade level.

Now, imagine this same teacher is a fourth-year teacher who has just made an international move from Louisiana to a large Middle Eastern city. With a recently completed Master's degree in special education, she is placed in a classroom working with preschool students with autism, where 100% of the students are of Arab descent and Muslim heritage. Despite the teacher's experience in settings of racial mismatch, the mismatch here extends beyond ethnicity to include culture and religion.

In an effort to remain proactive, the teacher used several resources, including reaching out to friends who lived in the city, to learn more about the culture. She arrived a couple of weeks prior to her start date in order to become better acquainted with culturally appropriate procedures and routines. Intentionally learning about the new culture she paid close attention to the mandatory school trainings for new staff. By learning information in an objective manner, the teach-

er closed herself off from the influence of others, including the media, and ill-informed individuals back home. These intentional accommodations allowed the teacher to begin to build relationships with students and families in a culturally appropriate manner, which ultimately set her up for success and a positive, progress-filled year.

Consider this example of the cultural inability of me in action. While the example chronicles the experience of an upper-middle class White woman, changing the socioeconomic or ethnic/racial demographic of the teacher does not negate the necessity for accommodating for the cultural inability of me. Plainly stated, the cultural inability of me directly impacts the ability of *all* educators, when interacting with students with differing areas of diversity, to meet the needs of students at the highest levels of excellence. As seen in the vignette above, if actions had not been taken to accommodate for CIM, the potential of student development and success could have been depressed (Emdin, 2016; Gay, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2002, 2009; Milner, 2007). The lasting result can be seen through an evaluation of educational outcomes of the 20th century. Since the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision in 1954, the United States has spent multiple billions of dollars to support educational ideals. During the 1950's and 1960's, legislation was drafted and passed that mandated education for diverse populations of students through public education. For President Lyndon B. Johnson, improving educational opportunities would directly support his war on poverty, leading to the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 (Lessow-Hurley, 1990). From this legislation, reauthorizations every five years, and others (e.g., Bilingual Education Act—1968, IDEA—1990, 2004; NCLB—2000, Race to the Top—2010), the federal government has worked to provide equitable educational opportunities for all students. However, very little change in educational outcomes for diverse populations of students has resulted from the provisions of these multi-billion dollar legislations (Fasching-Varner & Mitchell, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2006). For example, the National Assessment of Educational Progress results from 2007-2017 show that students of color consistently score significantly less than their White counterparts, 26 points in fourth-grade reading, 24 points in eighth-grade reading, 22 points in fourth-grade math, and 27 points in eighth-grade math (Education Commission of the States, 2017).

The following framework for accommodating the cultural inability of me responds to the need for teachers across the globe to flourish when teaching in diverse environments. These theoretical and practical accommodations focus on addressing the conscious and unconscious beliefs of educators and providing educators with tools to continue the process of developing themselves to be more culturally aware and culturally proficient. The framework is arranged through application of these three ideas: Evaluation & Critique of Personal Beliefs; Active Journey Toward Personal Development; and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Evaluation & Critique of Personal Beliefs

Exploring, evaluating, and critiquing one's personal beliefs is an uncomfortable challenge. Discomfort often comes in the form of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957; Gorski, 2009; Zapeda, 2006), a byproduct of the contradiction of a person's belief system by evidence that conflicts with established systems of truth. Experiencing cognitive dissonance causes a disquietedness that prompts one of two responses: discredit the evidence in favor of established beliefs or accept the evidence and work to adjust beliefs to more closely align with evidence. Therefore, problematizing one's belief system poses the immense challenge of doing so at the risks of discrediting family, culture, and way of life. The Johari Window (Beach, 1982; Luft & Ingram, 1961) can be used to illuminate the complexity of the challenges to be overcome when interrogating one's belief system. The Johari window (see Figure 1) is arranged in four quadrants of knowledge about the self. The top half of the window represents ideas that are visible to the public. Quadrant one, blind self, identifies things that are blind to the self yet known by others while quadrant two, public self, hosts ideas and beliefs known by the self and others. Ideas housed in the public self are crafted in such a way as to represent the person just as others see them. Simply stated, a teacher wears a red shirt and students recognize the teacher as wearing a red shirt. By contrast, with the blind self, the teacher thinks that students see his/her red shirt as clean and pressed, but the students see the shirt as pink and wrinkled. The bottom half of the Johari window represents ideas that are not visible to the public. The self is aware of and intentionally masks thoughts and ideas in quadrant three whereas; quadrant 4 is hidden

Figure 1
The Johari Window
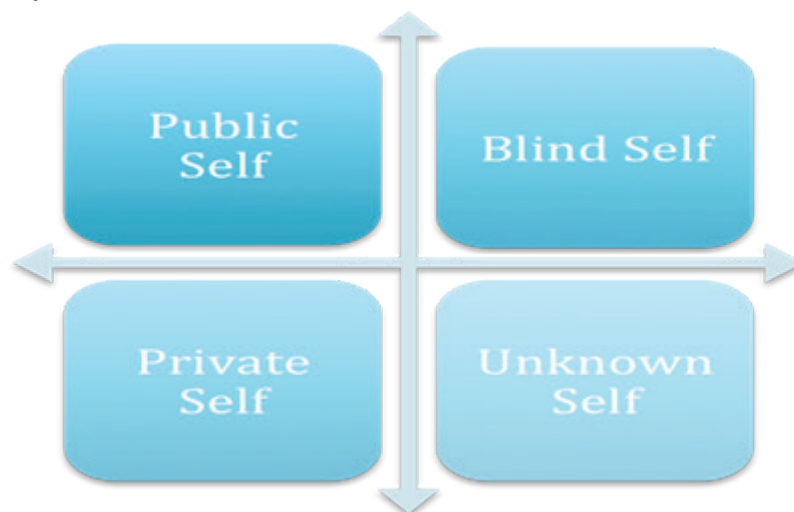
from the self and others. The unconscious thoughts of the self reside in quadrant four (Beach, 1982; Luft & Ingram, 1961). Following the simple, red shirt, example, the private self would be represented by a teacher wearing a red shirt and his/her students seeing the red shirt, however the students are not aware that the red shirt was a gift from the teacher's parents. The teacher's unknown beliefs and ideas about the red shirt are housed in the unknown self. Educators seeking to accommodate for the cultural inability of me would benefit greatly from activities and experiences outside their own cultural sphere of influence. These experiences alone are not enough to interrogate the *unknown self*. However, coupled with intentional self-reflection and thoughtful discussion (Hatton & Smith, 1995), these experiences can begin to scratch the surface of pulling items from the unknown self to the private self, and beyond.

Lindsey, Robbins, and Terrell (2003) provide a wealth of activities and guidelines for experiences that assist teachers facilitating processes to interrogate their unknown self. Two activities in particular can be used as a catalyst to begin such self-exploration: The Cultural Proficiency Continuum and My Culture. The Cultural Proficiency Continuum, adopted and adapted by Love, Stiles, Mundry, and DiRanna (2008), provides a definition for six components of the cultural proficiency continuum and uses those components to situate the actions of educators from culturally destructive to culturally proficient. Cultural proficiency is "an *approach* to responding to the issues that emerge in a diverse environment" (Lindsey, Robbins, & Terrell, 2003, p. xvi). It is further described as "a way of being that enables both individuals and organizations to respond effectively to people who differ from them." (Lindsey, Robbins, & Terrell, 2003, p. 5). Cultural proficiency is a journey, not a destination. As noted earlier, this journey is not always linear, as components may be may be displayed both concurrently and individually depending on the experiences of the individual.

The second activity developed by Lindsey, Robbins, and Terrell (2003), My Culture, requires participants to grapple with their name and cultural identity. It then asks two basic questions: How do I see or experience this aspect of my culture and how I believe others see or experience this aspect of my culture. Through these two questions participants are challenged to situate their cultural identity within themselves and the surrounding community. As discussed earlier, simply completing these activities alone is not enough to facilitate changes in behavior. However, offering skillfully crafted professional developments integrating these activities has shown some movement in the positive direction of teacher attitudes (Morton, Unpublished Results). These professional developments should be followed up with multiple opportunities for participants to reflect on their behaviors as it relates to the cultural proficiency continuum and their own culture. Continuous reflection is key to grappling with one's belief system (Beach, 1982; Hatton & Smith, 1995; Luft & Ingram, 1961) and transitioning items from the unknown self to the private self and beyond.

Active Journey Toward Personal Development

After teachers who experience racial mismatch acknowledge their implicit bias, it is imperative that they continue personal development in order to accommodate for their own cultural inability. Teachers also must remain cognizant that these steps address every stakeholder within education, beginning with students in the classroom and moving outward to the community as a whole. The journey toward accommodating the cultural inability requires action at each of these levels, ranging from relationship building to culturally responsive decision-making.

In the classroom. Regardless of a teacher's cultural identity or those of his/her students, there are intentional measures all teachers should take in order to ensure and maintain high expectations for all students. Teachers should be mindful of response opportunities, by providing an equitable number of opportunities to respond, individual help, adequate wait time, and probing higher-level questions. Teachers should also provide specific feedback that affirms or corrects responses, praises student performance and effort, provides a reason for the earned praise, and listens attentively to student efforts (Drakeford, 2004). Similarly, teachers should pay close attention to student voice, by providing opportunities to participate in decision-making, making room for student input and interests in content, and offering choices of how to demonstrate learning (Morrison, 2008). Internally, teachers must maintain a growth mindset of their students' potential, which translates to teachers believing that any student can, and will, learn and grow regardless of where they started, rather than maintaining a fixed mindset (Hochanadel & Finamore, 2015) that smart children are smart always (and less intelligent children will remain less intelligent). Perhaps the most important proactive measure teachers must take is building and maintaining positive, personal relationships with students and families (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995a). Positive relationships based on trust, mutual understanding, and respect, and shared goals are absolutely crucial in student learning and classroom culture, and will also help to minimize the impact of issues related to CIM.

In the school. To continue the journey toward personal development in order to reduce the impact of cultural inability on students, teachers must extend their practices to the greater school community. Principals should maximize professional development opportunities and incorporate diversity training, perhaps by way of training on culturally relevant teaching or the above recommended classroom practices. Professional development can also provide teachers with the opportunity to learn more about their teaching community, the demographics of their students, and their students' culture. Professional development should also include data analysis of disaggregated student data based on demographics, as teachers may be alarmed to see the academic implications of the cultural inability and racial mismatch (Love, Stiles, Mundry & DiRanna, 2008). Guest speakers can

also be beneficial in providing supplemental instruction on culture from a more personal perspective, as well as providing narratives of teachers who have made gains in accommodating for the cultural inability of me. Hosting school-wide book studies of texts written by diverse authors and containing content that discusses diverse contexts can also help teachers to better understand the narratives of people unlike themselves, and the impact of underrepresentation of diversity in literature on their students. Teachers' work does not end in the classroom alone; therefore it is important that their work toward educational and racial equity extend to the entire school and the surrounding community.

In the community. As the journey toward personal development progresses, teachers need to recognize their place within the broader community and recognize the community as a source of support and collaboration (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Members of the community constitute the members of the families that teachers serve, therefore building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with community members is a crucial step in personal development. Teachers cannot build relationships based solely on what they provide for parents; they must engage in a relationship that realizes what parents have to offer them in terms of cultural learning. A key component in building and maintaining these positive relationships is valuing the experience and knowledge that the community has to offer (Ladson-Billings, 2009), which requires teachers to truly maintain an open mind when venturing out into the community. Community members, a frequently untapped resource, offer a rich history of the area's culture and history, which can provide unique insight into students' personalities and challenges outside of the classroom. Members of the community may also serve as experts in different non-degreed and/or certification fields, which can provide unique insight into the complexity and abilities of the adults surrounding the students in the neighborhoods. These individuals are abundant with social capital (Delpit, 2006) and can help teachers gain an inside view into the community, as they engage in the personal journey to reduce the impact of implicit bias and accommodate for the cultural inability of me.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) (Esposito & Swain, 2009; Helmer, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995a, 1995b, 2009; Scherff & Spector, 2010) can be applied as best practice when seeking to meet the educational needs of culturally diverse student populations. Ladson-Billings (1995a) describes CRP as a guide to the collective empowerment, not the individual empowerment, of students (1995a, 1992), and situates it within three basic propositions: "(a) Students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order" (Ladson-Billings,

1995a, p. 160). Working within this framework, teachers are to be able to encourage students to interact with their surrounding culture in a meaningful and lasting way. Students are also afforded the right and provided the opportunity "to grapple with learning challenges from the point of strength and relevance found in their own cultural frames of reference" (Gay, 2002, p. 114). The possibilities of CRP utilization are boundless to encourage culturally diverse populations of students to develop critical stances that interrogate and antagonize social inequities (Esposito & Swain, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1992; Helmer, 2010; Scherff & Spector, 2010).

The three broad propositions about the actions of culturally relevant teachers occur concurrently in practice: the conceptions of self and others, the manner in which social relations are structured, and their conceptions of knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995a, 1995b, 2009), therefore application of CRP impacts both students and teachers. While criticism that CRP is a tool that can be applied methodologically to produce excellent teachers is unfounded, it does represent a "range or continuum of teaching behaviors" (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 478) that teachers can work toward as they seek to become more effective with their students. It is "designed to problematize teaching and encourage teachers to ask about the nature of the student-teacher relationship, the curriculum schooling, and society" (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 483). Answering these questions on a continual basis is a necessity when accommodating for the cultural inability of me, as they provide a pathway for evaluating the influences of attitudes, values, and behaviors that teachers bring to the instructional process.

Accommodating the cultural inability of me is not an easy or comfortable task. From cognitive dissonance caused by interrogating one's personal beliefs through the voluminous time applied toward the journey to personal development to the complexities of meaningfully implementing culturally relevant pedagogies on a consistent basis, the challenges persist. Yet, the proposed benefits are boundless for teachers and students. For teachers, these benefits include increased knowledge of the self, acceptance of the complexities of diversity, and increased consistency in application of high standards for all students. These proposed teacher benefits directly influence student outcomes by allowing students to engage activities that are more culturally relevant in environments that intentionally minimize distractions caused by racial mismatch.

Implications and Conclusions

The cultural inability of me is a culture-created inability that primarily manifests as mental or cognitive limitations to a person's ability to engage authentically with persons with varying degrees of cultural difference. CIM does not have a panacea. Instead, the authors offer accommodations to potentially lessen the impacts of implicit bias and racial mismatch on students by prompting educators to

focus on addressing their conscious and unconscious beliefs and providing them with tools to continue the process of developing themselves to be more culturally aware and culturally proficient. Accommodating the cultural inability of me begins with an evaluation and critique of personal beliefs and continues through an active journey toward personal development that leads to the ability to meaningfully teach through a culturally relevant pedagogy.

The development of a framework for accommodating the cultural inability of me supposes that educators identify that they are one of the key obstacles impeding their students' academic success. This theorization implies that all teachers are impacted by their own cultural inability, thus all students are affected. While Morton et al. (2017) implied that CIM was a concern solely affecting White middle class women teachers, it is evident that CIM impacts all teachers regardless of race, ethnicity, or cultural history simply because of the diversity within each race, ethnicity, and culture. The number of differences between students and their teachers further complicates the ability to overcome CIM forcing the necessity to make accommodations to lessen its impact on students. Lessening the impact of CIM on students should be a primary goal of teachers and school leaders. All too often, microaggressions resulting from bias and intolerance toward diversity cause teachers and leaders to act in ways that do not provide multiple opportunities for students to experience success continually.

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My Chameleon Life

Anjali J. Forber-Pratt

Abstract

The field of autoethnography has been greatly influenced by Bochner and Ellis whose work showcases the importance of rich, stand-alone stories that instantaneously capture the reader and bring you into the moment as if you are a fly on the wall with beautiful reflections. Stories allow us to organize and share our experiences as they connect to the political, social, historical constructs in which we live. Stories allow us to interrogate the very world in which we live in, where we have come from, where we are at today. In the case of this article my auto-ethnographic 'I' connects my personal story to the cultures of disability, race and privilege, followed by a deeper reflection to generate new knowledge and meaning. While autoethnographies are gaining more and more traction in some more traditional spaces, methodologically speaking they are still considered taboo. This piece hopes to serve as a methodological example of what it can be in addition to fostering discussion across and about multiple intersectionalities.

Introduction

I am good, perhaps too good, at hiding behind this image I have created of myself as a confident, strong and independent woman. This is not a bad image, it's an outward image that I have created and can live with. But, I feel torn because inside, there are times when I don't know if that is who I really *am* or if it's just who I *want to be*. Chameleons have an innate ability to blend in to their surroundings. Not knowing a single thing about my birth history or family lineage, as a trans-racial

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adoptee, I've decided that I must be at least a distant relative to the chameleon family because of how I've skimmed through life blending in. What I realize now is this seeming ability to blend in is a unique talent that serves as a protective coat of many colors so to speak especially as a multiply marginalized individual at a predominantly white institution (PWI).

Where does this chameleon-ness come from? I have an incessant desire to please others—more specifically, anybody who has given me a chance in life because much of the world tried to write me off. Yet, in my blending in, feelings of being an imposter are also deeply embedded in my core, and I believe there before I could even talk. As an adoptee, there quite literally is a receipt for me. I don't want to be returned. But even that thought highlights some of my deep views around this role as an imposter. I have two White parents. Even though they never drew attention to our race in a negative way, at all, in the society that we live in, I somehow decided at an early age that I needed to do all that I could to please my White parents, to not be a statistic of students of color who don't make it. In my town, the students of color, other than myself, were largely bused in from the city, I was conscious of this and knew that I was the face of diversity. This has only been magnified in my current life as a multiply marginalized faculty of color at a PWI. When you *are* the face of diversity, there is an unwritten burden of expectation that feeds into this self-proclaimed incessant need for perfection. For many adoptees, adoption is talked about as a journey, not an event and it is common for perspectives about adoption to grow and shift over time. Other autoethnographies of adoption talk about this similar struggle with identity (Hübinette, 2004; Kim, 2000), with relationships with adoptive parents (Hübinette, 2004), for some even a search for birthparents (Malhotra, 2013) and, rarely, an intersection of being an adoptee and disabled (Forber-Pratt, 2020; Kim, 2000; Schwartz & Schwartz, 2018). Another non-adoptive autoethnography talks about the concept of home as a transnational woman (Bhattacharya, 2018).

My disability doesn't really factor into my chameleon-ness in the same way; I can't hide my disability. Yes, I have memories of being left on the sidelines countless times as a kid such as not invited to birthday parties or sleepovers because of being disabled. However, you can *see* my wheelchair; this makes my disability very visible, unlike chameleon skins.

These deep conversations and thoughts have followed me my entire life, even into the academy. While it is important to understand some of the root causes for this chameleon life, it is also important to interrogate (Denzin, 2006) what this means in the here and now for navigating the higher education world. Though, I never will be able to truly discern whether my feelings of insecurity are because of my race or because of my gender or because of my disability, because all of those things are deeply intertwined in who I am.

Academic Journey Towards Ph.D.

The short version of my academic trajectory starts off as me being a girl with a disability in my town who was constantly overpromised that my needs would be met, and then being faced with supreme disappointment time and time again which got worse as I progressed through the grade levels. My mother fought long and hard for me to have access to an education, but my school district was relentless. By the time I reached high school, she was burnt out from the fight. But, I also realized that the fight was not truly hers, it was mine; I was the one living with a disability, and I needed to fight my own battles. As a 14-year-old, tired of the blatant discrimination and expectation of blending in despite my disability, I hired my own lawyers and took on my school district in federal court for discrimination on the basis of disability. My lawsuit was precedent setting to allow for punitive and compensatory damages under the Americans with Disabilities Act (1991) in a public education case (Forber-Pratt v. Natick Public School District, 2002). This was a pivotal moment for numerous reasons, and to read and understand more from that chapter of my life and the connection to accrued cultural capital and identity development, refer to (Forber-Pratt, 2012; Forber-Pratt, 2015). But, the subtext of that story is that even to show that story as my dissertation, I came face-to-face once again with my good old friend: Impostor syndrome.

In fact, I had institutional review board approval for an entirely different study where I intended to tell the stories of women with disabilities and how they became role models to and for the disabled community. However, an idea surfaced when I was taking an advanced interpretive methodology course to tell my story as an autoethnography (Bochner, 1997, 2000, 2005; Denzin, 2006; Ellis, 1999, 2004, 2009; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). I was asked by mentors why I was going to tell other people's stories instead of my own. I did not like this idea (at first). I was adamant that I was not going to do this. It felt like a copout and it felt like the imposter voice in my head was telling me that that method, autoethnography, was somehow *not good enough*—boy, was I wrong! I was surrounded by academic voices from more traditional fields who were in disbelief of even the idea of an autoethnography. This became a double-edged sword of a challenge—having to prove its worthiness as a method for myself as well as acceptability to others—a challenge shared by other scholars too (Holt, 2003; Muncey, 2005; Wall, 2008). Constantly people would ask me, "You're going to do what?" (Forber-Pratt, 2015).

Ironically, it was the comments from non-academics I struggled with even more so than the comments from those within the academy. These were the ones who no matter how much I tried to put it into perspective and explain the basics behind the methodology and the credibility of qualitative research, I would leave the conversation feeling like a deflated balloon, albeit for much different reasons. The feelings of being deflated came about because of feeling like an imposter. If I, a multiply marginalized being, did not belong in the academy in the first place,

who was I to make bold methods assertions too? Talk about a tailspin!

Truth be told, autoethnography is not for the faint of heart. But, when you embark on a journey into unchartered waters, it is far from being a copout. I learned to accept that and to clutch the cards in my hand tightly against my chest. The act of keeping my cards close was my attempt to manage those feelings of being an imposter in the academy. I chose to engage in safe academic spaces – such as qualitative methods conferences and to tell the safer story (Forber-Pratt, 2015) of getting institutional review board approval at a research intensive university for an autoethnography. I am proud of that accomplishment, but as Carolyn Ellis writes in *Revision* (2009), I realize now, in the re-writing of that chapter in my life, I was telling the safe story still afraid of being an imposter. Yes, I gained confidence to be the creator and to tell *my* story, *my* way, yet the story I was still most comfortable telling was that of process. A key part in this process was finding my own voice merging the academic and the personal (Johnston & Strong, 2008). Part of my hesitation to do an autoethnography was fear of failure within academia and then when I did, I constantly wondered, "Will it be good enough to actually get a job?"

Little Fish, Big Pond

Spoiler alert: I did get a job. In fact, I spent two years as a post-doc learning the ropes of academic life and then ended up in a perfect position for me. Fast-forwarding to present day, I am now five years into my job. I am fortunate to be at top tier university actively playing and contemplating the tenure game of chess, and yet when I am mentoring young aspiring academics and I hear them talk about the "R1 pressures" I still hear a faint voice that says, "Oh, no kidding, that's not a place for me!" then I hear the voice of reality that chimes in with, "Oh shit, you *are* there! Wake up!"

It is not that I don't belong there, but rather that I still cannot believe that I *am* there. At national and international conferences, I overhear role models of mine giving praise about their successful mentees and my first reaction is, "Wow, they have amazing mentors who believe in them and have supported them along the way, how incredible"; then I realize they are talking about me, and that they are my mentors. This is a truly humbling experience. I am so grateful.

Mentorship comes in all shapes and sizes. Advisors may leave you or even betray you, as may colleagues and people you once believed to be mentors. While these actions may feel like gasoline poured onto a fire at the time, this is temporary. It is important to not let imposter syndrome win in these cases. My advisor left the academy and I, initially, felt abandoned. The fallout from this did cause me to come face-to-face in the boxing ring once again with imposter syndrome. As an adoptee, I always have struggled with abandonment issues, so when this happened during my first year on the job, I was hurt, and I could not understand

why this was happening to me. I could not get my head wrapped around the why, I struggled to not ask the question of: "why me?" I could not understand why someone, who was also a minority in the academy and knew the odds I was up against, and who I had previously talked to in great depth about these feelings of imposter syndrome would do this. I sought to protect that last ounce of dignity and pride with all of my might. I built such a strong fortress, subconsciously, that it took an incredible amount of force and guts to chisel away at it. It has taken me a long time to let other people in, and to come up with a positive reframe.

Déjà Vu Moment

My positive reframe began with a feeling of déjà vu. I had been here before! I knew how to process this! I had been here before athletically. It was this non-academic example that resonated the most with me, because the academic déjà vu examples felt too raw and too close like my own cards I was clutching onto so tightly.

I began wheelchair racing when I was five years old and was enthralled by wheelchair racers competing in the Boston Marathon. As a young girl with a disability, seeing adults with disabilities excel athletically was truly a life changing moment for me. I actually believed that to become an adult you had to outgrow your disability, so seeing these athletes was the first cognitive memory I have of realizing that you could become an adult and still have a disability! These athletes had disabilities, but they also went to college! They had jobs, families, they had dreams of their own. I knew from that moment this was something I had to check out for myself; I wanted to become a wheelchair racer. I started to learn that this wheelchair was not going to stop me, I was bound and determined to not continue my life left on the sidelines. I began competing nationally when I was nine years old and always dreamed of one day representing the United States of America in the Paralympic Games. Yet, when I reached that pinnicle—Team USA in 2008 (and again in 2012)—I was face-to-face with imposter syndrome once again.

Picture this: Feeling vibrations in your chest and hearing a loud roar but that where what is being said is indistinguishable, but the noise just keeps getting louder, and LOUDER… this is what it is like to enter a stadium of 91,000 screaming fans all there to support you and your dream. It is incredible. It was, quite literally, a longtime childhood dream come true. But to bridge the gap of doing sport for fun, or in the minor leagues so to speak then making it to big leagues---the Paralympic Games, I was plagued with this self-doubt of, "Do I really belong here?" The Paralympic Games, elite competition for athletes with disabilities, is the second largest multi-sport event in the world (Brittain, 2012). The word "Paralympic" means parallel to or alongside the Olympic Games (International Paralympic Committee, n.d.).

At my first Paralympic Games, my coach and I had many conversations as he helped me to process what I was going through. He was so reassuring, "Yes, you do belong here." Or, "Yes, you did make the team." Or, "Yes, this is real." I kept

pushing back wondering if I was good enough to perform at this level and what if I wasn't ready? He kept telling me to trust the process…over and over again. I critically doubted whether I belonged on Team USA and on the world stage, but my mentors and coach taught me to believe in myself and to trust the process and my own inherent resiliency. It began to sink in when I found myself on the medal stand in Bejing having earned two bronze medals in the 400m and 4x100m relay.

Living in the Moment

Realizing that I had tackled imposter syndrome in this totally unrelated way helped me to feel more confident. This begs the question: Does this mean that I am living a dream? I think I am much like entering that stadium which constantly replays in my head. As a multiply minoritized individual—an adopted woman, person of color, who uses a wheelchair, transplanted from middle class to a prestigious private University in the south—I wake up every single day and think someone needs to pinch me. I am not sure when this imposter feeling will go away, or if it ever will. And that is okay by me, because it grounds me in the work that I do, it allows me to relate to students and to participants who are engaged with the research I am doing. This imposter feeling makes sure that first and foremost in all of the work that I do, that I am human. Methodologically, owning and naming my story makes me the researcher I am today.

Humans have compassion, respect for others and decency, and remembering where I have come from constantly feeds into who I am and who I want to be. My desire to fight the oppressive systems and to stand up to inequalities, and to go round for round in the boxing ring with imposter syndrome along the way is an integral part of my identity. I think about the times in my life when I could have quit; it would have been easy. I am not entirely sure why I never did quit. Every naysayer in my life, such as that teacher in high school who asked me in front of the class, "Why are you in an honors level English class, it's not like you can go to college anyway", has made me want to prove them wrong. It's the drive in me. I am a fighter. There are numerous examples in my life when I could have conceded to the world and simply given up. I had to fight in order to survive. These moments, however, have made me who I am today.

Imposter "syndrome" is like the constant thorn in your side or the wound that keeps opening up instead of healing nice and pretty that reminds you it is there but grounds you in who you are. Because of this, I know my work connects with individuals on a deeper level and is authentic, raw and true. As a researcher, I could not ask for anything better. Therefore, I reject the notion of calling it a "syndrome" with all of those negative connotations and implications that one must get "over" said syndrome. Perhaps I am more sensitive to the terminology as a disabled person, but I fiercely reject the medical model of disability (Albert, 2004; Barnes & Mercer, 2001; Masala & Petretto, 2008; Shapiro, 1994), which

asserts that the 'problem' belongs to the individual and that something is 'wrong' that must be fixed. According to this model, disability is bad, a problem, a limitation and ought to be kept out of the mainstream society (Gill, 1995). Therefore, I want to encourage *all* minoritized individuals to recognize the inherent *value* in these imposter "syndrome" feelings and to reframe it positively and capitalize on it. This more closely aligns with the human rights model of disability (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2007) which postulates that the main issue is in society rather than within the individual, and that disability is a part of society, but first and foremost we are people with rights who deserve equal opportunities and full participation in life. Extending this notion further to imposter "syndrome", what if we are not imposters at all, but that society is what makes us feel as imposters because of our minoritized status(es)? My positive reframe is to take the term: imposter syndrome and to reject the "syndrome" part altogether, and focus on the "im". Turn this into a statement: I'm _____. Fill in this blank with positive attributes. This affirming approach is a way, especially as a multiply marginalized individual, to express pride in my identities and allow that to fuel my soul.

I have decided not to shed my chameleon skin, that I once thought I needed to rid myself of; rather, I have chosen to embrace it and all of its colors and allow it to fuel my authenticity and empower my work. I am comfortable as a chameleon, are you?

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Microagressions and the Marginalization of First-Generation Faculty

Professional Assimilation and Competency Development

Amber L. Bechard & Janee Both Gragg

Abstract

In very recent years, as institutions of higher education have been focusing substantial efforts and resources on empowering first-generation students, first-generation faculty are increasingly called upon to mentor and support these students. Given their own developmental experiences and struggles, such faculty often enthusiastically embrace this labor. Yet such faculty have received little to no professional training or institutional mentoring as first-generation undergraduate or graduate students or, most importantly for our purposes here, as first-generation faculty. Indeed, little has been written about first-generation students who have become faculty members in the often-elitist academy. This article explores the authors' experiences of marginalization as first-generation faculty, using personal narratives marked by microaggressions that highlight implicit bias related to (1) professional assimilation and (2) competency development. Contextual considerations are discussed as is the pressing need for future research on and mentoring programs for first-generation faculty.

Introduction

In recent years, as higher education has produced research, programming, and other resources to empower first-generation students (Glass, et al., 2017),

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first-generation faculty are increasingly turned to a valuable resource for mentoring, support and diversity and inclusion initiatives. Yet these faculty did not benefit from similar theorizing and support in their path from undergraduate to graduate students to faculty members. Indeed, little has been written about first-generation faculty members in the academy.

Herein lies the irony of the ivory tower: publicly embracing first-generation students, yet still largely ascribing to a survival of the fittest, competitive academic culture where naiveté is weakness and historical academic privilege is the social and political capital that must be obtained for first-generation faculty to effectively navigate toward tenure, reputable scholarship, and professorial success. In this way, as Freire (1972) characterizes oppression, the rescuer (in this case, the academy) carries within it the potential to act simultaneously as the oppressor (Hiraldo, 2010). The well-intentioned establishment is liberating students through access to higher-education systems (Shor & Freire, 1987)—systems saturated with oppressive practices (Stockdill & Danico, 2012), including professional and relational faculty workplace dynamics marked by unconscious or implicit bias communicated through elitist, gendered, and racist microaggressions (Standlee, 2018). And as dimensions of difference—such as race, age, gender and social class—intersect, levels of oppression are magnified (Gutierrez y Muhs et al., 2012). This article explores the authors' experiences of marginalization as first-generation faculty, using personal narratives marked by microaggressions that highlight implicit bias related to 1) professional assimilation and 2) competency development.

Theoretical Conceptualization

Several theories are utilized in the meaning making of our lived experiences, including Feminist Theory, Critical Race Theory and General Systems Theory. First, Feminist Theory acknowledges the role gender, inequity, power, misogyny and silencing play in already corrupt systems (Hooks, 1984), represented here in our shared first-generation faculty experiences in the academy. Similarly, Critical Race Theory views education as shaping and reflecting the dominant discourse of a white elite whose racist, biased, gendered, classed practices and policies have contextualized our stories and represent a larger climate (Hiraldo, 2010). Finally, General Systems Theory acknowledges the complexities of human organizational systems with attention to redundant patterns of behavior within and across systems (Both Gragg, 2016). In this way, we understand that large-scale institutional change is both incredibly challenging and painful as the system seeks (through the individual actions of its members) to reward, both explicitly and (most insidiously) implicitly, behaviors that serve to maintain or strengthen the status quo.

From First-Gen Student to First-Gen Faculty

Much scholarly research and writing exists about the recruitment and reten-

tion of first-generation students who are the first in the family to attend or to graduate from college. A population with valuable and diverse strengths and perspectives, perseverance and resourcefulness, these students are assumed to benefit from additional support for their unique needs (Inkelas eta al., 2006; Lundber et al., 2007). However, older cohorts of first-generation students did not benefit from such naming, theorizing, and support: the term only began to emerge in the literature in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These older cohorts have since grown up and accepted faculty appointments. The metamorphosis from first-generation student to faculty member represents large leaps (Gersick, 1991) for individuals and families in terms of power—the kind that comes from knowledge, education level, employment status, socioeconomic status and social class. Spanning this cultural chasm can leave first-generation faculty spread thin, feeling isolated and disconnected from institutional work. Indeed, first-generation faculty are often eager yet also subtly suppressed participants in an unspoken cultural hierarchy. The title "first-generation faculty", even in the absence of a full-blown marketing campaign, can come with the often-invisible labor of unspoken responsibilities and expectations of student engagement, institutional service, and community outreach that are crucial to the success of first-generation students. While this can place additional time and resource constraints on faculty members, Baez (2000) suggests that the critical agency around how and why to serve is meaningful to first-generation faculty, albeit undervalued within higher education.

Marginalization of First-Generation Faculty

The traits of intelligence, ambition and tenacity that drive first-generation faculty to complete college and earn post-graduate degrees are not always as highly valued in academia as is language fluency and material resources acquired through multigenerational access to higher education. Thus, those familiar and comfortable with the nuances of navigating institutions of higher education have substantial advantages that perpetuate historical academic privilege (Housel and Harvey, 2009). First-generation faculty who work hard, engage in meaningful research, service and teaching and are certainly of equal value as academics remain subtly and consistently at a disadvantage. They find themselves marginalized, which, as per Weisberger (1992), is the process of positioning a group of people below or outside of society and its norms. Some faculty report being "bullied" by peers within the academy: peers who may have an unacknowledged bias or agenda to replicate the historical privilege of academe through what De la Riva-Holly (2012) terms "secret social norms and behaviors" (p. 292).

Implicit bias is the unconscious mental beliefs held about various groups, often based on past experiences and leading to demonstrated preference of one group over another (Hohman, Gaffney, Hogg, 2017). Implicit bias likely plays a role in how first-generation faculty are viewed in an environment grappling with

its own cultural identity even while efforts to embrace and embody diversity fall short in an increasingly anti-racist climate. So, for example, our voices are often rendered inaudible until restated by a faculty member able to crank the volume, articulating our ideas using more traditionally academic language. Ideas shared in meetings are met with lukewarm placating and then repackaged into initiatives rolled out successfully under a more privileged colleague's leadership—usually an established male scholar having greater higher-education fluency and standing to benefit directly from maintaining the existing power structures. Conversations that begin with us being told to "lean in"—in a superficial nod to gender and class justice—end in exclusion.

In this way, role expectations can become ascribed, influenced by implicit and explicit rules (Both Gragg & Wilson, 2006) about how business in the academy should be conducted and who is best suited to oversee which tasks. Contextualized within a unique sociopolitical and economic institutional climate and further nestled within specific departmental or program sub-cultures, both implicit and explicit professional role expectations can magnify first-generation faculty burdens and marginalization. Institutions risk undermining the very essence of diversity with an only superficial appreciation of the label *first-generation faculty* and appropriation of labor that ignores group differences, lived experiences and personal narratives and provides little or no support for success.

The slights and subtleties in communication and behavior toward others can signal unconscious biases, which are often barely visible to the perpetrator or recipient (Sue et al., 2007 and 2009). Indeed, microaggressions perpetuate the very oppression the academy purports to expose and eradicate and are also increasingly a topic of study, protest, and news. Most recently, Black, Indigenous, and people of color from the ranks of students, alumni, staff, and faculty nationwide are demanding academic institutions acknowledge, challenge, and dismantle the previously unquestioned, culturally imbedded, rarely recognized racial microaggressions that are the status quo.

Professional Assimilation:
Being Socialized to the Academy

After a full career as an educational practitioner in K-12, I accepted an initial Visiting Assistant Professor appointment, officially entering academia. Immediately I was in an unfamiliar space, where one "accepts an appointment" versus getting a job. I remember researching various professor ranks that many of my colleagues knew about since their childhoods, confidently navigating the complex cultural terrain of the academy. My limited background knowledge became more and more apparent as my experience in academia progressed. Comments from privileged academics were delivered with a sometimes subtle, always condescending, entitled tone.

My exasperation at complex and undefined systems—such as creating a study abroad course, compiling a tenure and promotion dossier, navigating the institutional review board and mastering the scholarly publication culture—were met with: "That's what the academy is about." The survival of the fittest attitude demanded that I figure it out myself or fail. Colleagues smugly told me: "I guess you're learning what it means to be in the academy." A dean once directly stated (and thereby reinforced my outsider status), "You're being socialized to the academy." When I proposed an autoethnographic article, an established scholar discouraged me: "That's not like any article I've ever written." Offers of mentoring and support were rare in that first experience as a faculty member. Though I wasn't mentored in systems or navigating research and scholarship requirements, I was given explicit advice on how to "behave" more like an academic. After an in-house interview for a tenure-track position, I was cautioned: "Be aware of how you are perceived. The impressions you leave are important." "Academics want those who came before them to be honored. Mention the names of relevant scholars often." "The way you present yourself needs a more scholarly lens." I felt hazed more than mentored. In actuality, I experienced the perpetuation of institutionalized oppression.

First-gen faculty report much effective support within the academy comes from other first-generation professionals, including administrative assistants and facilities staff who offer entirely different comments. "You are one of the most accessible faculty members here." "You work so well with people." "You are effective, yet still friendly." These collegial interactions with those who have another first-generation academy role reveal invisible relational work of first-gen faculty, repairing damage done by the aggressive, dismissive actions of privileged, connected colleagues. Such work includes seeing, asking, listening, bearing witness, and/or taking action.

Competency Development: Language Fluency and Cultural Nuance

As I moved into the professional culture of higher education, I had hoped for something like assimilation: where I could be who I am also be viewed as a valuable contributor. However, climbing the hierarchical ranks toward scholar status felt more like cultural eradication. For example, the word scholar itself feels pretentious, serving to separate me from my cultural history, social experiences and familial relationships. My colleagues frequently refer to themselves as scholars and compare themselves to one another through historically privileged ways of knowing and using traditional status measurements, such as number of scholarly publications and official impact data. While I understand the term's importance and centrality, adopting such a self-identity serves only to separate me from the working-class communities where I grew up and the alternative measures of suc-

cess I learned babysitting and waiting tables there. Similarly, self-identifying as scholar creates an air of pretense and thus a problematic distance in the communities in which my research is imbedded and designed to benefit.

My colleagues frequently make assumptions about the nature and extent of my scholarship, perhaps because it is community based, and often express surprise when I share information about publications and conference presentations. They frequently mischaracterize my research as service rather than scholarship thus undermining my contributions and my path forward in academia. So I am left striving to be perceived as scholarly enough to have credibility in the academy and while working not to alienate the community allies and partners central to my work.

My voice, by nature of word choice, prevents my ideas from being heard with the same credibility as those around me who are more fluent in higher educationese. Put simply, I am a first-generation scholarly language learner, with all the associated stigma and bias that comes with not speaking the dominant language. For example, I have been explicitly told that tenured faculty have a responsibility to speak up, share ideas and challenge ideologies as a contribution to academic discourse. However, these contributions are expected to come with a specific tone and delivered with a form of academic fluency that I lack. Lacking explicit rules on how, what and when to speak up, I experienced multiple pitfalls and consequences, being told I was coming off as "resentful" and "emotional." I was dismissed and not mentored on how to make these contributions or affirmed regarding their importance, regardless of their delivery.

Over time, I have become more nimble at using long-standing formal structures to exert my voice but this box checking, typically devoid of relational processes, does not come easily. I rarely move forward without consulting allies more familiar with navigating higher education process and procedure and keen to cultural subtleties and nuances. Mine is a collaborative relational process that looks starkly different from that of many colleagues who are more adept at navigating the terrain of traditional academic processes and procedures that often diminishes and silences alternative, relational voices like mine.

Contextual Considerations

Given the often unacknowledged challenges of navigating professional assimilation and competency development processes, the implicit bias first-generation faculty face and resulting microaggressions can leave them feeling marginalized and unsupported even while trying to mentor first-generation students. Successful academic identity development for first-generation faculty has direct implications for institutional navigability, scholarly vocabulary and achievement required for tenure and promotion. With implicit, coded expectations of acculturation linked to academic success, first-generation faculty must learn the cultural

traditions and nuances of higher education (De la Riva-Holly, 2012).

Much like first-generation students unfamiliar with the college environment (Jehangir, 2010), first-generation faculty would benefit from re-envisioned mentoring and specialized programming designed to clarify the cultural nuances of higher education and stave off social, emotional and intellectual isolation (Baez, 2000). Like the token minority student expected to speak on behalf of the collective cultural experience (Niemann, 1999), first-generation faculty run the risk of being tokenized as easily accessible resources to the campus community and its many strategic initiatives to the detriment of their own work and professional priorities. Most notably, though, first-generation faculty must actively engage in their own liberation from the institutional status quo, drawing attention to the implicit biases undergirding the microaggressions that contextualize their professional assimilation and competency development processes.

Conclusion

This article explored first-generation faculty members' marginalization by long-standing higher education infrastructure, marked by microaggressions, with a focus upon the problems around professional assimilation and competency development. Successfully navigating the ivory tower as a first-generation faculty member remains challenging, as academia remains a bastion for the historically academically privileged, a demographic that, not coincidentally, aligns with the historically White and wealthy. In a climate where institutions are working to embrace first-generation students both because it is the right thing to do and because it is financially necessary, first-generation faculty continue to live the irony of the ivory tower, seeking a place among the academic elite who are intent on maintaining their fortress. Yet, first-generation faculty provide crucial, diverse perspectives and experiences reflected in our teaching, research, and service that enrich the institution in so many ways, including the support and insight we provide to first-generation students. Additional exploration of the lived experiences of first-generation faculty is warranted and will support the development of scholarship and mentoring programs designed to enhance the successful hiring and retention of first-generation faculty.

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The Undulations
of Writing for Publication

Mellinee Lesley

Abstract

Through autobiographical narrative inquiry (Kim, 2016), I explore a string of untold stories from my life about publishing academic writing. Using the self as data, the retelling of these stories examines what it means to cultivate a writing identity and more specifically what it means to write for publication. Through a critical literacy lens (Freire, 1996), I problematize the traditions of publishing and consider the ramifications for mentoring doctoral students into this realm of academic life. Thus, this reflexive essay (Luttrell, 2010) is a sorting through of nearly thirty years of chasing academic publications. This writing is a way to both make my thinking visible and tell a story of my becoming an academic writer through the shaping forces of audience, blind peer review, and conflicting opinions.

Introduction

Writing has never come easily to me. It is a strained experience framed by self-doubt. One of my earliest memories of writing in school was being humiliated by my second grade teacher when she assigned our class to write a letter to the next year's second grade students and then read our letters out loud to the class. When she got to my letter, she ridiculed my attempt at humor and made comments such as "this doesn't make any sense." In that moment, for the first time in my life I was confronted with an audience—in this case one not too fond of puns. Prior to this experience, writing in school largely meant dictation and penmanship. In

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contrast, writing at home had been something that was playful, exploratory, and completely mine. In second grade, my home writing self collided with my school writing self and marked the beginning of many moments of uncertainty I would encounter with writing as a student and an academic.

Through high school, college, and two graduate programs, I had numerous instances where my writing was praised and critiqued by different teachers. I never knew what feedback to expect, and the feedback I received was often confusing. Unfortunately, feedback did not get clearer as I earned advanced academic degrees. I remember being stunned as a first semester master's student in a rhetoric and composition program when the faculty member who was teaching a class over writing pedagogy complained about how terrible the first essays in the class were and how tortured he had been reading them on an airplane flight to some unrevealed but important destination. "Some of you need to get your goddamn grammar right!" He scolded. Wide-eyed, all I could think about through the rest of the class was whether I was one of the students who had made grammatical mistakes in my paper. I have often thought about the irony of a professor giving such hostile feedback in a class where we were studying effective writing pedagogy. At the time, however, my insecurities prevented me for pointing this out. Feeling powerless to ignore the whims of teachers, I believe the collective conundrum of such experiences led me ultimately to a career in higher education where I would continue to navigate critiques and confront the mystery of writing for an audience other than the self.

Although criticism over writing began for me as a young child, publishing—the pinnacle of criticism—did not become a goal for me until graduate school. In 1993, I entered a doctoral program at the University of Pennsylvania. I was petrified and two months pregnant. I had recently relocated to the East Coast from the Southwestern United States and felt rather overwhelmed by all of the compounding changes in my life. The first week of classes, I spread my books and syllabi on the kitchen table and broke down in tears. "I can't do this. I can't read all of these articles and books and write 30 page papers," I sobbed. Without hesitation, my husband responded, "Yes, you can. You just need a time management plan. All you have to do is break up the work into smaller steps." Thus, my graduate studies began at a little kitchen table in Delaware with fears of my future and past swirling around me in due dates.

Initiation into the Publishing Club

As I progressed through coursework, publishing was a mysterious prospect that I had little understanding of. Mostly, I pieced together that publishing was extremely difficult and often paved the way to a failed academic career. "Publish or perish" was not just an arcane dictum. I saw faculty reach the three-year point in their career and vanish. "I think he's making other choices," my advisor euphemistically

explained, but I understood such departure was not exactly by choice. I also saw the toll fear of publishing took on untenured faculty through their haggard faces and vicariously shared in their distant stare toward an unspeakable horror.

One day in the library, I stumbled onto a book titled *Bitter Milk: Women and Teaching* by Madeline Grumet (1988). Intrigued by the title, I began reading. I found the book to be an eerie meditation on the confluence of motherhood and academia. It was like finding a cryptic note written to me from a future self I had little understanding of beyond the timelines for class assignments and a looming dissertation requirement. In this book, I saw my life as a female graduate student and adjunct faculty member laid out in the pages of another female academic's story. I had an invisible position in higher education, an endless mound of papers to grade, my own papers to write, a daily commute to navigate, and piles of laundry to do. I thought earning a doctoral degree would be the most liberating thing I could do professionally, but in the pages of this book my image of higher education as a hallowed realm of enlightenment and opportunity began to crack. Adding gender politics to the mix of the higher education career I imagined, made the prospect of publishing even more daunting.

Shortly after discovering *Bitter Milk*, I came across a narrative about academic writing by Linda Brodkey (1994). In this article, Brodkey described writing as a "protective mantle" and a "newfound power" for young girls (p. 528). Brodkey also noted her "many lean years of writing in school" (p. 528). For Brodkey, writing instruction in school occupied a highly contrived and abbreviated space. Very much like my own experience in second grade, the generative and creative impulse of a young child was curtailed by the strictures of a writing curriculum with little room for experimentation. Brodkey wrote:

> When I was in elementary school, before children were allowed to write, they were expected to learn to read, write cursive, spell, diagram sentences, punctuate them, and arrange them in paragraphs. The first writing assignment I remember was in the fifth grade—'Write about your favorite country'—and my essay on 'Africa' was a compilation of sentences copied in my own hand from encyclopedia entries. (p. 531)

Brodkey's K-12 writing instruction sounded like mine. As I advanced in school, writing was predominantly rule-governed and restrictive. It rarely represented an organic outgrowth of learning even in graduate school.

As a doctoral student, publishing became a new layer to the expectations of academic writing. I felt increasing pressure to publish, so I began to submit conceptual papers to journals for publication. Neither of my first two submissions were successful. One journal editor told me my paper on feminist research methodology was "not very good." Another journal editor accepted my manuscript, but stated I would have to pay to publish it. I had not heard of predatorial publishing at this point in my career, but the request made me feel as though the editor knew I was desperate to publish and saw an opportunity

to make money off of me. One of my peers advised me to stay away from this journal and punctuated her point with a rhetorical question, "Do you think our professors *ever* pay to publish?" In these early attempts at publishing I sensed there were unwritten rules such as illegitimate outlets, but I was not sure exactly how to go about determining them except to continue submitting my writing for review to journals I had been acquainted with through coursework. Consequently, I bumbled along in solitary pursuit of this ill-defined goal.

In my coursework as a doctoral student, I was imbued with theories of critical literacy (e.g., Ellsworth, 1989; Freire, 1996; Lankshear, Lankshear, & McLaren, 1993; Shor, 1999). As a researcher, I wanted to understand applications of critical literacy theories in various educational contexts and articulate these studies in such a way to further illuminate critical literacy. With this theoretical lens, my first publications were explorations into enacting critical literacy in various educational contexts. In particular, I studied the ways reading and writing about educational oppression shifted marginalized students' literacy identities, skills, and educational trajectories. Just before I graduated, I published a piece that was about creating space for critical dialogue in a freshman composition class.

I hoped my dissertation, which was an investigation over a year-long professional development initiative at an elementary school, would lead to several publications. The best part about writing a dissertation was that it put me back into a space where I was engaged in extensive writing at home and felt a degree of freedom. It was hard work as I drifted in a tide of data and theories for weeks at a time, but it was creative work. My chair read pieces throughout the process and offered encouragement and suggestions. This routine worked well until I shared my completed dissertation with the other members of my committee. The night before I defended my dissertation, one committee member called me to ask if I had published from my dissertation yet. I answered that I was waiting to defend before attempting to publish. "Good!" she retorted and proceeded to tell me I had written a "terrible" dissertation. I had traveled back to the East Coast for my defense and spent several hours calling peers who were familiar with my study to ask them what they thought about this odd, last minute phone call. Thankfully, my chair and my friends had been encouraging and patched together my devastated sense of self before I had to face this woman. The next morning in my dissertation defense, my chair began the discussion by stating, "We all agree that your dissertation is beautifully written." As soon as he made this statement, the committee member who had called me the night before interjected, "No we don't!" This abrasive comment stunned my chair who paused and asked the committee members to talk to me about what they would like me to revise. Once again, I was in a place where one teacher praised my work and another offered excoriating criticism. I passed my defense, made revisions, and graduated, but because of the one committee member's comments my dissertation felt stained, and I never attempted to publish any part of it. Bitter milk.

I accepted a position at a teaching intensive university, which allowed me

to recover from my dissertation experience and return to writing without the attendant pressure to publish. After five years, I felt the urge to venture into a research intensive university and entered the job market again. I had published a few more articles and amassed a great deal of teaching experience, but I did not quite feel as though I had accomplished what I set out to do with my career. Even though I was nervous about the pressure to publish, I was excited to create a more developed line of research.

Over time, my experiences with publishing, like my school experiences, formed a repetitive pattern of rejection and acceptance that eventually led to enough publications for me to be tenured and promoted. The route to this point in my career was fraught with revelations about the idiosyncrasies of publishing. Mostly, I learned the importance of conforming to the editor's instructions. I learned to modify titles and sanitize words and tune my voice to a dispassionate academic tenor. Even so, as the following review demonstrates, sometimes I was unable to meet the editor's expectations.

> *Comments to the Author:*
>
> *I was looking forward to this resubmission, but I feel that the author did not fully address the recommendations made by the reviewers. In particular, the methods still lack transparency. While the author provided more information about the students, he/she did not indicate what percentages of students fell into each master model and whether or not those students differed based on the demographic or content-area information provided. The reader is expected to trust the excerpted comments are representative, but it is not clear that they are representative of the sample or how they represent portions of the sample. The paper is still compelling, but these gaps in reporting the methods and results should be resolved.*
>
> *Also, the discussion and implications sections of the paper, while expanded, are not particularly compelling. More integration of the theory and research cited earlier in the paper and more guidance for teacher educators with suggestions for how to deal with these attitudes toward literacy habits would really strengthen this manuscript as a contribution to [name of journal].*
>
> *With more substantial revisions in the direction the author took with this first set of revisions would make this manuscript a good contribution to the literature.*

I learned to revise numerous times to have opportunities to publish. For example, I revised this manuscript a second time in order to publish it.

Difficult Truths

In the years that I have been a faculty member in higher education, I have found there are limits to the topics that mainstream educational journals are willing to take up and by the same token trends that editors are eager to support. Although both negative and positive findings lead to important research implications, as a researcher, I have experienced a publication bias toward positive solutions to educational dilemmas. Research that imparts too harsh of a critique of various educational practices and systems has been more challenging to publish.

In 2008, as I started to explore deeper, systemic issues of educational equity, I ran into increased difficulty publishing my writing. I spent the better part of a year trying to publish a manuscript about the deleterious effect of high stakes testing on fourth grade children who had failed the state mandated reading test the year prior. I diligently revised this manuscript several times for a journal ultimately to be told by the editor they would not publish it because it portrayed too negative of a story about high stakes testing. I actually worked up the courage to address my concerns with the journal editor who had rejected my manuscript because it was not "supportive" of high stakes testing. Tenured and beginning to amass a publication record, I felt emboldened to "talk back" (hooks, 1994) with the following email:

Dear [Name of Journal] Editorial Team,

I'm sure it goes without saying that I am extremely disappointed in your decision to not publish my manuscript in the May 2008 issue of [Name of Journal]. Of course I am disappointed by the fact that this manuscript has been in revision at your request for a considerable length of time. I'm most frustrated by the fact, however, that the primary reason cited for rejection is that the manuscript is not coated in a positive veneer.

It saddens me greatly that the stories of the children, teacher, parents, and administrator presented in this manuscript will probably never be accepted for publication in any journal because they represent critical stories as opposed to "creative," "constructive," and "supportive" stories of high stakes testing. The lives of the children depicted in this manuscript are already obscured by a society that does little to redress issues of social disparity. With your decision to solely focus on positive stories about high stakes testing, aren't you contributing to the very oppression high stakes testing creates with this population of students—minority children contending with poverty?

I understand that you feel the "negative" stories about high stakes testing have already been told. While there have been such stories published in the past few years, they obviously have not had much of an impact on the policies surrounding NCLB accountability mandates. Does it not stand to reason, then, that more such stories need to be told in order to bring about a change?

Please reconsider your decision to reject this manuscript due to the unpleasant reality it depicts. High stakes testing needs to be presented in a multiplicity of perspectives no matter what criticisms such perspectives may impart.

Sincerely,
Mellinee Lesley

I knew my retort would not result in a publishing opportunity with the journal, but I could not ignore the hypocrisy of editors who had asked me to revise and resubmit my manuscript three times to meet their specifications and then rejected it because it was too negative. Ironically, a couple of years later, the editor of this journal won an award for a book about critical literacy, which was a little more bitter milk for me to swallow as I watched her receive recognition for this work at an awards ceremony.

From this experience, I learned there were limits to the topics journal editors are willing to address in spite of an allegiance to critical perspectives. In the midst of the frenzy of the 2001 No Child Left Behind legislation, the trauma of high stakes testing was not a topic the editors deemed important. Fortunately, I was able to publish the manuscript in an international journal, so all of my effort with this study was not put aside like my dissertation.

I have run into other topics that after several submissions to different journals I have decided are unpublishable as well. One such topic is the rape culture adolescents are exposed to through digital media. Another topic is the chronically poor writing instruction taking place in "underperforming," urban high schools. Of this second topic, one reviewer wrote: "Part of me really appreciated the story being told through this research, leading to the understanding (that other researchers have made as well, as the authors realize and recognizes) that things have to change systematically in order to rethink the teaching of writing." Yet, the manuscript was not deemed appropriate for publication.

Negative findings like the trauma of high stakes testing, rape culture in digital media, and poor writing instruction leading to to a downward educational spiral for diverse students in an "underperforming" high school, have been the most difficult manuscripts for me to publish. Consequently, I have come to believe there is a publishing bias against such social critiques because they expose difficult truths.

Contradictory Feedback and Major Revisions

Another challenge of publishing I have experienced is receiving contradictory feedback that is difficult to decipher. Many times I have had one reviewer write extremely complimentary feedback and another write extremely negative feedback over the same work. This happened recently in a manuscript about zines, which are self-publications typically exploding with chaotic images over socially hidden and sometimes irreverent topics. With this manuscript, the editor wrote:

The reviews of your manuscript are clear and precise, so I won't reiterate them in detail. You'll note in general, however, that the reviewers had some differing perspectives on your piece: one recommends a "major revision" and the other "accept."

In this instance, I had to navigate the two perspectives, which meant discarding some of the feedback from one reviewer in order to address the other's suggestions.

In addition to contradictory feedback, a revise and resubmit decision with major revisions has been a struggle for me to navigate as a writer. Because suggestions for major revision can be overwhelming, sometimes I have opted to take the suggestions that made sense and submit the manuscript to an entirely different journal. A few months ago, I was asked to make major revisions in my theoretical framing of a manuscript. The editor wrote:

Currently, however, it is still difficult to see how the manuscript contributes to the type of theory building and empirically focused analysis that tends to be compelling to many readers of the journal and helps to define the type of articles we tend to publish.

Once again, I worked up enough courage to talk to the editor. This time, however, it was over the phone—a first for me. The upshot of the conversation was that the editor wanted me to cite theories from the field of rhetoric and composition instead of the ones I had cited from the field of literacy education. The editor's bias toward one disciplinary tradition made it difficult for me to take up this work. Publishing can be a punishing business for those of us with a shaky writing identity. Also, the older I get, the harder it is to accept feedback that seems biased toward a particular epistemological stance or in this case a collection of readings. Feedback skewed to a certain field or philosophical framing always surprises me because I expect reviewers to work within the context of the study. Recently, I received feedback over a book chapter that critiqued the manuscript for being too focused in the discipline of literacy education in my review of literature even though the study took place in a high school English department. The reviewer wrote:

Over-emphasis on literacy education. There's some lit review on outreach in that field. The only reference I think would be useful to those in say, Life Sciences, would be the Cochran-Smith & Lytle source. . . . The science community uses the 'DELTA' model to train grad student how to teach. We've used that model for 8 years to structure a 2-credit inter-D course on the principles and practices of CES.

These particular comments seemed too mismatched with the study to me, it was difficult to see any value in the feedback. When I receive this type of feedback, I often wonder about publishing parity and what Freirean (1996) resistance would

look like in academic publishing. I also wonder if self-publishing is the only truly egalitarian pathway and whether it could obliterate publishing bias.

Publishing as Mentoring

In spite of the issues I have encountered with academic writing and publishing, peer review is the only substantial mentoring I have had with writing since graduating from my doctoral program. Although some feedback is difficult to understand or hard to accept, feedback through the peer review process has been vital for me to progress in my academic writing career. I do believe anonymity of the feedback breeds fruitful dialogue. Frank and clear feedback can be beneficial. For instance, the following feedback helped me reorganize a manuscript to be more logical:

> *Your argument seems to be evident on page 3 where you stated, 'To better understand the affordances of composing through new media . . . shaped by critical media literacy.' I think this paragraph needs to come sooner in the manuscript, thus writing a shorter introduction. I also think the introduction needs to provide examples of research support for your second goal 'to identify key components of composing online . . . .' I think this is especially needed due to your title: 'Composing and the need for critical media literacy.' Thus, I recommend organizing this piece a bit more, and I have a few recommendations you may consider. I think the introduction needs to be rewritten.*

Even when a manuscript is rejected, cogent feedback is extremely valuable in guiding other projects.

I have had two occasions in my career where an editor took a particular interest in my topic and provided extensive feedback that pushed my manuscript to a higher level. In one instance, the editor asked me to include a discussion about the Common Core State Standards (National Governor's Association, 2010) because these standards were newly created and had been adopted by most states. This insight created a greater sense of exigency and national relevance for my research. In the other instance, the editor provided suggestions on my manuscript to help clarify several aspects and create a revision that addressed patterns of mechanical issues in my writing from the reviewer's comments.

On other occasions, I have received detailed feedback that greatly facilitated the precision of my writing such as the following example:

> *Change the word "Girls" to adolescent girls in the title (cover page).*
> *Related to punctuation and upper case, put a comma after the word sites*
> *(p. 2, line 10). Then on line 17, change hooks to Hooks.*
> *P. 2, line 39, put a comma after the word fifteen. P. 2, line 43, change*
> *internet to Internet.*

Feedback that includes an element of copyediting shows a level of investment from a reviewer often above and beyond what is required that has helped me develop stronger writing skills. This type of feedback is the closest experience to being in a writing group where peers read and respond to drafts of writing. However, not all faculty writing groups include this step of actual feedback over each others' writing (e.g., Elbow & Sorcinelli, 2006). Thus, the process of blind peer review is every academic's writer's workshop.

Coming Full Circle

Because of my varied experiences with writing for publication, I try to make a point of demystifying the publishing process for doctoral students I work with. Even so, I often feel as though I fall short of this goal partly because I did not have a professor overtly mentor me and, thus, have no model on which to base my actions and partly because I am concerned that I may convey opinions and information that will frustrate students. I have also found including doctoral students in the manuscript development and submission process to not be very helpful if the student struggles with basic aspects of writing and employing research methods. In these instances, I have found myself doing all of the work and have come to question the ethics of including students' names on manuscripts where they do not contribute intellectually to the project. I once included a student's name on a manuscript because she assisted me marginally with data collection and later found out she could not explain the study during a job interview. This challenged my assumptions about what students learn from collaborating on research projects.

Because of the complexities of writing for publication, I wrestle with how to scaffold learning about publishing and ponder questions such as: How do I better prepare doctoral students for the rigors and realities of publishing without inculcating disillusionment? To what extent should we teach doctoral students about the gate-keeping practices of publishing that can be idiosyncratic and biased? When is it productive to offer classes on writing for publication that include publishing testimonials of such experiences? What should true co-authorship look like between faculty and doctoral students? Is co-authorship the best route for mentoring doctoral students into writing for publication (Kamler, 2008)? How do we best show students the complexities of bringing a manuscript to print? Every time I mention a negative experience with publishing to students, I feel guilty when I see their eyes widen. Who is to say their experiences will be similar to my own? By the same token, I do not want to mislead them into thinking publishing is easy or even straight forward. A balanced perspective is certainly warranted.

In addition to mentoring doctoral students in ways that are productive, we need to address issues of publishing bias as a community of scholars. An inclination to publish research leading to positive results should be studied. We should also examine whether some journals have a bias toward certain topics

and paradigms of research methodology. To what extent are these predilections based on disciplinary traditions? In our crush to keep up with new trends, do we ignore other topics to the detriment of the field? A content analysis of topics published in different disciplines is needed as is a self-study led by journal editors on topics that are rejected for publication. We also need to examine the extent to which we are engaging in methodological rigor as a research community. Is there enough methodological variety in studies addressing the same topics? Similarly, to what extent are replication studies published? These questions point to the fact that there are much larger implications for the academic community to consider concerning publishing than my personal journey imparts.

Writing for publication is riddled with hope, despair and many contingencies. Publishing plays a major role in the knowledge base of a discipline, the public good, and the professional lives of academics. Thus, much more attention needs to be given to the realities of publishing. For example, publishing trends should be an ongoing discussion at every research conference. In the academy, we need to continually engage in evaluation of publishing practices and continue to examine the efficacy of traditions such as peer review. Something so integral to the health of higher education should not be discarded like spoiled milk. If publishing is the life force of academia, it should be handled and analyzed like any other form of phenomena worthy of study in higher education and be given much more attention.

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Consequences of Stereotype Threat and Imposter Syndrome
The Personal Journey from STEM-Practitioner to STEM-educator for Four Women of Color

Kristina Henry Collins, Erica F. Price, Lisa Hanson, & Dianne Neaves

Abstract

This article highlights the STEM journey of four women of color that matriculated at four different types of universities (R1, PWI; HBCU; private, religious-based PWI; and an international HSI university) for their undergraduate STEM degrees. The ethnographical narratives shared by each, informed lessons learned about stereotype threat, imposter phenomenon, and the chilly environment that is present within male dominated STEM fields. The authors offer recommendations to reduce the consequences of these issues to include deliberate STEM identity development and STEM mentoring. Framed by the CLIC (content learning and identity construction) theoretical framework and Collins' (2018) Black student STEM Identity model (BSSI), vertical mentoring and service-learning best practices are discussed along with initial results of a pilot study designed to address these issues.

Introduction

Women and minorities in America continue to be a very underutilized source

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of human capital in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). There is an overall low concentration of both subgroups in STEM relative to the number of women and minorities in the overall workforce and that hold STEM degrees. Whether categorized by workforce or STEM degrees, non-Hispanic white males make up the majority of individuals identified as scientists or engineers (The National Science Foundation & National Science Board, 2020). NSB's 2020 science & engineering indicators showed that while in the last twenty five years women's presence in the broad area of science and engineering has significantly increased by degrees and within the workforce, the enormous disparity between men and women has shown insignificant improvements: Marked by the year that the first of these four featured women received her undergraduate STEM degree, in 1993 working women earned 43% of all college degrees and represented 31% of individuals with doctoral, science and engineering degrees that were hired in the field. Yet, disproportionately, they represented only 23% of the overall science and engineering field workforce. In 2017, working women earned 52% of all college degrees and accounted for 45% of those with doctoral degrees in science and engineering, but still represented only 29% of those working directly in engineering and science fields. Researchers have attributed this to complex factors in the science and engineering discipline that include gender discrimination, disparity in grant funding and opportunities, and inequity in scholarly manuscript reviewing (Ceci & Williams, 2011; Hoppe et al., 2019).

The common discussion surrounding these facts and possible solutions are not new, but our last point compels another question that is oftentimes not addressed in terms of implications and a discussion for possible solutions: Where do these college-educated STEM women go when they do not persist in the fields of science and engineering? How do they cope with those reported complex factors that deter them from building a career in their preferred area of study, and deny them of being who they are in terms of academic identity—a scientist or an engineer? Possible answers to these questions are outlined in this article by four women of color who provide personal narratives of coping and survival in their journey to realize their dreams of becoming scientists and engineers. Their STEM stories reveal accounts of stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995), imposter syndrome/ imposter phenomenon (Clance & Imes, 1978), and a "chilly climate" within a white male-dominated field (Sandler, 2009). They represent different geographical backgrounds, and were all educated in different types of universities for their undergraduate STEM degrees: A Research Institution (R1), a historically Black college and university (HBCU), a non-continental state institution and a foreign private institution. All four of them have master's degrees and two of them have pursued doctoral degrees. While the paths to their current careers are different, they shared a common journey from STEM practitioner to STEM educator. Each of them in their separate STEM struggle and decision to leave the direct STEM field, found ways to stay connected to who they are and what they loved

most—science and engineering. Today you will find them in higher education researching STEM identity and talent development, teaching undergraduates in natural science, mentoring K-12 instructional coaches as a STEM curriculum director, and teaching elementary students 21 century STEM skills. Sharing stories from different stages of their life, these are their STEM stories. While each person is not explicitly identified in her different story, the reader will recognize similar struggles that are commonplace for women of color no matter their geographical background, educational setting, and STEM major.

Early Signs of Imposter Syndrome in and Out of the Classroom

Reflecting on my own STEM talent development—while not conceptualized as such at that time—I now realize that my own STEM interest and academic motivation was unintentionally influenced early in my life as a result of the activities that my mother facilitated within the home. It was unintentional in that most of the home-based activities were not implemented with the goal to build STEM skills, but rather to compensate for inability to pay for extra-curricular activities, to keep me busy as an only child at the time, and creative ways to incorporate day-to-day chores while entertaining me as a child. Unintentional as it was, I spent my most memorable childhood moments sitting at the kitchen table with my mom and step-dad fixing puzzles, playing board games, solving logic puzzles, mathematically adapting recipes, and trying to understand diagrams from the many auto mechanics books owned by my step-dad. The kitchen table became my STEM playground where many hours of informal, culturally relevant learning and critical thinking experiences became the central theme of everyday activities. It was these experiences that largely influenced and fostered an intrinsic value, interest, and academic success in STEM. As a matter of fact, I had mastered the game of chess by the age of three and by the time I was a pre-teen, I could take a technical manual of any kind, make sense of its complicated diagrams, and effectively communicate instructions to anyone wanting to build something. Outside of the "protection" of guiding parents, my development as a STEM student was at best, socially adverse.

In the classic sense of the term, I experienced imposter syndrome in the classroom as early as high school, often being the only person of color and the youngest an accelerated, advanced mathematics and computer science curriculum. I didn't take the male-dominated auto-shop class nor did my female friends find studying technical manuals a "girlie" thing to do. The more advanced courses became, the less I would see students that I associated with socially or who looked like me. I started to wonder why the friends that I had the most in common with socially were not in these classes with me. Even though I continued to build on my STEM skills throughout my young adult life, I often found myself feeling as if I wasn't 'one of them.' For example, even though I considered myself good at "doing"

mathematics, I did not see myself 'being" a mathematician or computer scientist. On the flip side, I experienced imposter syndrome outside the class as well – I wasn't 'one of them' either. I later referred to this as "superman syndrome", having extraordinary talents but hiding them to fit in. In high school, I would even go so far as to hide the fact that I was in the most advanced "nerd" classes. I would often downplay my intelligence using humor. Based solely on these early experiences, I would proclaim that one consequence of imposter syndrome and stereotype threat for women of color is feeling as if they are living a double life, and not wholly true or belonging to either.

As I remember, I chose my undergraduate degree and the college that I attended based on a single conversation that my AP calculus teacher had with me. She (white female) told me that I should go into engineering because, as a Black female, it could be the "ticket out" of my small town in Alabama. When deciding where I would go to college, I chose the same R1, predominantly White Institution (PWI) that she attended. I knew nothing about engineering or college, but applied only to that school and entered with a declared major in engineering. As a first-generation college student, even new student orientation was intimidating. Again, I looked around at peers and doubted my abilities, marginalized my intelligence, and determined that I did not belong. Constantly, in every new phase or venture, I think that there was no way that I could accomplish what others have. In typical imposter syndrome fashion, I attributed my success to luck and my failures to not being equipped to succeed. So much so, that at the beginning of the first semester in college, I signed up for the military; it was the "backup" plan and previously, the only other option I had considered. After a dismal first semester, I left college. Interestingly enough, my ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) scores were so high that I was able to pursue one of the most highly classified and technical positions available for enlisted, female recruits – cryptologic technician collector (CTR), a component of the military intelligence program. I enjoyed my job in the military and was afforded an opportunity to return to college while fulfilling my military commitments through the Sea & Air Mariner (SAM) program. However, there were two times that I attempted to switch my military job. Once I inquired about an opportunity to work on a submarine. Another time, I attempted to transfer into an officer program within military intelligence. In both cases, I was met with gender-based limitations and stereotype threat. I remember sitting across three white males during my officer candidate interview and at one point listening to them debate about one inappropriately questioning my marital status and parent status. Similarly, during my senior engineering seminar, my professor advised me and the only other female in my cohort to not to wear a ring to interviews because, for females, it signaled potential maternity leave, family priorities, etc. Yet, for males, it took on a positive meaning of stability. I earned my bachelor's degree in electrical engineering technology (EET), and worked in the field for six years while serving in the military.

My initial plans were to go to graduate school for engineering. When speaking to a counselor at the same university, I was told that my transcript did not reflect a strong mathematical background. So, I returned home to attend a regional institution to take math courses to enhance my transcripts. For registration purposes, I pursued a master of science in education with a concentration in mathematics. I taught developmental mathematics and basic algebra courses for the mathematics department and worked as a substitute teacher. After substituting for the high school computer science class one week, I received very positive feedback from students and parents. This impressed school administration enough to ask me to apply for a permanent position as the computer science teacher. Before even finishing my master's degree, I transitioned into teaching with a provisional teaching license based on my STEM background and experiences.

My transition from STEM practitioner to STEM educator was not particularly planned or strategic; it came from the challenges and/or decisions not to persist in one area that led to other opportunities. Subsequently, I have integrated a STEM discipline at every level of my career and for each of my advanced degrees, submitting to the one thing I knew to be true—I am most fulfilled and engaged when the task is related to STEM. As a high school computer science, integrated technology, and mathematics teacher, I drew from my own STEM experiences to inform my teaching philosophy and practices. I recognized the importance of mentoring and guidance for these students through the STEM pipeline. Yet, even as I successfully built a career and fostered STEM identity and talent development for students that came from the same background as me, I still found myself struggling with the imposter syndrome. While pursuing my Ph.D. in educational psychology, I added quantitative research methods (QRM) as my minor study. Studying advanced statistics, more times than not, I was the only Black person in the class. I was one, among a scarce number of White students and dominated by Asian students and professors. Again, the stereotypes proliferated and I felt lost, confused, and out of place. Even after earning all A's in every QRM class, I must admit that I initially questioned the validity of those grades compared to my perceived skill set.

Imposter Syndrome still creeps in, as a junior faculty in higher education undergoing the tenure and promotion process, feeling the stress of publication requirements, and battling perceived isolation as an underrepresented professional in my department, college, university campus, and field of study. To me, it is much like an addiction that you deal with one day at a time with self-affirming talks -today I feel empowered; today I made a difference; today I am worthy; today I have something to offer; today I can do this. Serving and mentoring students, especially underrepresented students in STEM, have reciprocal benefits. There is empowerment in the process of helping others to at least strive for higher education. It gives me a sense of purpose and inspiration to continue my own pursuits.

STEM Identity Threatened by Implanted Imposter Syndrome

The earliest memory I have of my profound interest in science and math is second grade. My teacher, an African American woman, taught us our multiplication facts using flashcards that we turned into bracelets. We wore them with pride. However, in sixth grade, I remember standing too long at the chalkboard to work a long division problem, and having my confidence shattered in one instant as my teacher—also an African American woman—yelled and instructed me to "SIT DOWN!" She proclaimed that I'd never be able to do math. I believed *her*! That one moment instilled in me a fear of risk-taking. My intrigue and desire to master mathematics was thwarted with a paralysis induced by her words. I had internalized the identity (or lack thereof) that she had spoken into my life. Even as I encountered several memorable math teachers in later years, I harbored a mental block for math. My love for the questioning, wondering why things were, and my natural inquisitiveness were still burning to be satiated.

The courses I selected in high school were challenging, and I excelled—I even graduated in the top five percent of my graduating class. I didn't believe that I was one of the 'smart ones' who should choose math or science as a career choice, but something in me pushed me along that path anyway. During my senior year of high school, I had not decided on a college major, but I applied and was accepted into a summer engineering program for graduating seniors at one of the most renowned HBCU's in the southeastern part of the country. My sister was there as a sophomore majoring in electrical engineering at the time, so I thought I would go to at least spend time with her. I enjoyed the classes, and the people I met. Still, it was still intimidating for me to be in that program with so many others who had attended schools with a pre-determined focus and preparation in pre-engineering. Oftentimes, I felt like an imposter 'knowing' that I wasn't really good at math even though I had graduated high school ranked as number 11 out of more than 250 students and I had successfully earned high marks in all of the AP courses I had taken. I could visualize them as scientists and engineers, but I did not see the same in myself.

I proudly left the summer program with college credits on my high school transcript and excitement for my first full semester as a college student. Even though I was accepted, I was not going to attend that school. The financial strain on my parents to pay the high cost of attending an HBCU for my sister and me would have been too much. I accepted a full, presidential, academic scholarship offer from Lakeview State University (pseudonym), a different HBCU located in a more southern part of the country. Having never heard of LVSU and with no established support system in another state, I packed all the clothes (and my self-doubt) in the back of a Buick Regal for a journey with my parents across the country; it seemed like the longest trip of my life. I began a chemical engineering major influenced by my summer experience and love for science. I wanted to

study science, but I also wanted to help others. Engineering, as I saw it, didn't seem to do that directly so I changed my course of study to biology with a goal to enroll in pharmacy school after graduation. I knew of a lady from my church whose was a pharmacist—and she represented the epitome of helping others. She even helped me to obtain an internship as a pharmacy technician that I thoroughly enjoyed.

To pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in biology at LVSU, it was required to also minor in chemistry. Organic chemistry, genetics, and some of my upper level science classes almost broke me! The coursework was overwhelmingly challenging, and sometimes I considered changing my major to literature to feed my pastime passion—reading! I frequently studied with other natural science majors and engineering students to prepare for exams, tests, etc. In these study groups, I often wondered what my peers knew or had inside them that made the subject matter so much easier for them to grasp. Were they simply smarter? Did they have better study habits? Were they supposed to be there and perhaps I wasn't? I never shared my feelings of insecurity because everyone else seemed to have it together, and I didn't want to be "found out." Reflecting back on that time, I realize now that I was no less intelligent than my peers and attending a HBCU provided an environment to feel racially secure. Within four years, I graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Biology, and a minor in chemistry. I was the third person (and first generation at that time) in my family to graduate with a science or engineering degree—my sister earned her engineering degree two years prior and my one of my first cousins did as well at a different institution. I felt proud of my accomplishment.

After graduation, I immediately began working on my master's degree in chemistry at LVSU while I applied and studied for the PCAT (pharmacy college admissions test). I also worked as a substitute teacher to make ends meet. I enjoyed my work as a teacher—the lifelong desire to help others was satisfied! Consequently, I convinced myself that I would not pass the PCAT, and therefore would not be admitted into pharmacy school. The voices of self-doubt that I listened to and trusted since sixth grade told me I wasn't the pharmacist-type anyway. I decided, without any consultation or mentoring from anyone, I would commit to helping young people find their way toward a love of science instead. I became a science teacher and loved it! My experiences as science educator and school administrator have included middle school science teacher, chemistry teacher, high school science department chair, middle school assistant principal, elementary school principal, and master teacher and curriculum developer for a university-K12 partnership. I am currently the director of STEM curriculum for a fast-growing school district in the state of Texas and completing (ABD) my doctoral degree in curriculum and instruction

I took a path that moved me out of the direct STEM pipeline, but I have multiplied myself for the STEM field as a role model and mentor for others who needed me to show them that they are smart enough and good enough to pursue a

STEM career or whatever their hearts desired. My love of science, my ability to connect with kids, and my skill set to deliver the content in a manner that made every student feel as if they too are scientists gave me a unique opportunity to be the shoulders students like me could stand on as they pursued their STEM careers. My former students, many of whom are students of color, are pharmacists, doctors, lawyers, chemists, entrepreneurs and STEM educators. I find pride in my 22-year career as a STEM educator and advocate. I am also proud that I have indirectly had a hand in increasing the numbers of minorities in STEM. My heart overflows with joy knowing I helped them to bloom as scientists.

STEM Success Within a "Chilly" Educational Environment

I remember it like it was yesterday when my sixth-grade teacher called me to the front of the classroom for one of her culturally accepted and stern, public assessments of student progress. As I walked towards her, she began to report, "You got more than thirty-six wrong on the math homework. For every wrong answer, I am going to beat you." She pulled out her leather belt, and hit me in the palm of my hand thirty-six times. I returned to my seat crying and embarrassed. She added, "You will never learn; you are worthless; you will never make it to high school." To hear those words from a person who is revered as a role model can damage a child's self-esteem. To offer motivation in the form of punishment and embarrassment should be illegal. However, that wasn't the case at Plainville Primary (pseudonym) and to the contrary, in that moment during my long walk of shame back to my seat, I pledged that nothing would hold me back from achieving my goals. As a matter of fact, this marked the beginning of an audacious quest in which I decided I would graduate high school and pursue a college degree.

I completed elementary school and attended a vocational, junior high school for three years. During the last year of junior high, my mom informed me she could not pay for me to attend a tuition-based high school (versus free trade-based) or for me to take the Caribbean Exam Council (CXC) college entrance exams. At that point I realized that I needed to reunite with my father, who lived on the opposite side of the island in Jamaica, and was more than able to pay for a college preparatory high school and the CXC exams. With transportation paid by a church member, I left and went to live with my dad. He enrolled me in one of the most prestigious, catholic high schools on the island. Accounting was predetermined for me as a major study by my high school counselor, who perceived it as most useful and practical for a female student. I wanted so badly to be a science major, but I was too afraid to advocate for myself or sign up for the classes I needed. Therefore, my love for science was placed on the back burner.

In my last year of high school, I was accepted to nearby Universal Caribbean College (pseudonym) as an accounting major. Determined to attend college by any means, I packed my belongings and moved immediately in the dorms on cam-

pus. On the last day of new student orientation, students had to stand in a long line to pay for classes or make payment arrangements. Unfortunately, the student loan that I expected to receive was not awarded. I had no money. I had two options: I could pack up and return home or stay there and delay one semester of studies to work full-time on campus as a janitor and cafeteria worker. I chose the latter to earn money to pay for classes. I worked on average between 90 to 100 hours per week for an entire semester. I started my college career as an accounting major the very next semester. I was never happy with my decision to study accounting, but I finished an associate degree anyway. Discouraged by my friends and with no support from my family, I began to apply for schools in the United States. I was accepted to one university, but could not raise enough money to attend, so I took two years off and traveled to work with different programs. The same university eventually offered me a scholarship, and I eagerly relocated to the northern part of Texas to continue my studies at a private, religion-based institution. I was starting over, as a transfer-international student, far away from the stereotypes of what I was supposed to be. I had learned to advocate for myself. I added biology as my major.

During my first semester as a student and not a stranger to hard work, I enrolled in seven classes: Introduction to Chemistry, Anatomy and Physiology, Introduction to Probability/Statistics, Psychology, Medical Terminology, Human Growth & Development and Introduction to Sociology. However, good work ethic wasn't enough. I did not have sufficient foundation in science and that semester was extremely difficult to say the least. Most of the time it seemed as if I was holding on to dear life just to finish one week of assignments then to suffer on to the next. Everything was new except for the harsh educational climate I had similarly endured at home. I had several experiences and interactions with my all White, male professors that made me I question, "Why am I doing this? Is it just to prove a point? Did I really love science as much I remembered or was it because I was told that I could not do it"? My chemistry professor suggested that it would be best for me to return to Jamaica. The anatomy professor shared his belief that God had something different in mind for me, and declared it was not anatomy or physiology. The statistics professor informed me, during midterms, that having a C on my transcript will hurt me in the future; it was only midterm and there were two more exams and the final that I would have to take. After much persuasion, I dropped the statistics course. I ended with marginal grades in the others. After just one semester, my future looked dim and hopeless. Scholarship funding ran out; I didn't really understand the total cost of attendance nor did I realize that the scholarship offered would not be enough to cover two years of expenses. I was unable to pay for the second semester, yet hope came from an unlikely source. At the university, there was one Black, female professor in the nursing department. Ironically, I had met her briefly during my travels to Mexico. Unbeknownst to each other, she had applied to teach there around the same time I had received my scholarship offer. This professor became my refuge when she invited me to

live with her for the remainder of my time there. She provided food, shelter, encouragement, and the mentorship that I needed. To pay for tuition and books, I earned other scholarships, worked on campus, and cleaned houses off campus. After 2 ½ years of intense studying, I earned a Bachelor of Science degree with a concentration in Biology and Business. I contribute a major part of my success to that one Black, female professor; she became my family away from home. Her support neutralized the chilly climate of the university as a whole. She modeled for me what mentoring and advocating for students is all about.

After undergraduate school, I decided to move to New York City where I worked as an educational coordinator. While there, I planned to pursue graduate studies in epidemiology, but was unable to find a program that was flexible toward full-time working students. I opted to pursue a Master of Science in Education; I figured, at least, it would help me to do my current job even better. I completed my master's degree, but was still haunted by the desire to work in a "pure" science field. I finally returned to Texas to pursue a second graduate degree in biology at a public, regional institution. During the course of my latest studies, my life was met with one major challenge after another. At the very start, there was a delay in processing my paperwork as an international student, which jeopardized my ability to receive in-state tuition and to work on campus. I had just enough money to enroll in first semester classes. I spent an entire semester with little money for rent or food; I made a deal with an apartment complex for living arrangements. A friend donated money for food. In order to secure a position as a graduate lab assistant, I worked there the first semester without pay as Homeland Security reinstated my status as an international student.

I wanted to give up and go home. Again, I asked myself, "What am I doing here"? I was at a point of utmost despair when I met a fellow Jamaican student who had recently finished her graduate studies in biochemistry. She became my 'big sister,' my mentor and my adviser. She reinforced my determined spirit to keep fighting. Then as sudden as she came into my life, she left—she passed away with breast cancer. Now deciding to give up, I didn't enroll next semester. When I eventually returned to school, I took a course with one of my first female professors. Her influence and positive impact gave me strength to continue my course of study. It was during the last year of my studies I encountered *another* chance meeting with a current doctoral student in a neighboring city; she told me about a new Black female professor on campus that had impacted her life. Accepting these 'chance' meeting as Divine intervention, I sought this professor out and realized we shared a similar background in STEM. I volunteered as much as I could with her work even though she was in a different program at the university; she mentored me in STEM education research and service learning. In December 2016, I graduated with a Master of Science in Biology. My research focus, and thesis, was *Students' Attitudes toward Science: How Gender Differences Influence Students' Attitudes in Secondary Classrooms with Resident Scientists.*

In my journey, however difficult and scarce of mentors within my field of study, I was persistent and charged feverishly forward in my STEM path—a path that was not straight by any means. I endured and managed to grow beyond the difficult moments, inspired by my desire to be in a position to give back and have a great impact on others. For every female of color whose white, male professors tell her, explicitly or implicitly, that science is not for her, I will be there as an example to show and guide her otherwise. Currently, I am a biology instructor at a community college in western part of Texas, and have started to focus my attention to create a STEM Summer Camp for school-aged girls in Jamaica. Energized by my current path, I will stay engaged in STEM by combining academic excellence and research in science education. My quest is to ultimately earn a Ph.D., contributing to research in science education and paying forward the opportunities that were given to me.

Despite Stereotype Threat:
Once an Engineer Always an Engineer

As a young girl, I wanted to be an astronaut. I also wanted to be a scientist and do experiments in a lab. Those dreams came from watching TV. Back then my family's financial situation was challenging to say the least, thus television became my window to the world. One of my favorite activities was watching the space shuttle launches with my grandmother. She was the one who planted the seed for higher education before I even started school, partly because it had been her own unrealized dream. Furthermore, she was the most supportive person throughout my educational career. She was passionate about learning and passed this on to me.

While in elementary school, I signed up for as many extracurricular activities as I could. But even so, I wanted more out of school. Science was almost absent from the curriculum. To satisfy my longing I would experiment at home with anything I could get my hands on. In fact, most of my enduring memories from my childhood involved me hanging around my grandmother's sewing shop playing with her materials and tools. I received my first sewing machine when I was in elementary school. My first design was a clown dress for my doll; I drew it, cut it, sewed it and donned it on my doll. This was huge! It was also my first *real* mathematics lesson. Suddenly I had a conceptual understanding of measurement.

For middle school, I wanted to attend a math and science magnet school. However, the school did not provide transportation and my family's daily schedule was already complicated enough with 4 children attending 4 different schools. Without access to a quality STEM based curriculum, my interests and attitudes toward school changed. By the time, I reached the 10th grade I had lost my motivation to participate in extracurricular activities and no longer aspired to become an astronaut or scientist. Despite this, I still excelled in math and science; it came so natural to me. Then, for my junior year I enrolled in a new school. The new

school's principal placed me in advanced mathematics because I had made A's in geometry. I did not know what this meant until I showed up to class the next day—it was pre-calculus. My classmates seemed to know the material very well while I had no clue of what was going on; I was lost. To make matters worse, I felt like a complete outsider. As a result, and for the first time in my life, I received a failing grade on a test. However, the teacher's encouragement incentivized me to work harder and consequently my grades began improving. What appeared to be a curse turned out to be the key to my future; I was forced to finally learn how to study to succeed in those advanced classes that challenged me. I gained transferrable skills and discipline that proved to be the foundation for my journey ahead.

Then time came to apply for college. I was not sure about what to pursue or where to start. I felt inclined towards engineering, but I still questioned my abilities as a result of my academic struggles at this new school. In addition, being a first-generation college student, I had to learn to navigate the entire collegiate system by myself. For instance, due to a few mistakes I made during my application process to a larger institution, I missed the first round of admissions evaluations. So, I opted for a smaller, 2-year vocational school that was within walking distance from home. I chose to pursue natural science because it was the only articulated transfer program offered whereby credits could be used toward a bachelor degree. In the beginning, I thrived and enjoyed all my classes. That was until I had to dissect an animal. I just could not bring myself to do it. When I expressed this to my biology professor, who had offered me an internship, he told me that I would get used to it. I knew I would not and that it would be imperative to reconsider my options. My accomplishments in the natural science program, however, made me feel optimistic about engineering school. With the help and encouragement of a counselor, I transferred as soon as I was done with the basic requirements. I was accepted to begin the following fall at the College of Engineering at the most prestigious universities in Puerto Rico. I was proud. I felt empowered.

The time I spent in engineering school was filled with constant challenges. It took me five years instead of the expected three to finish my undergraduate degree as a transfer student even though I transferred with an equivalent to two years of course credits. First, it was difficult to fit in not only because I was pursuing a major dominated by males but also because of my socioeconomic status. People in my demographic group—low SES, females—would often drop out. On top of that, I did not have all the background knowledge I needed. The K-12 schools I attended did not have STEM programs and my focus at the two-year school was natural science. In contrast, most of my peers had attended very prestigious or specialized K-12 schools and started out at the 4-year university. To my advantage, by then I had learned to look for help. I began seeing a counselor on a regular basis and eventually developed a support network with other students with similar backgrounds. Since these students were first-generation college students as well, we shared some of the same difficulties and helped each other figuring out solutions.

I finished college with an undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering with plans to work in engineering design. Unfortunately, the opportunities in this career field were limited. In addition, my family members insisted that, for a woman, it was better to work for the local government. That's what I did. Yet, I found myself surrounded by unmotivated people waiting for retirement. I despised my job. With hopes of finding opportunities to grow, I ventured into construction. As warned at the time, women in this career field were not taken seriously. To gain respect I had to assume a hostile attitude to assimilate into that environment. A year later, unhappy and dissatisfied, I was back on the job hunt. I finally landed an interview at an engineering design firm. However, I was not hired. The manager explained that since he would have to train me like an entry-level employee, he could not match my present salary. He went on to state that even if I accepted the much lower salary, he would still be reluctant to hire me because he did not think I could manage long with an anticipated income lower than living wage. Frustrated, I turned to the pharmaceutical industry. There, I was basically exploited as a secretary, tasked with processing massive amounts of documents every day for long hours. None of this related to any of the reasons I went to engineering school. On occasion, I would find ways to utilize my technical skills by extracting and offering data using software. If I was lucky, I would analyze and generate reports using self-determined algorithms. I questioned if I would ever land my dream job to become an engineer.

After six years of going in circles, I needed a break. I relocated to the continental US and became a substitute teacher while I thought things through. During this time, I worked mostly with children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Soon I realized that there was a lot in common between these children and me. Little had changed since I was a young girl. The chances for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds with inclinations towards STEM to develop their abilities are limited and these chances decrease even more when students are English language learners (ELLs). Aware of the possible setbacks they would encounter and the importance of having opportunities to develop their skills, I thought I could make a difference if I served as a teacher for at least a few years. I earned my certification to teach. While working at the elementary school level I met countless students with a tremendous disposition for STEM. In fact, one year I had a whole class of students that would rather miss recess than miss science. Being able to expand their world of possibilities made me feel accomplished. Becoming an advocate and improving my teaching skills for their sakes were of utmost importance. To that end, after six years teaching, I went back to school to pursue a Master of Arts degree in bilingual/bicultural education. And while that journey was not an easy one for me, I graduated in December of 2016. In the upcoming years, I plan to continue advancing my career by pursuing a doctorate degree. I do not question myself anymore about whether or not I will ever find my dream job. I am an engineer by training and I am also a STEM educator. As long

as I am able to inspire and help students realize their true potential I will be on the right path.

Understanding the Cultivation
of Stereotype Threat and Imposter Syndrome

As a common theme emerged from the stories of these four women, the worry of finding one's fit and place in this world is often magnified by internalized race-based and gender-based stereotype threat as well as self-doubt in one's own ability. As a human factor in the pursuit of scholarship, eliminating stereotype threat and imposter syndrome is an impossible task. What we can do is reduce the consequences related to such phenomenon (Garden, 2009). To do that we must first understand how the phenomenon presents itself and is cultivated.

The journey of these four women of color, and the many commonplace stories of others like them that they have witnessed substantiate a critical truth: marginalized and underrepresented students' development through the STEM pipeline is centered on race and gender, and is positively or negatively impacted by [un]intentional and [in]formal actions of others. Their stories provide an additional framework by which to inclusively address race and gender diversity within that STEM pipeline. The lived experiences of these four women of color revealed "leaks" throughout the STEM pipeline from the home to school to the workforce. Collectively cogitated, what crystalizes is a reconciliation of five major presumptions: (1) without a sense of agency, cultural discontinuity is at the forefront of an almost pre-destined journey for women of color in STEM, (2) STEM talent will initially surface and is influenced by the values and circumstances within the home and community, (3) a disconnect between the manifestation of these talents and the appreciation for them within formal educational settings play a role in the early inception of imposter syndrome in women of color, (4) sometimes, that development is further fermented by a culture-blind curriculum and/or inadequately trained or unresponsive educators, and (5) With proper mentoring, STEM success can be achieved even in the chilliest of educational and male-dominated work environments.

Reducing the Consequences
of Stereotype Threat and Imposter Syndrome

Even more promising, the collective stories of these four women of color reveal that if STEM is a major part of their identity, it will remain as much a part of them as their primary, race and gender identity no matter the path in which their journey may take them. It is in the culturally responsive and progressive development of their STEM identities that the consequences of stereotype threat and imposter syndrome can be reduced.

STEM Identity Development

Collins (2018) contended that "given that a student's cultural milieu and interactions with the academic STEM environment may differ based on an individual's race or ethnicity, it is important to examine student STEM identity and talent development through a lens that incorporates race and ethnicity" (p.146). She further noted that "the development of the students' STEM identity is the result of reciprocal interactions among various psychological factors, individual behaviors, and the outside environment" (p.146). Confirmed by Vygotsky's social development theory of cognitive development, we know that individuals will mimic and internalize the demonstrated ideas, values, strategies, and actions of those closest to them, which includes family members, teachers, peers, and event-technology (TV, computers, etc.). As such, these influencers are considered MKO's (More Knowledgeable Others), whereby a learner perceives better understanding or higher ability level (Vygotsky, 1987) in STEM through them. Confronting color-blind approaches to talent development, Collins posited that Black students' persistence throughout the STEM pipeline and across the lifespan is character-

Figure 1
Contextual Model for Black Student STEM Identity
Note. STEM = science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
Source: Collins (2018). Reprinted with permission.
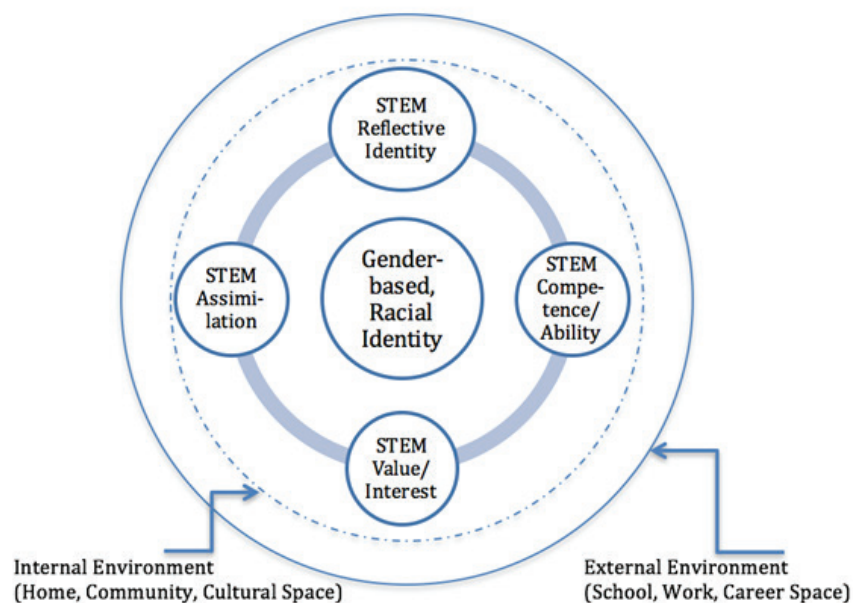
ized by "a cyclic attitude toward one's STEM self-concept, sense of belonging in STEM fields of study or discipline, and the perception of one's own STEM cognitive ability" (p.160). Supported by CLIC (Content Learning and Identity Construction) theoretical framework (Varelas et al., 2013), Figure 1 illustrates the contextual model for Black Student STEM Identity (BSSI; Collins, 2018).

According to the model, there are four basic questions that Black students internalize. The affirmative answers to these questions are interconnected in ways that foster a STEM identity that reduces the consequences of stereotype threat and imposter syndrome. The first of these, "Do I belong in a STEM field?", is affirmed by reflective identity. The other three questions are related to perceived possibility for success. Black students will constantly question their ability to learn STEM content in the context of its utility (value/ interest) within their environment. And due to the socialized nature of race and gender, they will also evaluate their engagement (assimilation) in relation to the cultural practices of the STEM field (i.e., disciplinary processes, language, discourse, and norms). As students become more central members of a disciplinary community and engage in its cultural practices, changes in identity and knowledge as positionality occur (Varelas et al., 2013) and the cycle continues.

More so for Black females, who are not typically socialized and raised to be scientists and engineers, it is important to nuance the opportunities and experiences for a positive STEM self-concept (Collins et al., 2019). A more comprehensive approach is necessary to address the cognitive and social factors that influence STEM retention and persistence (Rodriguez et al., 2018). Proactive steps to bridge gaps between college and the STEM workforce are critical, including the psychosocial support needed for Black females prior to even enrolling into college (Ford et al., 2018). One effective way to do that is through mentoring.

STEM Mentoring

The contexts and benefits of mentoring are well documented within the literature (Kochan and Pascarelli, 2003; McKensey, 2016). Culturally responsive STEM mentoring programs are designed to fortify and reinforce the STEM pipeline for all students, especially for underrepresented students. At the post-secondary level, universities are in a unique position to offer mentoring across the life span in collaboration with secondary education and community partnerships. One such program, Mentoring Matters (Collins, 2017a), serves as an example for effectively addressing stereotype threat, imposter syndrome, and "chilly environment."

These four women of color collaborated to facilitate a pilot study,[1] to uncover effective strategies to positively affect STEM retention & persistence in CLD (culturally and linguistically different) students. This pilot study (n = 27) was conducted as part of a service-learning project within a graduate-level mentoring course. Informed by CLIC theoretical framework and Collins' (2018) BSSI

model, and utilizing a vertical mentoring approach, the professor of the course and a community partner (research mentors) mentored and coached three doctoral students and two recent master-level graduates, as project facilitators (project mentor-mentees), in the design of three research-based STEM projects: STEM Research, STEM G.I.R.L.S. (Girls integrating research and learning in service), and STEM Leadership.

Under the guidance of these project facilitators, ten master-level graduate students (graduate mentors) who were enrolled in the mentoring course were divided into three mentoring teams to implement the activities for the STEM projects. Select undergraduate students (mentees) who self-identified as underrepresented (Black, Hispanic/ Latino, and female) students in STEM signed up as participants for one of the three STEM projects.

While the components of vertical mentoring practices are not novel, put together, the program's organization forms an innovative hybrid model (Keller & Pryce, 2010; Welch at al., 2012) for collaboration that offers culturally responsive benefits associated with content-based learning communities (Kurepa, 2012), a nested mentoring structure (Fouche & Lunt, 2016), and co-mentoring principles (Clarke, 2004). Eliminating the shortcomings of a 'one size fits all approach' to mentoring (Gratton and Truss, 2003) even within a single program, the use

Figure 2
Program Organization and Vertical Mentoring Approach for Mentoring Matters Program
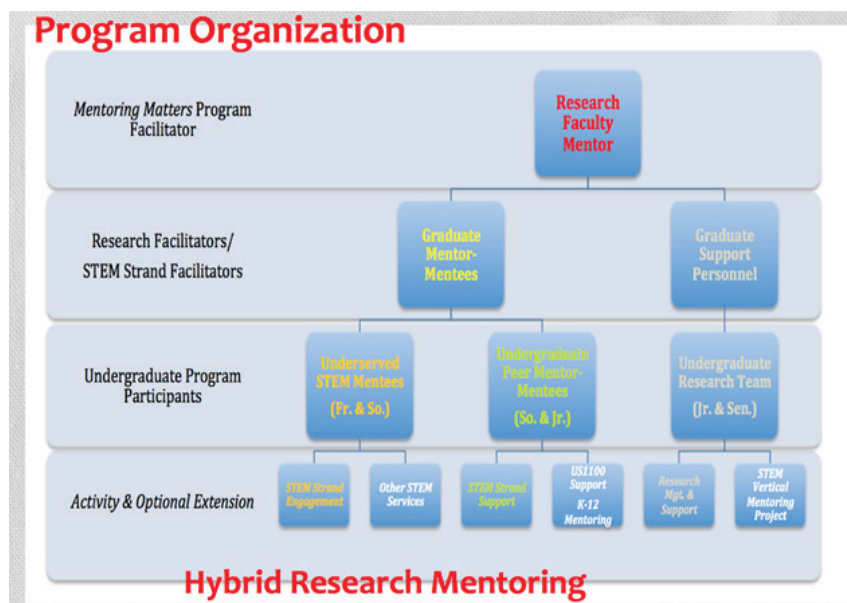
of a vertical approach that was dynamic (Fang & Van Viliet, 2006), educationally multi-leveled (Livesay & Rogge, 2006), and interdisciplinary (Olivero, 2014) proved to be very effective. It employed all three elements of Vygotsky's theory— social interaction, MKO, zone of proximal development (Murphy et al., 2015) in the cognitive and social development of STEM students. It offered a sustainable way (Nagchaudhuri et al., 2004) to also retain junior faculty in higher education (Clarke, 2004) as students continued to advance to new levels within the mentoring process throughout their collegiate career.

Preliminary findings (Collins, 2017b) from post-program surveys, online discussions, and mentor journals for the Mentoring Matters study revealed that stereotype threat and imposter syndrome were not a concern for any of the participants, including the four women of color featured in this article, while they were engaged in the project over the course of the semester. The project mentors and graduate mentors found that their confidence and skill set for culturally responsive mentoring increased over the course of the semester. Additional analysis and research are warranted to tease out specific activities that reduced the consequences of stereotype threat and imposter syndrome.

Implications for All STEM Stakeholders

Whether as supervisors, mentors or advocates, it is the ethical responsibility of researchers, professors, practitioners, and educators to model effective and appropriate development of the STEM interests and talents that will positively cultivate and nurture STEM identity, especially for our underrepresented and underserved students in STEM. These four women of color were all drawn to shield other marginalized students from the issues they faced in the STEM environment. Each of them has become a STEM educator and/or researcher committed to training the next generation of STEM practitioners. They have dedicated much of their adult life advocating for equity and access in STEM for students that come from similar backgrounds. They offer a voice to address cultural discontinuity, value depreciation of STEM talent, culture-blind curriculum, unresponsive educators, and male-dominated environments. Their responsive practices inform new perspectives in providing appropriate support and finding ways to reduce/eliminate the effects of stereotype threat and imposter syndrome at all levels of the STEM pipeline.

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Collective Creativity
Pedagogies of Collective Authorship in a Hollywood Writers' Room and Its Implications for the Teaching of Writing

Joseph D. Sweet & David Lee Carlson

Abstract

In this article, we conduct a case study of collaborative authorship that takes place in the writing of the Amazon Prime series, *Transparent*. To do this, we rely on extensive interviews with three of the show's writers, and one editor to investigate what can be learned by tracing the collaborative efforts that begin in the writers' room and extend through every aspect of the show's production. This inquiry intends to open possibilities for the ways in which collaborative authorship practices of Hollywood writers' rooms and television production can inform writing pedagogy, and professional writing practices, particularly for collaborative, creative writing. Ultimately, the authors suggest practices currently being enacted by these professional writers that school communities, teachers of writing, and professional writing groups can adopt.

Keywords: collaborative writing, collaborative authorship, qualitative research methods, writing pedagogy, *Transparent*, television writing, writing methods

Introduction

Many professional writing contexts require that authors write collaboratively,

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and educators in higher education demand that their students engage in collaborative authorship. Likewise, demands of the academy encourage collaboration among scholars (Ede & Lunsford, 1990). However, collaborative authorship goes largely untaught in secondary school and remains a topic ripe for further research (Yim et al., 2014). Surely, many reasons exist for why collaborative authorship remains largely neglected in secondary ELA curriculum, but an increase in testing demands continues to soak up considerable teaching time in secondary schools. Though current professional and academic circumstances require collaborative writing (Ede & Lunsford, 1990), forty-two states recently implemented the "college and career ready" Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that include zero standards concerning collaborative authorship. In fact, only one writing standard mentions collaboration and it does so in the context of scaffolding writing activities through peer review. Collaborative authorship is distinct from collaborative writing. In writing research collaborative writing often includes writing activities such as pre-writing, editing, revising, etc, (Christensen, 2014; Graham, McKeown, Kiuhara, & Harris, 2012; Graham & Perrin, 2007; Wilcox, Jeffrey, & Gardner-Bixler, 2015), but excludes two or more people collectively authoring a text. We use the term "collaborative authorship" to indicate two or more people writing a common text with little interest in determining authorship rank (i.e., first author, second author). Collaborative authorship presumes writers engage in collaborative writing activities. To date, the CCSS do not require collaborative authorship at all. While school standards and their corresponding high-stakes tests emphasize individually assessing a learner, the real demands of professional and academic life beyond secondary school require people to write collaboratively.

Furthermore, and as will be explained in greater detail below, writing scholars have given scant attention to the process writers undergo when authoring collaboratively (Yim, et al., 2014). Owing to the professional demands for collaborative writing, the lack of scholarship in this area, and the pushing aside of collaboration in secondary school standards, this study offers unique insights into the collaborative writing processes that occur in a Hollywood writers' room. These insights may offer strategies that writing educators can use to engage more meaningfully and authentically in collaborative authorship.

To investigate the possibilities of collaborative authorship in writing pedagogy, this paper conducts expert interviews (Flick 2012) with three writers and the head editor of the popular Amazon prime show, *Transparent.*[1] Our interest in this research stemmed from our desire to understand both how the show educated the public about the lives of trans*[2] people (Carlson & Sweet, 2019; Sweet & Carlson 2017, 2019) and how the creative team enacted their writing process. The interviews uncovered important revelations about collaborative authorship, which we believe can contribute to the existing scholarship in this area. Additionally, we believe this research offers alternative approaches to the complex relationships between various aspects of writing. So much of the scholarship on writing

seeks to soften or sanitize writing practices in schools while our paper seeks to understand how writing happens in the messiness of a production of a televisions series that also seeks to inform the public about a marginalized and oppressed group of people. Beyond the public pedagogical components of this paper (see Sweet & Carlson, 2019), this article considers the radical contextualization of a writers' room in the television series *Transparent* to explore different approaches to understanding the elusive and complex writing practices. The revelations discussed below only emerged during the data collection process. Though *Transparent* offers great potential for teaching and learning about trans* subjectivities (Carlson & Sweet, 2019; Sweet & Carlson, 2017, 2019), the research presented in this article seeks to open possibilities for collaborative authorship practices of Hollywood writers' rooms and television production and how these practices translate to writing pedagogy and professional writing. Thus, we focus primarily on the collaborative process in the writing of the show. In doing this, we highlight the rather chaotic aspects of the sayable and knowable of writing practices and consider their implications for collaborative authorship.

This article neither addresses the possibilities for improving student academic achievement through collaborative authorship nor through collaborative writing. Although correlations between collaboration and higher test scores may exist, our research design does not lend itself to such conclusions. That said, the results presented here do offer novel and valuable insights about the complex ways of doing collaborative authorship that may carry many benefits and may be applicable to pedagogies of writing. Nonetheless, we cannot conclude whether or not this will lead to improved academic test scores or to greater fluency with writing generally.

Instead, we examine the real-world context of writing for television and investigate its potential for collaborative authorship in writing pedagogy; *Transparent*'s executive producer, Jill Soloway, created a nurturing writers' room that we believe offers new possibilities for teaching and enacting writing. In order to address the possibilities therein, the inquiry relies on the following research questions:

> What can collaborative authorship processes taking place in a television writers' room teach scholars about the chaotic aspects of the writing process?

> What might scholars learn about collaborative authorship from a writer's room of a popular television series?

The article attempts to answer these questions by examining the collective experiences of authors in the writers' room and putting these experiences into conversation with existing discussions already taking place in writing research, particularly scholarship that investigates collaborative writing activities. To do this, we organize the paper in the following way: first, we detail the existing research on collaborative writing and provide an overview of scholarship investigating writers' rooms as sites of inquiry. We focus on collaborative writing literature because it is the closest area of scholarship to collaborative authorship. As noted

above, very little research has been conducted on collaborative authorship. Thus, grounding our work in the area of collaborative writing is necessary to establish the importance of our research. Then, we outline the methods of data collection and analysis. We follow the methods with a comprehensive discussion of *Transparent*'s writing practices and their implications for writing pedagogy, including outlining specific strategies educators can appropriate. We finally conclude with a discussion of the transformative potential that high quality writing carries for empowering writers to create change.

Collaborative Writing

Even though contemporary demands of academic and professional life require collaboration among authors (Ede & Lunsford, 1990), school practices tend to ignore collaborative authorship (CCSS, Yim et al., 2014), and teachers tend to favor individual writing over collaborative writing activities (Wilcox et al, 2015). Collaborative writing emerges from a rather long history in the teaching of writing that encourages students to lean on one another's writing or writing groups to aid the writer in the writing process (Atwell, 2014; Elbow, 1998; Murray, 2009). Collaborative authorship, on the other hand, credits two or more people authoring one product.

It is noteworthy that some of the scholarship in cinema studies and pop culture acknowledges that television writing holds a unique place in Hollywood specifically because of its collaborative practices (Ross, 2011). Other scholars offer that television writing presents an exception because it is a "negotiated activity" where groups of writers collectively create story through recurring characters (Nicholas-Pethick, p. 156, 2011). Television, then, offers a special opportunity for educators to learn about collaborative practices that may be beneficial to teachers and school communities because of its "negotiated" aspect. Thus, the television writers' room is a particular genre that relies heavily on collaborative writing activities and produces a collaboratively-authored product. To initially investigate the research regarding educational possibilities of the writers' room, we conducted a search on ERIC for academic articles that infused educational research with the collaborative writing processes of television writers' rooms, which produced zero pertinent studies.

Scholars in the fields of cinema studies and pop culture, however, have investigated the television writers' room as a site of inquiry (Henderson, 2011; Heuman, 2016, 2017: Phelan & Osellame, 2012; Redvall, 2014; Ross, 2011, to name a few) but none that we could find specifically investigates how these practices of collaboration may impact the teaching of writing. In his aptly titled piece, "What Happens in the Writers' Room Stays in the Writers Room: Professional Authority in *Lyle v. Warner Brothers*," Heuman (2016) emphasizes the competitive nature of the room and the gendered politicking that takes place. Heuman (2017) asserts

that television producers often view writers as workhorses and emphasize productivity over humanness. Though he is careful to point out that there is not "some monolithic subordination of writers" (p. 33), he posits that television production includes infrastructures that subordinate writers' humanity and creativity. Likewise, Henderson (2011) writes specifically about issues of gender and race in the writers' room, concluding that the writers' room practices marginalize co-workers based on gender, race, and socioeconomic status. However, unlike most Hollywood writers' rooms, the production of *Transparent* is a highly nurturing environment where these writers take time to cultivate a warm and open writing process that mitigates competition. (N. Harpster, personal communication, October 14, 2016, November 16, 2015; Soloway, 2015). Thus, our investigation into the *Transparent* writers' room offers a rather unique approach to collaborative authorship and offers insights into the writing process.

Though we could find no studies that investigate the possibilities that writers' rooms may have for educational practices (e.g., secondary English classrooms, first-year writing courses), there exists a great deal of educational scholarship on collaborative writing activities in schools. Scholars in the field of education may employ collaborative writing practices in their classrooms, but they do not necessarily glean these practices from cinema studies or popular culture studies. Instead, these studies reveal a clear relationship between peer collaboration in writing activities and improved writing that is positive and strong (Godbee, 2012; Graham et al., 2012; Graham & Perrin, 2007; Loretto et al., 2016; Wilcox et al., 2015; Yim et al., 2014). Graham and Perrin (2007) assert that their investigations "of collaborative writing processes . . . show that collaborative arrangements in which students help each other with one or more aspects of their writing have a strong and positive impact on quality" (p. 16). In their discussion of independent writing, Wilcox, et al. (2015) affirm that, "peer collaboration and feedback in writing activities . . . are correlated with better writing performance" (p. 18). Importantly, they also assert that a disconnect exists between evidence-based practices regarding cooperative writing activities, and high-stakes tests that favor individual writing. They point out that favoring independent writing may be a disservice to those writers whom scholars have shown will benefit from collaborative writing activities. Specifically, educators may serve their young writers better by asking them to engage in cooperative writing rather than the current emphasis on individual composition.

Furthermore, in their study of collaborative writing across four Colorado middle schools, Yim et al.'s (2014) piece reinforces the existing scholarly literature regarding the impact of collaborative writing activities. However, they implore schools to include more opportunities for students to engage in collaborative authorship: "Given the ever-increasing demands for collaborative writing in professional and academic contexts broader forms of collaborative authorship, in which multiple authors share various forms of responsibility and contributions . . . should be en-

couraged by teachers" (p. 252). Further, they observed "little true co-authorship; most collaboration consisted of a main single author receiving and responding to feedback from others" (p. 252). While this form is the most commonly enacted in school and the only one included in CCSS, Noël and Robert (2004) indicated that this kind of writing, though collaborative, is the simplest form of collaboration. Moreover, the real world, or in other contexts outside of the classroom, requires working in a community to compose one common text. Although writing curriculum rarely fosters collaborative writing or collaborative authorship, academic success and writing in various contexts necessitates that writing pedagogy in educational contexts (broadly defined) consider a change in their approaches to teaching writing. Our inquiry begins to bridge the gap between collaborative authorship in popular culture and the writing classroom.

Thus, we offer this study to enhance the existing research on professional writing practices, their implications for writing pedagogy, and writing collaboration. While this section situates the study in the existing literature in collaborative writing and makes a case for its inclusion, the following section describes the methods of data collection and analysis.

Methods

The data for this project consist of a series of semi-structured expert interviews (Flick, 2014) with four members of *Transparent*'s creative team. Among those on the creative team, we interviewed three staff writers and one lead editor. Each interview required between one and two hours. Joe also conducted one, one-hour, follow-up interview with one of the writers (Noah Harpster) to investigate specifically the collaborative practices taking place in the writers' room, on the set, and in post-production (for complete interview protocols, see appendices A and B). The authors critically designed the interview protocols to address a variety of topics pertinent to the research, including sexual and gender fluidity, masculinities, character development, transparency, and the writing process. We designed the writing protocol to include inquiry about the creative writing processes to better understand how the writing process transformed from the initial concept for a show to the completed script. The results from the interviews presented here focus exclusively on the collaborative authoring aspects of the show's production.

Of those we interviewed, we chose three writers who together comprise very diverse writing experiences and personal backgrounds. We believe that each provides unique insights into the collaborative practices taking place in the writers' room. Together, their expertise grounds the study and provides it methodological trustworthiness.

All of the interviews were professionally transcribed, and we sent the participants copies of their transcribed interviews and allowed them to make changes. Two participants made minor changes to their transcribed interviews. We read

through the data in their entirety twice before we proceeded to memo the data during the third reading (Saldaña, 2015). After memoing the data with initial impressions and ideas, we began to see some major themes emerge and formed initial categories of larger thoughts collected in the entire data-set (Flick, 2014; Saldaña, 2015). After this, we developed an emergent list of preliminary categories by reviewing and coding the transcripts. We noticed that writing and collaborative writing emerge as an important aspect of the data. We disaggregated the sections of the data that dealt with specific aspects related to composition, such as "writing," "collaboration," "editing," "writing process," and "revising" to name a few. From this set of disaggregated data, in vivo codes (Saldaña, 2015) began to emerge as emblematic of these particular chunks of data (see results below). Finally, we met to discuss and merge the categories that we created and shortly thereafter distilled the data into four in-vivo codes, which is detailed in the following sections. In the spirit of collaboration and transparency, we member-checked the codes by emailing them to the participants (Flick, 2014). We felt this a necessary step to ensure the trustworthiness of the codes and to collaborate with these professional writers. Thus, we corresponded with the participants throughout the data analysis process to ensure the trustworthiness of both the data and the analysis of the data. The section below presents the four in-vivo codes and discusses their implications for writing pedagogy.

Results

The major codes that emerged from our analysis include: safe writing culture and corresponding emotional benefits; disciplined schedule and protocols; connection to stories; collaboration throughout production. In the paragraphs that follow, we contextualize each of these with interview excerpts, and analyze the literacy practices they reveal.

Safe Writing Culture

It's about listening. It's about not saying no. —Noah Harpster

Before the writing team began writing together, they shared a two-week retreat where they formed meaningful and intimate relationships. Executive producer, Jill Soloway, rented a house in Los Angeles where each day the writing team would gather to engage in one another's lives. Harpster describes this experience:

> One thing that Jill did is she forced intimacy on the first day. . . . She basically sat everyone around in a circle on couches and was like, "Let's check in. Who are you? What are you about? Where are you in your life right now?" I think that she chose people who [sic] she thought would be susceptible to that, who would be open to being vulnerable, and being forthcoming with what's going on in their lives. It took about five minutes for someone to start crying.

Harpster implies that intense emotional intimacy among the group became integral to their creative process, and the writers acknowledge that the two weeks they spent together taught them to trust and be vulnerable with one another. The time they shared helped to build a culture in the writers' room that allows them to mine their histories and use those histories to build stories and characters for the show.

While each of the writers recognize the intimate relationship they have with one another, Soloway intentionally orchestrated this event to create a communal and safe space for the show's artists to engage in creative processes. As Harpster puts it, "Jill totally manifested that. She created that environment. That was very intentional—then we started talking about story." In addition to crafting an intimate environment, Harpster also posits that Soloway intentionally sought writers who would be willing to be open and accessible with other people. Our Lady J explains how the culture stimulated and guided their writing process:

> First, we break story[3] all together, where for three months, two months, we'll be in the [writers'] room. We go in. We open up. How was your day? How was your weekend? We start talking about feelings and life and experience. Then, the next thing you know, "Oh, my god! That would be amazing for Josh," or, "That'd be amazing for Maura or Ali." Then things start going up on the board.[4]

As Our Lady J implies the relationships among the writers fashion a space where they both encourage and respect moments of vulnerability. This dynamic proves integral to their writing process.

In his discussion of being emotionally available, Harpster describes in detail how this communal environment provided the writers a context where they could create a character from their personal experiences. In the original version of the pilot, which Soloway solely authored, she exposes secrets of each of the major characters except the middle son, Josh, who did not have one. One of the writers brought this to Soloway's attention, and the writing team created a secret past for Josh during which he participated in a sexual relationship with his adult baby-sitter, Rita. Over the course of the season, he maintains this relationship with her as a man in his 30s. Rita is a major character and influences much of the plot across the entire series. Harpster describes how this character developed: "Rita is someone who was born out of the writer's room and that whole story was filled in off of people in our room's personal experience." Rita's creation illustrates the importance that collaboration plays in the writing of this show. Rita emerged from an organic, group effort, but did not exist when Soloway wrote, shot, and edited the original pilot. The fact that a child-molesting babysitter can be born from a community of authors' life experiences indicates a very real intimacy and trust present in the room.

In addition to the specific example Rita offers, Our Lady J describes in general the ways everyone contributes to developing characters and plot. Though all of the writers write for all of the characters, each writer provides different insights:

> We all write for all. We write for every character. . . . When we're breaking

> story, like we are now for season three, when it comes to [transwomen] Maura or Davina or Shea, I'm always telling stories that I've gone through. . . . Things that I've had to overcome or challenges, and that comes up and goes into the trans* stories.

Our Lady J reveals that extremely safe and nurturing environments foster trust and encourage participants to share their pasts. To have the freedom to divulge these experiences allows the writing team to draw on their histories and construct characters and story.

While emotional security proves vital to *Transparent*'s writing process, Harpster expresses both the value of ideas that emerge from being emotionally grounded, and highlights the care necessary for maintaining an intimate culture. "The more emotional, the more personal, the better. In order to do that it has to be an incredibly safe space. You have to be very kind to each other." Harpster stresses that this type of partnership must take place in a very safe space where one's integrity will not be threatened. Also, the writers who share the space recognize its significance, so they take responsibility for maintaining it.

The culture the writers nurture in *Transparent* is something of an aberration for television writers' rooms. In general television writers' rooms are known for being "one-uppy" and "competitive." Harpster describes that "a lot of writer's rooms are about competition and one-upping each other and trying to get your jokes in." In her interview with Vulture.com (2015) Soloway describes the more typical writers' room atmosphere:

> A lot of writers' rooms are set up where there's a team of draft horses that are waiting to come and be ridden by a showrunner,[5] at the showrunner's will, for however long. In other rooms I've been in, you don't get told what time you're going home. . . . There's this traditional way where your dignity can be at risk.

While *Transparent* diverges from the decorum of traditional writers' rooms, Soloway also concedes that some other Hollywood writers' rooms are inclusive and communal (Soloway, 2015). However, because the writing process enacted in *Transparent* requires writers to divulge deeply personal and intimate details of their lives, the emphasis that Soloway and the other writers put on maintaining a safe and warm environment indicate the influence that environmental contexts has on creative writing processes. Researchers, professional writers, and writing teachers alike have established inclusive and safe environments as foundational for effective writing teaching (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001; Griffith, 2016; Kirby & Krovitz, 2013), yet the data here indicate that it is even more vital for marginalized people who are being asked to mine prior experiences.

In addition to the benefit an inclusive collaborative community can have on creative writing processes, writers also receive an added personal benefit from sharing their stories, watching those stories portrayed by actors, and later disseminated into the community. Our Lady J describes the impact this process has had on her:

> In a way, in a personal level, it's really therapeutic to be able to tell these stories in a room. Then, it goes past that into a creative area, where these stories are then told through characters. Then, you see the actors on set portray those stories. Then, you see it on the final version on film. It's really—there's no way to explain it. It's magical.

Not only is a safe communal space where writers mine their lives for creative material fundamental to the creative process taking place in the writing of *Transparent*, but authors also receive therapeutic rewards from sharing their stories with caring colleagues. Harpster describes this experience as both integral to creative writing and "kind of like therapy."

The data also indicate that writers can receive the advantage of public recognition from writing and producing stories that depict their lives. Our Lady J explains:

> On a very personal level, it's very therapeutic to be able to tell stories of trauma and to have it reflected back to me in a healthy way. Where a group of cis people are like, "Wow, that sucks." Like, "I'm sorry that happened." Whereas, as a trans* person, it's just part of my story.

In this quotation, Our Lady J reflects on how this kind of writing provides opportunities for public recognition and acknowledgement, which helps to validate her as a trans* person. Thus, she illustrates another benefit of a nurturing and inclusive writing environment.

Though scholars and writing instructors alike have discussed the importance of establishing a secure and inviting writing environment in classroom settings (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001; Griffith, 2016; Kirby & Krovitz, 2013), *Transparent* teaches us that this environment is primary for the types of collaboration and creation that occur in its writers' room. The writing practices of *Transparent* emphasize the significance of establishing relationships among the writers well before any writing takes place, and, as will be detailed below, they purposefully set aside time to maintain these relationships throughout the writing process. This section highlights the culture of community and understanding that permeates the writers' room, and the following section will explore some of the ways through which the writers sustain this culture, and the protocols they employ to ensure an inclusive, respectful, and creative process.

Discipline to Collaborate

> *Nobody but the person holding the pen standing at the whiteboard gets to say, "No." That's the rule. —Noah Harpster*

When the *Transparent* writers break story, they maintain a very strict writing schedule that provides ample time to care for one another. Soloway (2015) describes the procedure:

> We work in 50-minute chunks and then we take 15-minute breaks, during which we're really paying a lot of attention to each other. We don't actually work for that many chunks per day, usually four, but they're really intensely focused chunks.

She implies that providing a structure for the writers to care for one another, check in with each other's lives, and cement lasting and trusting friendships helps engender a creative process where they are willing to take creative and emotional risks. In addition to maintaining personal relationships, the ample breaks allow time to reflect on what they have created, and provide the opportunity to deeply consider each other's ideas.

Harpster asserts that the intense focus within these relatively short writing sessions proves an invaluable benefit of the schedule. As he says, "Everyone is completely focused and available emotionally." He illustrates that the level of focus and emotional intensity would be much more difficult if the writers worked over long stretches, rather than 50 minute intervals. Additionally, to help facilitate attuned focus, the writers adhere to an agreed upon set of rules that include no cell phones or computers in the writers' room. Only the intern, whose job is to write down every word exchanged, has a computer open during communal writing activities.

The strict writing schedule deviates from the more traditional writers' rooms where writers often work at the will of the showrunner (Soloway, 2015). In her discussion of the *Transparent* writers' room, Soloway emphasizes the humanity embedded in its decorum: "I'm all about a humane process—we don't work really long hours—and respecting the artists' time, too" (Soloway, 2015). While the strict writing schedule respects artists' time and allows for maintaining intimate relationships, the protocols of the writers' room also provide insight to the collaborative processes.

When the writers break character or story, they designate one person to lead the discussion. This person may be the showrunner or it may be one of the writers who has personal experience or vested interest in the topic the writers are exploring. The person leading the discussion stands in front of the white board and writes down ideas the other writers suggest. As Harpster puts it, "Whoever is 'running the room' is the only person who gets to say, 'No, let's not focus on that. Let's move on to this.'" According to this protocol, the person running the room may deny an idea, but all the other writers may only grow ideas. Additionally, the outlines the writers produce via this process are mobile and malleable. They organize the ideas on sticky-notes and affix them to a whiteboard grid. The white board functions as a graphic organizer and contains the basic episodic structure and character arcs. However, the sticky-notes allow plot points to float among episodes and scenes that encourage the story as constantly in process. All of the writers accept that some ideas will evolve and some will be abandoned. This collaborative structure provides opportunities for focused creativity and hinges on a community of respect where communal trust and friendship mitigate hostilities that may arise from excessive ego and competition.

Connection to Stories

> *Everything that happens has to have an emotion behind it. —Our Lady J*

While on the writing retreat before Season One, Soloway discussed her experiences when her 70-year-old parent transitioned. According to one of the writers, Soloway had vague notions of the direction they thought the season would go, but they relied on the writers' experiences and the exploration of the writers' ideas to guide the season's trajectory. Soloway (2015) identifies one of the grounding premises of the writers' room: "We come from an intuitive, emotional place, as opposed to other TV shows where you might be thinking about joke-writing or odd situations to put the characters into." Soloway stresses intuitive and emotional base from which their writers' room generates creativity, characters, and stories.

While discussing the social context that allows *Transparent* to be produced in the first place, writer Ali Liebegott considers both the ways that our culture's expectations of television and gender have shifted, and indicates how her life experience and the life experiences of queer people in general have suddenly become marketable:

> The fact that I'm writing on a [television] show—I always say this to Noah is like, "Guess what everyone? I fucking published the first thing I ever wrote in 1987. Okay? Finally, my life is marketable to someone to be mined for a TV show." Do you know what I mean? People have been doing this shit forever. People have been writing things. They just haven't been greenlit.

Liebegott suggests that television is breaking new ground regarding queer identities, but she also implies that writers unearth their lives as an integral aspect of the creative writing process. The personal connection that Liebegott feels for the show and that Soloway intimates above pervades the culture of the writers' room.

Our Lady J further articulates both an emotional connection to the material and a personal responsibility to the stories. She feels that transwomen of previous generations have worked and sacrificed for her future, so she likewise has an obligation to work for younger trans* people. "I guess, I just—in the context of the show, I feel like so many of my trans-sisters really [sacrificed their lives for the future]. We continue to do it for the future. The people who came before me who lived their lives authentically and open and made a splash doing it so that I could see them." Our Lady J indicates that she speaks for voiceless trans* folks and is obligated to present "authentic" trans* characters; she creates trans* stories "in a way that is authentic and real. I think having a trans* person in the [writers'] room really is the only way to do that. . . . Also, I feel a great sense of responsibility." Not only does life experience play an important role in creating authentic characters, but also the characterization grows from personal connection and responsibility to the story being told.

Though Our Lady J feels a palpable sense of duty toward trans* folks, fellow

writer Harpster asserts that personal connection is a prerequisite for producing high-quality writing. When asked about the importance of personal connection, he responds,

> I think it's super-important. The longer I do this, the more I realize that I have to be invested in it. It's one of the only truths that I've realized about writing is that the things that we've written that were like, "Eh, it's not that good" or, "It doesn't resonate with other people." It's because it didn't resonate with us. It wasn't coming from a place of understanding and need in the writer.

According to Harpster, writers tend to produce higher quality work when they feel invested in the writing, yet he extends the idea of connection and investment even further. He states that good writing comes "from a place of understanding and need in the writer." Though Harpster's approach is similar to Our Lady J's sense of responsibility, Harpster also posits that writers require this connection to produce good work. As he puts it, "The odds of [producing high quality writing] are incredibly slim if, on the very first level, the writer is not emotionally connected to it." Good stories are those that writers feel they must tell (Elbow, 2015), and while a personal connection to the piece persists as a foundational aspect of good writing, the following section examines how collaborative authorship in television extends beyond the writers' room.

Extended Collaboration

I mean, I don't even remember who wrote what at this point. —Our Lady J.

Well before the season begins filming, the script has already undergone a complex process of creation and revision. Once the writers outline the season, a detailed process that occurs over three to six months, the executive producer assigns episodes to individual writers or writing pairs. Upon completion, these drafts will then undergo a series of revisions to which the entire writing team, including the showrunner and executive producer contribute. During this revision process the actors also participate in a "table read" of the draft and provide their feedback. By the time an episode is finally approved for filming, innumerable collaborative revisions have already taken place. However, a complex and intricate process of collaboration continues to occur *after* filming begins. Our Lady J summarizes one way this collaboration occurs:

> Things happen on set where (actors) improvise. We're like, "Oh my god. That's amazing. That changes everything else, so now we have to rewrite." It's a real group effort. That's between the writers and the showrunner and the dirrectors and the actors, and everyone involved really help create the story.

As Our Lady J suggests actors provide revisions through improvising new dialogue on set which may affect the characters' stories. Moments of improvisation

may be a minor edit from the shooting script, or some of their improvisation may require major revisions of plot points within the series. When the story requires these revisions, writers incorporate the actors' input to rework the story.

Academy award winning editor, Scott Conrad, coined the phrase, "Editing is the final rewrite" (Freedman, 2014). While actors provide important revisions via improvisation and suggestions, editing also emerges as a vital aspect of cooperation in producing television shows. While the creative team films the show, the editor works concurrently to create a story from the daily film clips. By splicing the dailies together, she constructs the initial, "editor's-cut" of each episode. As *Transparent* head editor and Emmy award nominee Kate Haight describes, "As the editor, you're making your own choices and your own decisions. You hope that you've been hired because you have the same point of view as what [the executive producer] is looking for." After she creates the editor's-cut (which is often as much as twice as long as the required episode length and is always the starting point for post-production), the editor works first with the director to revise the editor's-cut. Once they create the director's-cut, then the producers and writers all provide feedback to form what becomes the final, "online" episode.

Haight also describes the ways through which writing evolves over the various processes that occur across the development of the show's story:

> When you write it on the page, it's different from when they shoot it. When you cut it together, it's different from when they shot it. You always are trying to just make the best version of what you have, instead of what your intention was when you first started writing.

Haight offers interesting perspectives about both intentionality and adaptability. As she states, successful artists and writers must be willing to relinquish their previous intentions and embrace new ideas. The willingness for all of these artists to adapt, to check their ego, and to care about each other makes the collective creativity described here possible. That said, the creative team construct each episode to follow Soloway's vision. Throughout the entire process, from initial creation of ideas to the polished end product, the unifying undercurrent centers on honoring the vision Soloway has for the final product; "[They're] always the final say on every choice." Having a final decision maker who oversees the collective effort of many opens interesting possibilities for pedagogical practices that we explore in the following section.

Implications

The practices enacted throughout the creation of *Transparent* provide a number of implications for writing pedagogy and professional writing communities. The show's writers specify that the culture of respect and group-care they foster and maintain proves paramount to their generative and collaborative processes.

Though writing teachers and researchers alike acknowledge the importance of creating a safe environment for students to explore ideas in writing, we argue that this is even more vital when people engage in collaborative writing activities. In writing groups, educators often require authors to reveal their writing throughout the process, which may be a personal and exposing experience. To assuage some of the anxiety writers may feel regarding their work, educators can create environments that nurture collaboration through mutual trust and respect. To do this, they introduce and maintain guidelines for how writers interact with each other, and create time in their writing curriculum for guided discussion within writing groups that explore members' lives, mutual interests, and concerns. Teachers can also allow students to choose with whom they would like to work. Because trust and emotional availability is integral to collaborative writing processes, offering students the opportunity to be comfortable with their writing partners would help engender affirmation and promote cooperation. In a similar vein, providing writers a choice of writing topics may increase possibilities for author investment and motivation in their writing projects. Scholarly literature in the field of writing research reveals that motivation plays a significant role in students engaging in writing activities (Cutler & Graham, 2008; Troia & Olinghouse 2013); students may be more invested in their writing when they are provided a range of topics to choose from or can create their own topic (Elbow, 2015; Griffith, 2016; Fletcher, 1996; Macrorie, 1988; Romano, 2000, 2013).

The practices of the *Transparent* writers' room also suggest that a very structured environment with ample time for reflection and relationship maintenance proves integral to creative, collaborative authorship. Teachers can implement a similar structure where they divide writing units into relatively short periods of very intense and focused work intermingled with shorter periods of reflection and socializing that encourage care of relationships within the group. Correspondingly, what many educators have vilified as "off-task behavior" may have very beneficial outcomes for collaborative authorship, so teachers might reconsider off-task behavior as an essential aspect of building relationships. Also, when students discuss story possibilities, one student could oversee creative decisions while others may only provide encouragement and grow ideas. Additionally, we urge teachers to use sticky-notes and whiteboards as tools to encourage adaptability and likewise help some students overcome their tendency to become fixated on a particular set of ideas.

However, in the codified processes of school and student evaluations, many education systems indicate that authorship must be accounted for when students engage in collaboration. Along these lines, the writers of *Transparent* undergo a chaotic and complex process negotiating authorship throughout the show's production. For instance, though all of the writers are all responsible for writing every episode, only one (occasionally two) is officially credited. In fact, writers understand that episode credits sometimes do not correspond with the person or

people who wrote the majority of the script, but the writers agree that this is an acceptable practice and reflects the cooperative nature of their writing community (N. Harpster, personal communication, October 24, 2016). This point about authorship speaks to the dynamic characteristic of language in the collaborative authorship process. No one owns language, or to be more precise, language is used as a tool to communicate the lives and experiences of trans* individuals in the context of a television series. Authorship is placed in quotation marks in order to teach the public about the complex lives of trans* individuals. Collaboration trumps authorship in this instance. The writers, therefore, are driven by the result; they unite together in order to create a meaningful series that attempts to move its audience to empathize and understand the experiences of trans* people, and thus produces the possibilities for social change (Greene, 1995). This drive to reflect the lives on trans* people in order to educate others appears to assuage a desire for credit or for authorship.

Conclusion

Though the practices of Hollywood writers' rooms may have important implications for writing, many student collaborations taking place in school filter through the students' social contexts, including school hierarchies, social statuses, writing anxiety, motivation, and writing readiness. The omnipresent social factors in adolescent lives must be taken into account during practices of collaborative authorship at school. This paper does not assume that these contexts will be necessarily alleviated even if educators make every effort to ensure a culture of trust and comfort. Similarly, there could very well be social status, hierarchy, and competition at play in the *Transparent* writers' room that simply went unreported.

The writers for *Transparent* indicated that they remained emotional available and empathic of others throughout the collaborative authorship process. Interview evidence indicates that writers were hired partially because of their affective dispositions (N. Harpster, personal communication, October 24, 2016). Given the profound significance that social contexts and hierarchies play in students' lives and the fact that many people are less inclined to be emotive in classrooms, this study cannot assume that its findings will be germane for all writing communities. Nonetheless, we contend that the collaborative authorship practices, including establishing a safe writing environment to explore provocative and controversial topics can initiate a profound discussion about the uses and applications of collaborative authorship in the writing pedagogy scholarship.

As this article reveals, the creative process in the *Transparent* writers' room fashions possibilities for creativity that would not have existed if the authors wrote in isolation. The success and popularity of *Transparent* indicate that communal writing processes described above provide authors the capability to create exceptional pieces of writing and may prove an exemplar for how to implement collab-

orative authorship; moreover, the rewards of collaborative authorship extend far beyond a measurable product, for collaborative authorship involves a complex, highly structured, nurturing and creative practice that provides many avenues for unexpected, supplementary benefits of participation. Those who partake in this type of communal writing receive an emotional wage where they earn additional payments in the forms of emotional security and meaningful friendships. Correspondingly, authors gain recognition when fellow writers affirm their histories, and when they witness these stories embodied, publicly presented, and validated. We believe that the extended benefits that exist via the process of collective creativity described here carry potential value for a wide variety of writing contexts including academic, professional, amateur and educational settings.

While the supplemental benefits of *Transparent*'s writing practices provide significant emotional gains, the demands of collaboration persist as an integral aspect of many professional, artistic, and academic settings. Educators have an ethical responsibility to provide their students the tools necessary to be successful, so educational settings should include more opportunities for young writers to engage in occasions of collaboration.

Moreover, writing carries the capacity to open alternate realities and offer readers or viewers fresh perspectives. Soloway reminds us that high quality writing products contain the potential to create affective responses that continue far beyond pedagogical responsibility. They explain,

> I love when I meet people who tell me they were able to come out because of the show. People say, 'My parent is trans. My family stopped talking to them ten years ago. I called them up and I said, "Have you seen this show?"' [*Transparent*] becomes like a bridge for people to reconnect and a model for love and family. (2016)

As this quotation implies, writing carries innumerable possibilities regarding human interactions. Because the show produces affective responses like empathy and understanding, it likewise has the potential to alter human behavior (Greene, 1995). As the anecdote suggests, writing can affect social change, and educators can empower their students with the capability to use collaborative authorship to reconnect and to build bridges. What more could we hope for in writing classrooms?

Notes

[1] The authors recognize that two of the show's employees have accused the lead actor (Jeffrey Tambor) of sexual misconduct, and we by no means condone his behavior. Quite the contrary. While this behavior is inarguably egregious, one of the accusers (actress, Trace Lysette) implores that Amazon allow the show to continue. With this in mind, we believe that the writing processes that create *Transparent* offer writing pedagogues rich possibilities regarding the teaching of collaborative authorship.

[2] Trans* (with the asterisk) includes various and diverse gender identities among

transgender, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary people, whereas trans (without the asterisk) traditionally only includes transmen or transwomen.

[3] Both writers Our Lady J, and Harpster use the terms "break story" and "break character" to refer to the process of making up events that affect characters' and plot outlines.

[4] "The Board" will be discussed in more detail in the following section where we outline procedures and protocols. Briefly, it is a white board upon which the writers organize ideas.

[5] Showrunner is a word used in television to designate the individual who is ultimately responsible for the content of an episode. This person is often (but not always) the executive producer and lead-writer. At the end of the day, the showrunner decides what an episode will contain.

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Appendix A

Writing Interview Questions

Primary:

1. Walk me through the process of how the idea for an episode becomes what the viewers see. What roles do writers, producers, actors and editors play, and how do the playing out of these roles promote the purpose of the show?

2. What scene and/or episode would you say is most critical to show to adolescents to learn about gender/sexuality?
    a. What do you want viewers to learn about gender/sexuality from this show?

3. What choices editing, writing, etc did you make in order to engage a less progressive general audience?
    a. Why did the show choose to cast a straight, critically acclaimed and well known male actor to play a trans-woman?

4. What compromises in the writing process did you make in the collaboration?

5. Tell us about the discussions you had in the writers' room about Maura's femininity. Alok Void Menon wrote a piece for The Guardian arguing that *Transparent* reinscribes gender binaries, he argues that trans people must be either male or female in order to be accepted. How does the show move us forward in our understanding of gender?

6. How does narrative help teach others about transgendered people?

Secondary:

1. In the commentary they indicated that the writers debated about whether Maura returns to Shelley for comfort? What were the debates?

2. What are Maura's foibles?

3. What prop or object best represents each character?

4. In terms of writing character, how does triangulation work in terms of finding one's identity?

5. In what ways do the kids see potential selves or potential identities in some of the other characters?
    a. How does the mirror work as a metaphor for character development?

6. Tell us about the decision about the scene where Sarah and Tammy tell children about Grandpa Mort's change?

7. Talk to us about the writing of Marci's phone conversation at camp?

8. The two girls have gender/sexuality fluidity—but Josh does not—why not?

9. Tell us about the scene with Josh and his niece and the dream light—what is the importance of this scene?

10. Continually returning to the past—how much of the puzzles of the past need to be filled in for people to feel authentic—Ally holding hair at the conclusion of the season—tell us about this decision? She seems to be ready to fly away, holding on by a thread, or is she finally "grounded"?

Appendix B

Follow-up Writer Protocol

1. What is the culture of the writers' room?
    a. How was that culture created?
    b. How is this culture maintained? As in, what specific methods are used in maintaining the culture that has been established?
    c. Would you describe the decorum of the writers' room?
    d. How does the writers' room engender collaboration?
    e. What happens when people disagree?
    f. How is this writing context different than other writing contexts you've worked in?
    g. How is this collaborative writing process different than writing projects you've done individually or with Micah?

2. Walk me through the process of creating a new season.
    a. How much do you plan ahead as in outlining the whole season before getting down to specifics of writing an episode?
    b. What does collaboration look like when creating the arc of a season?
    c. How is plot created?

      d. How are characters created?

      e. How does the diversity of experience among the writers enrich the collaborative process?

3. How much collaboration occurs in the writing of a single episode among the writers?

      a. How is it decided who writes which episode?

      b. What does this look like?—How does this collaboration occur?

      c. Can you think of a specific example from an episode when this occurred?

      d. How does this change when other players get involved (e.g., actors, producers, director, editor, etc)?

4. How do you think the writing process would be different if you were writing a plot driven show rather than a character driven show?

      a. How might character driven shows invite creative collaboration in ways that plot driven shows may not?

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Vision and Scope

Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education is an academic forum for the transdisciplinary study of the dynamic and complex relationship between the various competing and complementary aspects of education broadly defined. *Taboo* is grounded on the notion of radical contextualization. To investigate the notion of radical contextualization, we encourage scholars to draw from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives to contest current taken-for-granted approaches in education and in the academy. Some of these approaches include, Post-Structuralism, Feminist Studies, Actor-Network Theory, Queer Theory, New Materialism, Historical/Genealogical, Affect Theory, and Critical approaches to race, class, and gender studies. Beyond simply articulating critical perspectives we seek contributions willing to stake the unsaid and the previous and current unconsiderable and/or irreconcilable. We encourage work that seeks to wrap its lips around the complex, chaotic, and cutting edges of the sayable and knowable. We want to push readers and contributors to perform complex questioning of the very ideas that have become all too common-place within traditional academic journals. We specifically foster discussions across and through different disciplines including explorations into how intertextualities and intersectionalities operate throughout and within different educational times/spaces/places. The journal encourages papers from a wide range of contributors who work within these general areas. We also encourage research that pushes the methodological boundaries. *Taboo* seeks a dialogic series of interactions that push place, space, and time boundaries as well as invites a leaning in and pushing back approach. Not only do we seek content that engages these values, but we also favor unique, controversial, and continually complicated forms and modes of presentations. As its title suggests, *Taboo* seeks provocative and controversial submissions.

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Beyond simply articulating critical perspectives how does the manuscript stake the unsaid and the previous and current unconsiderable and/or irreconcilable?

How and to what extent does the work seeks to wrap its lips around the complex, chaotic, and cutting edges of the sayable and knowable?

How does the manuscript push readers and contributors to perform complex questioning of the very ideas that have become all too common-place within traditional academic journals?

How does the manuscript foster discussions across and through different disciplines including explorations into how intertextualities and intersectionalities operate throughout and within different educational times/spaces/places?

How does the manuscript foster research that pushes the methodological boundaries?

How and to what extent does the manuscript foster a dialogic series of interactions that push place, space, and time boundaries as well as invites a leaning in and pushing back approach?

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